

Transcript for Episode 222: Badass Softie Leadership: Why Joy, Storytelling, and POV Are Your Competitive Advantage with Dr. JJ Peterson

Jessica Miller (00:02)

JJ, welcome to the It's Your Offer podcast. I'm so happy to have you in the studio today.

Dr. JJ Peterson (00:07)

I am so excited to be here. Thanks for having me.

Jessica Miller (00:09)

Yeah, I'm so thrilled to talk about all the things that's been going on in your world, JJ. There's been a lot going on in your world.

Dr. JJ Peterson (00:14)

There really is. It's been a, it's been a very fun year. I, yeah. So, for the last decade, really, I was at Storybrand and I'm still there. Actually, I'm still working with Storybrand and Storybrand for people don't know. It's a company that helps people clarify their message using a story framework. So, my background is in.

Jessica Miller (00:22)

Yeah, tell us about it.

Dr. JJ Peterson (00:40)

story and narrative theory. I was a professor. I did public relations and marketing. And then for the past 10 years have been helping companies and leaders clarify their message using the power of story. And I was head of story brand. And now my new title there is a professor in residence. So, I do still a lot of teaching and consulting and workshops and curriculum development for them. But I've also created kind of my own brand on the side. So I'm still there, still very much part of everything, but have created my own marketing agency. And then I've also just recently launched a new podcast called Badass Softie. Really, it's all about kind of reframing leadership in many ways that talking about it's a podcast for leaders who are really unapologetically ambitious, but also lead with their heart.

Jessica Miller (01:22)

Yay!

Mmm.

Dr. JJ Peterson (01:39)

It really started for me, that piece of it started about 20 years ago. I was doing improv comedy as you know, as you naturally do. When I would tell my backstory, people are always like, you did what you did that? So, I was touring doing improv comedies. And, for people who know comedy, you don't make money in the club.

Jessica Miller (01:56)

What are you doing?

Dr. JJ Peterson (02:06)

you make money at private events because if you do a club, know, anybody going to a show should recognize that when they see somebody on that stage, they probably got paid \$250 for the weekend and they bought their own flight and their own food in their home hotel room. So, they've lost money to be there, but it's a great place to practice and be a part of it and you know, and all those things. But where you make your money is in private events. So, we toured doing a lot of corporate events like we did.

Jessica Miller (02:06)

Okay.

Wow.

Dr. JJ Peterson (02:34)

a Christmas party for the farm that gives all the eggs to McDonald's, like that kind of stuff, like huge farms. Or we did conferences and conventions and camps, because we're clean comedy, so we did a lot of faith-based kind of things. And I would see these leaders that would get up on stage and they would try to be funny and loud and boisterous.

Jessica Miller (02:41)

Wow.

Dr. JJ Peterson (03:04)

they would get off stage and I would watch their team cower and be afraid. And I would watch them do things that I think, you know, on stage are saying one thing and off stage they're acting completely different. And I also saw a lot of amazing leaders. So first off, yes. But a lot of the times I just saw people who were leading, who were leaving a wake behind them of damage and trauma.

Jessica Miller (03:16)

Hmm.

Yeah. Yeah.

Dr. JJ Peterson (03:32)

And I remember I was on break and I was in Washington, DC, break from tour. And I was in Washington, DC visiting my friend. And just said, you know, I'm tired of touring. Touring life is hard. It was very fun. I love being a comedian, but I gained a bunch of weight. was sick all the time. I didn't get to see my friends, couldn't have relationships, all that stuff. And so was like, I want out. And I remember I was walking on a railroad track with him in Washington, DC. And he was asking me what I want to do. And I said, you know,

Jessica Miller (03:49)

Yeah. Yeah, it's hard. Yeah.

Dr. JJ Peterson (04:01)

I really want to go back and raise up the next generation of leaders to not leave behind a wake of trauma and actually like live out of their true authentic selves, lead who they were meant to be, lead how they were meant to be leaders. And so that's kind of what I did. I kept touring for a little bit, but I ended up going back and getting my master's and PhD and I went into higher education. I taught communications and leadership.

Jessica Miller (04:07)

Mmm.

Dr. JJ Peterson (04:29)

and then moved into administration, was Dean of Students. So actually, started working with student leaders and ASB and government. And, you know, and for the past, you know, even 10 years, I've been kind of around all of these incredible leaders in the business space and thought leadership. And this is kind of one of those continuations of that story of where I was like, I see a lot of people out there who are very inspiring to me as leaders, but I'm not like them. That's kind of the biggest piece is I look and I go, they're incredibly ambitious, but I don't want to be ambitious that way. Like they helped me be more ambitious, but I don't want to lead the way they're leading. And then also I see a lot of people who have incredible amounts of passion and heart. And I go, that's amazing. And I've learned a ton from them, but also, I'm a bit more ambitious than they are. So, it's kind of like.

Jessica Miller (05:06)

Hmm.

Mm-hmm.

Dr. JJ Peterson (05:23)

how do I balance this space and create a community and a place where people can have conversations around what does it mean to truly be a badass softie, to be somebody who is like, let's be driven, let's do things, let's change the world, but also let's care about people and protect our hearts and also build community and love in this process. And I know that sounds a little cliché and a little bit like,

you know, kind of woo woo. But what I'm finding the deeper and deeper I get into it, since it's actually not about woo woo, it really is the way to succeed moving forward is when you put both of these things together.

Jessica Miller (06:06)

Yeah, I love this so much and by the way, JJ, I think this is you this is you And I didn't know about the improv. I mean this explains why on stage you're so funny I'm like man He's just like naturally funny. How did he just get up there and do that? But it's like 20 years in the making Which is awesome. improv comedy is probably my kryptonite. I think I don't even know what I would do with myself but my god

Dr. JJ Peterson (06:10)

Yes.

Yeah. Yeah.

You would, you, I'm sure you would be fantastic. You would be, if you can host a podcast for as long as you've hosted a podcast, you can do improv. I'll tell you that right now.

Jessica Miller (06:35)

my gosh. After I got over the stage fright of standing there like people staring at me and I have to be funny like my gosh forget it. But yeah, I totally agree with this idea of you know the ambition and ambition and heart. And I think one of the most fascinating things I mean and I think you'll agree with this it's like duh. Like why aren't people as part of their framework. I mean I think we're like leaning one way or the other we kind of forget about the thing but it really needs to be both. Right.

Dr. JJ Peterson (06:38)

Thank It is, and the research backs it up on a whole bunch of different levels as well. And we'll talk about that as we go through this, I'm sure. you know, and here's the biggest thing is I was kind of starting this is I didn't want to point to other people and go, that is the wrong way to lead. Like what I would say is it's not the way I was built to lead. Like I look at people who, you know, you hear context, people out there saying even, you know, empathy is a weakness. And I'm like, mm.

Jessica Miller (07:08)

Mmm.

Dr. JJ Peterson (07:32)

That's not true. And I never want to be that type of leader. Now, I'll just say it, that person is the richest person in the world. So that works for them, but I can learn from that. But I also, that's not who I want to be. I remember when I came to work at Storybrand with Donna Miller, who really brought me in very early in the process. One of the things he said to me was,

Jessica Miller (07:34)

Yeah, right. Exactly.

Dr. JJ Peterson (07:58)

You know, and we did this with early on with all the employees. was, we asked, what's your big dream? What, like, if you could live like kind of your perfect life, what would you do? And for me, he, you know, he's asking me this and I'm like, you know, I think I would buy a house and I would, I'd like, you know, be able to take a month off in the summer to where I could travel. And then maybe another month off in the summer where I could do a movie. And then, cause I used to do stuff in Hollywood. was like, I'd do a movie and then, you know, I'd love to teach at a university, maybe just one class or something like that again. And, and he's like, and I was like, yeah, I think that would be a perfect life. And he goes, no, no, no, you're going to do all those things. I need you to dream bigger. He goes, I want to be president. What do you want to do? And that was one of the first times that I was like, I am not ambitious. Like I thought I was ambitious. And I'm like, I get it. And he was a person who really challenged me.

Jessica Miller (08:40)

Hmm.

Mmm. Done.

Hmm.

Dr. JJ Peterson (08:55)

to become more ambitious and think about bigger impact and changing the world. And if you have a gift and a voice and a product even that can actually make people's lives better than in many ways, it's your duty to actually be a bit more ambitious with it. Now, I don't want to be president. That would destroy me. So, I am not going to lead like Donald Miller. And I don't think he actually really wants to be president either. think he just puts that out there as a big thing.

Jessica Miller (09:08)

Yes

Mm Me too.

Yeah. Right.

Dr. JJ Peterson (09:23)

I don't need to be ambitious like him, but I want to be, I can be more ambitious and that's okay. And, you know, and then also I'm on the nonprofit of, I'm on the board of a nonprofit. And I remember one year they were giving their report and they said, you know, our goal for the end of the year is to raise \$5,000, you know, towards the end of the year. And I was like, hey, every single person in this room who's on this board over a year could give \$5,000.

Jessica Miller (09:29)

Mm-hmm.

Right. Yeah.

Dr. JJ Peterson (09:52)

everyone in this room, you're not dreaming big enough. And they're like, well, we don't want to be pushy. And I'm like, no, no, no. The work you do saves people's lives, literally saves people's lives. We need to be more ambitious and not shrink and just like lean into the passion and let people kind of like, let's hug and figure out who's going to give us money. And so, it's both of those things of looking at both of those people and going like, I'm going to be challenged by both. And I want to challenge both.

Jessica Miller (09:58)

boy.

Right.

Yeah.

Dr. JJ Peterson (10:20)

And

that's really like what this is kind of built out of. It's not being prescriptive, but allowing people to really pause long enough to say, what type of leader do I want to be? I've been shown a lot of types of leadership out there. That's not me. I don't feel good being that person, but who am I and how can I lead in a new way?

Jessica Miller (10:41)

Yeah. And I think in modern day and like the age we're standing in right now, this needs to be the foundation for every CEO, entrepreneur, executive, because we have this beautiful opportunity to amplify that voice, right? To make that impact. And designing that in a way that feels good and authentic to you that takes both of these things into account. And then leveraging all the tools and the opportunities that we have to really tell people about it or touch them allows us to make such a big impact. And whether you're a nonprofit or a solopreneur or whatever, I mean, I would say it's the best time to be around wanting to make a change, but it starts with you and leaning into that in a way that feels aligned, it's fun, it's truly you, like your personality comes out and all those things, right?

Dr. JJ Peterson (11:36)

and, and I, I'm a big believer in it. And, really for me to be very honest where it comes back to is what I was talking about, like being that 20 years ago, figure, like watching the wake of bad leadership and watching the trauma that was created and knowing that it just doesn't have to be that way. And I do think that a lot of those leaders, it wasn't even that they were bad people.

Jessica Miller (11:49)

Mm-hmm.

Dr. JJ Peterson (12:02)

or bad leaders is that they were leaving out of an inauthentic voice. And so, they were leading out of their own insecurities and their own fears and trying to be something they thought they were supposed to be instead of being who they truly were. And again, I know that sounds a little bit woo woo, but I'm just, have, as I've dove into this more and more, the research really backs up this idea that when we become more human,

Jessica Miller (12:06)

Yeah.

Dr. JJ Peterson (12:30)

when we become more authentic, when we become, lean into our wisdom and our experience as leaders, that we do better and our teams and our companies do better. And so, I think there's pieces to this that are like, might feel a little touchy feely. And I think that's okay. I'm kind of a, I am a little bit of a woo-woo guy anyway, but on top of that,

Jessica Miller (12:54)

Yeah.

Me too.

Dr. JJ Peterson (13:00)

I'm also, you know, I have a PhD. look at the data, I research, I study, and I see like, okay, I'm not going to put something out there that just is like, well, just be, have fun with your team. And it's like, what does that even mean? And it's like, and you know, I'm, I'm, I want to make sure that it's all grounded in real experience and real research that really helps people actually do this well.

Jessica Miller (13:04)

Yes.

What do they mean? Right. Yes.

Yeah. And you talk a lot about joy. I we talked about that a little bit before we got on here. And, you know, I'm all about the hell yes. I mean, it's part of my brand. And, you know, you and I were conversing about this, how these things are often an afterthought. Like even when I talk about the offer, like the hell yes part is like the most important part, even the other, you know, around the other framework. So.

Dr. JJ Peterson (13:41)

Yeah.

So, me, yes, that is part of, so I also like, one of things I do is I help people develop kind of like frameworks for courses and like help people kind of simplify their work. And so of course I had to come up with like a beginning of at least a framework for this. And one of the pieces of what it means to be a badass softie is to practice joy. And when you practice joy, what the research shows when you're talking about research is that

Jessica Miller (14:10)

Mmm.

Dr. JJ Peterson (14:16)

Well, let me back up for a second. I think a lot of times we see joy as frivolous when it comes to doing hard work, right? Like joy gets in the way. Like I, as a teacher, I have definitely a hundred percent in my class then like, all right guys, that's enough. Come on, get back to work. You know, or like, yeah. Or, you know, like when you're in, like you're in an office and you're like laughing and then your boss walks in and everybody's like, oh crap, we got to get back to work.

Jessica Miller (14:25)

Yes, agreed. Yes.

Yeah, wrap it up. Get back on point.

Dr. JJ Peterson (14:46)

You know that moment where it's like, uh-oh, they caught us. They caught us laughing. They caught us having fun. Well, we often view joy as a reward for the hard work that we get to celebrate when it's over. We get to, you know, have a beer with our friends and all this stuff. Like we get to laugh about all the things. And I think that's should be part of it is that when you go through hard things that at the end of it, you celebrate and you have some fun.

Jessica Miller (14:50)

Yes! my gosh, totally.

Mmm.

Sure.

Dr. JJ Peterson (15:14)

But the reality is that joy is part of the work, not a reward for the work. And if you look at the research, basically, joy is a part of every culture and every kind, like you, you look at, cultures harvesting even through history where they're singing songs in the midst of heavy harvest. Well, the research shows.

Jessica Miller (15:20)

Yeah.

Hmm.

Dr. JJ Peterson (15:36)

that joy actually creates safe space where creativity and ingenuity can flourish. So that's the first thing, is that when people experience joy, that they are more creative and more inventive. The research also shows that joy helps us recover from stress and sickness. So, your ability to bounce back from a traumatic situation or a hard thing,

Jessica Miller (15:59)

Hmm.

Dr. JJ Peterson (16:06)

or, you know, extending, put too much stress in your life with joy actually helps you physically recover and mentally recover from that faster, allowing you to continue to do the work that you want to do. And there's even research from, out of Michigan, the university of Michigan that talks about how it joy moments of joy, lower our inflammation and lower our help our immune system actually cover from illness. So

Jessica Miller (16:16)

Amazing.

Mm-hmm.

Dr. JJ Peterson (16:34)

what we wanna think about in this is that joy is really a part of the work, not a reward for the hard work. And it requires practice. And when I talk about joy, what I'm not specifically talking about is just laughing, gut laughing, you know, and sitting around or goofing around or, and this is also important, ignoring pain, right? Joy is a choice.

Jessica Miller (16:49)

Yeah, all right. All day long.

Mm-hmm.

Dr. JJ Peterson (17:00)

Happiness is kind of situational, but joy, believe, is a choice that we have to practice and lean into in light of hard things and in light of painful situations, not in spite of them. So, joy is not sweeping hard things under the rug. Joy is actually leaning into moments of beauty, light, and goodness, which can be found in relationship, which can be found in humor, which can be found in beauty, whimsy, adventure.

Jessica Miller (17:28)

Hmm.

Dr. JJ Peterson (17:30)

All of those things contribute to joy. So, it's not just like, let's sit around and laugh, but it's you and I connecting over coffee. You and I having a deeper conversation over lunch, building relationship. It's you and I reflecting on something that we went through hard and finding moments of redemption. That is what joy is about. It's not ignoring pain. It's not frivolous. It's not sweeping things under the rug.

It's leaning into those moments where we find beauty, connection, whimsy, adventure, newness. Joy is about refreshing and bringing new life. And so, as a leader, what that means is finding that for yourself, I think first and foremost, looking for that throughout your day, which can be a simple, like, you know, we've all heard how gratitude journals really impact us. what that, what gratitude journals are is

Jessica Miller (18:04)

Mm-hmm.

Yeah.

Dr. JJ Peterson (18:26)

really marking moments of joy in your life. What are the things you are grateful for? You are loved, build life into you. So, what that means is pausing maybe at the beginning or end of the day and going, yeah, that was good. that was good. And just having those moments. It means that when the moments of providing space in your own life and in the life of your team to have moments of connection, have moments of laughter.

Jessica Miller (18:41)

Yeah. Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Dr. JJ Peterson (18:56)

have moments of even pausing after really hard things and looking for the redemptive moments in those hard things. It's not about saying this happened. Like I'll go kind of a little dark for a second. One of the things that drives me crazy is when people are like, you know, I got in that accident and that accident happened. I lost my legs. Well, this is hard because I'm saying this drives me crazy. People have their own experience. I'll use my own.

Jessica Miller (19:21)

Yeah.

Dr. JJ Peterson (19:25)

my own experience is I broke my leg because I needed to be humbled, right? Or something like that. Like it's that my pain was caused to me for a purpose. I actually don't think it works like that, to be very honest. I think it's a little bit different is that I can find purpose from my pain, but my pain did not happen so that I have to have this purpose. Does that make sense? Like there's, just a small shift.

Jessica Miller (19:32)

Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Hmm.

Dr. JJ Peterson (19:54)

But joy is about finding the reason. I don't have to be happy that I broke my leg. But when I break my leg, I can say, what does this allow to be possible now? I don't wish that I broke my leg. I didn't even want to break my leg. I don't want anybody else to break their leg. But when I break my leg, I can say, what is possible now because of this? Well, I can rest a little bit more. I actually have empathy for people who are going through pain themselves.

Jessica Miller (20:06)

Exactly. Right. Right.

Yes.

Dr. JJ Peterson (20:22)

That is what I mean by redemptive moments and that can bring joy to those situations. So anyway, I could go on and on. know I'm keep talking here, but I'm very passionate about this and understanding that joy is not a reward for the work. Joy is the work.

Jessica Miller (20:30)

Amazing.

Yeah. And you and I talked about this a little bit too, people have listened to this podcast heard me beat them over the head with like, hell yes and joy and all the things, but you fundamentally show up and create different things when you are starting from that place of joy, when it is part of the building block of what it is that you're putting into the recipe. And it changes to your point, the way that you think when you think differently.

Dr. JJ Peterson (21:01)

Yes.

Jessica Miller (21:06)

You feel differently, you do different things, and you fundamentally create different results from that space versus a different space. And I think it does actually, like it creates this expansion in us where we can get grounded and show up in the ways that we want to. It's a choice. When you choose choice, it's a different state of being. And all of the research that talks about that, like you mentioned, both like physiologically and mentally, it is a shift and then we're creating from that place. It also builds, I think, a beautiful like door and a bridge for us to foster confidence and foster connection with people in a way that actually allows us to take whatever it is, our work, our voice, the things that we want to be putting out into the world, and it allows us to do that in a more powerful way.

Dr. JJ Peterson (22:01)

Yes. Now here there's, mean, there's so many things about what you said that just got me so excited, but one that I will kind of lean into there is this idea of being able to be more creative when you show up from a place of joy. Now, pro hold with me for a second. It's going to take me a second to bring this all together, but I'll tell you what I mean by this. So, Procter and Gamble did a study where they found that when you go into a grocery store,

Jessica Miller (22:12)

Mm-hmm.

You're

Dr. JJ Peterson (22:31)

that is familiar. You typically take the same route and buy the same things, right? So, you like, I go to milk, I go to bread, I go to it, and they've shown that what happens in that moment is your, actually your heart rate slows, your breathing slows, and you move into a state of subconscious living. You actually like, your brain's like, I don't want to think about decisions, I don't want to make new choices, and you just relax.

Jessica Miller (22:36)

This is me. Yep.

That's how feel in grocery stores.

Mm-hmm.

Dr. JJ Peterson (22:59)

So, what they did to wake people up is, know those displays at the front of stores where there's soda or chips? Those are not there to highlight the sale. They're there to wake you up, to make you pay attention. Because when you wake up and pay attention, you'll make other choices. Because if you move into an unfamiliar or notice something different, what happens is your brain wakes up and you will actually buy more because you are leaving your subconscious state and you are moving into a conscious state.

Jessica Miller (23:04)

Yeah.

Dr. JJ Peterson (23:28)

So you go, oh, Doritos. And then you go, oh, I also need hot dogs for this weekend. Like you're kind of, it wakes you up. If you don't wake up and don't see something new and are too familiar, you make the same choices repeated over and over. Same principle, like if you are driving home from work and you meant to go to the grocery store and all of a sudden you show up in your own driveway. Like, have you ever done that? Like you go, how did I get here? It is, right?

Jessica Miller (23:33)

Hmm.

How'd I get here? my god, it's like scary, yes.

Dr. JJ Peterson (23:55)

It's because when you drive familiar routes, you also drive from your subconscious. Your brain wants to relax. It doesn't want to make different choices. So, what this leans into is that when we are in familiar environments, doing familiar things, we actually go into a subconscious state of living and we don't make different choices. It's why often we have our morning routine or our nighttime routine. We don't make different choices. However,

Jessica Miller (24:01)

weird.

Dr. JJ Peterson (24:25)

When you go to, like, let's say you go on a trip to overseas, to France, and you change your environment, and now all of a sudden you have to actually be awake and pay attention to everything around you, what often happens is we come home from those trips and are just like, man, France just does it better. Like, I don't understand why, like, the food is better, the drink is all of it. And some of that might be true.

Jessica Miller (24:45)

The croissants are better.

It's true.

Dr. JJ Peterson (24:51)

But the reality is, what the research shows is that when we put ourselves in a different environment and have a different perspective, we are more awake to the things around us and we make different choices than we would normally make. That's why doing for a team, going to an offsite for an all-day meeting is actually more beneficial for your team than doing it in your home office. It's cheaper to stay home, but you will get better creativity when you go somewhere else because you go to a workspace

Jessica Miller (25:13)

Interesting.

Dr. JJ Peterson (25:20)

like a communal workspace, and you're like, where's the bathroom? Where's the snacks? Like when you're outside of your office, you have to be more awake and that actually creates more creativity. tying this all back to joy. When you find new moments of connection, new moments of beauty, new moments perspective on redemption of hard things, what you're actually doing is waking up your brain

Jessica Miller (25:31)

Interesting.

Mm-hmm.

Dr. JJ Peterson (25:47)

to a new environment. You're actually paying attention to things and you're coming out of your subconscious thinking, which the research shows allows you to make different choices than you normally would make. If you stay in your rut, you will make the same choices every day, because your brain will cause you, doesn't want to have to think, it doesn't want to have to burn calories. So, you just make the same choices over and over again. But you wake up to new beauty, you take your team to a museum one day you go and do a Lego workshop, you know, like things that like a little bit like, team building. What that actually is doing is creating a, it's waking your team up from subconscious thinking. And that alone allows them to be more creative and more inventive in their work.

Jessica Miller (26:20)

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

I love this so much. And it's so much more fun. It's so much more fun. Like who wants to sit in the same boring conference room? You know what I mean? my God.

Dr. JJ Peterson (26:42)

Yes. That's the other part of it.

Yes, it's all about the research, but also as you can tell, I love to laugh and I love to have fun. It's also just better. It's just more fun.

Jessica Miller (26:53)

Yes, me too. It's a requirement.

It's better. Yes.

Yes. And you know, like the joy, the creativity, the authenticity, like this really creates who we are as leaders and the things that we talk about and the messages that we put out there. And we talk a lot about profit leavers on this podcast and in my business, it's really uncovering sort of the gold and the like the

hidden quote unquote money in your business and learning how to grow with ease.

And your perspectives as a leader are one of the most important assets in your business. Right? It is. And this is important work. And then it's important to create it. And then it's important to amplify it. And I know for you, JJ, you have a way to help people synthesize this, like a framework to bring together their thoughts and their perspectives before they put it into AI.

Dr. JJ Peterson (27:35)

Absolutely.

Yes.

Jessica Miller (27:56)

in a way that they can talk to us about that because you've done so much of this kind of work.

Dr. JJ Peterson (27:58)

Yes.

Your voice is your advantage. That's really like the biggest thing that I want to say, especially in this AI driven world. And this is not an anti AI conversation. I love AI. I use it with my clients in front of my clients because it helps if you're, if we're not, then we're falling behind. And actually, I think you, I look dumb if I'm not using AI because they are in the room.

Jessica Miller (28:05)

Yeah.

Yeah, I AI, like the rest of them.

Yeah. Yeah.

Yeah,

agreed. Yeah.

Dr. JJ Peterson (28:28)

Right. So, they're using it when I, and so I need to be using it too. But the reality is your voice is your advantage. And I think that's a big thing that people have to understand. And the first thing that I think you need to understand in thinking about kind of this new age and especially in using tools like AI or even like, you know, frameworks that other people are using, doesn't even have to be AI is that your job as a leader is to think about using these tools in a very specific way. Your role is to curate. So, AI creates, humans curate. And what I mean by that is you have to have a point of view that you are using to inform AI or any framework that you're using or any tool that you're using. You have to have a point of view. AI will never have a point of view.

Jessica Miller (29:03)

Mmm.

I love that.

Dr. JJ Peterson (29:25)

I really believe that. Like it might take a very, very long time, but AI does not have a point of view. So, it creates based on the point of view that you give it. So, you have to develop a point of view for yourself, meaning you have to give the information that goes into AI, let AI create, and then on the backend, you need to curate as well, the content that's coming out. Because more and more HubSpot,

Jessica Miller (29:35)

Hmm?

Dr. JJ Peterson (29:53)

showed that in 2024, there was over 100 % increase in the amount of content being created with AI. And I believe 2025, when we see those numbers is gonna blow that out of the water. So, there is more noise out there, there is more content out there, and it's more and more generic than ever. And we can spot it. We can see it. eight-year-old can see it. When he watches a video, he will say, oh, that's AI. He's eight years old and he hates it. He calls it out.

Jessica Miller (30:04)

I agree.

Agreed. Yes.

Wow. Yeah, I agreed.

Yes.

Dr. JJ Peterson (30:23)

You know, and so, we're seeing more and more of this and the research shows that actually that when people see things as inauthentic, that they actually lose trust in a leader and in a brand. That's, and we've all kind of known that in our gut, but the research is now backing all this up. That basically the less authentic things are, the more people lose trust in your brand, the more authentic and more human they are, the more people gain trust and lean in.

Jessica Miller (30:33)

Yes.

Dr. JJ Peterson (30:52)

So, the first thing to just think about when you're amplifying and when you're putting out the work is one, think in terms of your job as a leader is to curate. So, you have to create a point of view, then you have to put it into AI and use the tools and use frameworks that other people have developed and then curate what comes out, make it more personal. To get really practical with that, when we're talking about creating content, so I know a lot of people... have social media, they have obviously marketing, have websites, have, they're doing on sales calls, sales pitches on podcasts. Here's a couple of things that you can do to make sure that you lean into your own point of view. How do you make your point of view be seen? The first thing is use personal stories. So, anybody out there can go into AI and create a PDF that says like, give me five mistakes' people make.

Jessica Miller (31:25)

Lots of things.

Dr. JJ Peterson (31:49)

in Q4 that shuts their business down or five things' people need to be thinking about to launch 2026 well, right? Like we're going to see all of that messaging out there right now. Like, and, it's good. We should see that. That's what people need at the end of the year and launching 2026. How do you not get lost in that sea of noise? Take that AI information, but now make it

Jessica Miller (31:52)

Mm-hmm.

Yeah.

Dr. JJ Peterson (32:14)

personal use a personal story. So, what is a mistake you made in your 20s that you learned from that other people can learn from? What is one thing that you did at last year that actually made a huge difference in your business? When you take that content that's out there and make it personal, now you humanize the content and also nobody else has that same story.

Jessica Miller (32:22)

Mmm.

Mm-hmm.

Dr. JJ Peterson (32:41)

You know,

I think a lot of times people are looking for that one thing that nobody else is saying and nobody else has ever said. And I'll just say right now, there is nothing new under the sun. You're not going to create something new. Very rarely. There are probably people who do, but very rarely are you going to say something that nobody else has ever said. Your job as a leader is to say it in your voice and that voice nobody else has. That's what a point of view is. So, the first thing is.

Look for those spaces that you can tell personal stories. People are craving human connection. They want more.

Jessica Miller (33:15)

Yeah. JJ, can I ask you a question about this?

So, like, let's pretend we were talking about like, five things to make your 2026 awesome, because yes, we are going to see that everywhere. And we wanted to take this first piece that you're telling us about with the stories. So, give, can you give an example of like how you wouldn't say five things that are going to make your 2026 awesome, but you take a story and you'd make that the focal point, even though you're trying to tell them the same things.

Dr. JJ Peterson (33:23)

Yeah. Yeah.

Yeah. So, know, like, um, you want to talk about it, but like you, you, you want to say, so I'm trying to think of a very specific example. So, let's just say 20, you know, here's something to do 2026, make 2026 strong. And you know, some, lot of stuff out there right now is about how your morning routine, how to start off your day in a morning way. Well, yeah. So.

Jessica Miller (34:04)

Right. Yeah. Do this, do this, do this.

Dr. JJ Peterson (34:09)

Instead of just like going, here's five things and putting it in a PDF or making a video about it, go, here's one thing that I did last year that actually gave me more energy through the day. And just do that. Don't give me five things. Give me the one thing. Now AI mate, I can put in AI, give me five things that I can do to start off my morning well. And then I am looking for in that content, one of those.

Jessica Miller (34:23)

got it.

Dr. JJ Peterson (34:35)

suggestions that I have a personal story out that is true. You can't make it, make it up, but that it's true and real and made a difference. Cause what you're doing in that is so AI again, AI kind of offers like, AI offers content, but you offer wisdom, right? That's like the difference there in your point of view. So, your personal experience, your lived life,

Jessica Miller (34:39)

Yep. Yeah. Now let's steal somebody else's story.

Yeah. Mmm. Yup.

Dr. JJ Peterson (35:03)

is what is your point of view. So, I can take those five things from AI and I can go, ooh, the third one's great. It's about coffee and I drink coffee every morning. right. So, you'll that's now what I'm bringing in. I'm going to ask, bring that aspect. I'm going to make it relatable. I'm going to make it, you know, bite sizeable, but I'm going to make it personal instead of, hey, when you're sitting in the morning, do a gratitude journal. Here's the research on gratitude journals that summarizes what's going on.

Jessica Miller (35:14)

Yes.

Dr. JJ Peterson (35:32)

but you need to bring perspective and wisdom. So that's what I'm talking about about that personal story is yeah, use AI, but pick the thing, curate that content and then make it your personal story that you're adding to that.

Jessica Miller (35:36)

Love, love that, yeah.

Dr. JJ Peterson (35:49)

And then the second thing of how to develop your point of view that I talk to people about is what I call paradigm shifts. So, one of the ways to stand out and be human again is to take what everybody is talking about in your space and offer your unique take on it. So, what I mean by that is like saying, you know, let's say you are a, you're a personal trainer and you'd say, you know,

So many people right now are thinking about how do I make it through the holidays with all this incredible food around? Here's actually what I think you need to be thinking different, how you need to be thinking different. That's like, so it's just, here's how to think different. It's naming what everybody is thinking.

It's naming what's going on, but bringing your, again, personal wisdom, your perspective on it. And it can be about like what everybody's talking about right now. Like say, here's five ways to finish the year strong.

Jessica Miller (36:27)

Hmm.

Dr. JJ Peterson (36:45)

Everybody's saying five ways to finish so you're strong. Here's what I think you actually need to be thinking about, or what are the things you need to leave behind? Simple. Again, it's not like mind blowing new that nobody has ever said before, but it's bringing your perspective and your shift, your paradigm shift to the table. And then in that, tell a personal story, right? So, you're kind of now combining the two, you're showing this is not AI created, this is me.

Jessica Miller (37:04)

Mm-hmm.

Yeah, mm-mm.

Yeah,

yeah.

Dr. JJ Peterson (37:14)

This is me

as person that you can relate to that shows my value in this space that is different than other people. It helps you differentiate in the market as well, especially when it comes to thought leadership. Right. So that paradigm shift is really important. You can also use current events. Like you can say, hey, Wicked is getting released this week and I took my kids.

Jessica Miller (37:26)

Mm-hmm.

Dr. JJ Peterson (37:39)

Start there. Everybody's talking about Wicked. Ariana and Cynthia are everywhere, you know, as we record this, everyone. Or telepersonals. Hey, my son the other day said, right? Like, which this actually happened to me. Our son, we're sitting on the couch and my, son, we were just watching a movie and all of sudden he just goes, Hey guys, he's eight. Hey guys, do you ever think about the fact that like helium never goes away?

Jessica Miller (37:50)

Mm.

Dr. JJ Peterson (38:06)

And the same helium that we're breathing is the same helium that people breathe a hundred years ago, which means that people who are sitting right here where we are breathing the same air that we're breathing. Do you guys ever think about that? And we looked at each other and go, no. And right then, then in the movie, this like a bunch of money fell on the ground and he goes, oh, get that ching ching. And then starts running around. And it was like, we're still dealing with this like life altering thought, you know, so like.

Jessica Miller (38:22)

No.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Dr. JJ Peterson (38:35)

Nobody has that story. Nobody in the world has that story. Now I can apply that to meaning and purpose and connection in my business. But what I can say is what if we actually stopped thinking this way and started thinking this way based on that personal story, right? So those are two things. When I say point of view, what I'm saying is personalize the stories and create paradigm shifts. When you do that,

Jessica Miller (38:37)

Right.

Yeah. Yes.

Yeah.

Dr. JJ Peterson (39:05)

with the AI tools and you're amplifying your voice and you're putting it out there and you're running hard, pause in all of that and don't just create content for content sake. Your voice is your advantage. Don't lean away from that, lean into it. Create a point of view and offer that as a gift to the world.

Jessica Miller (39:25)

love this so much. I think there's an underpinning of this that's really important to point out which is you know in a very visible world there's a lot of different opinions. We have all of our stuff like to go to decide that you're going to go out there and be brave and tell your stories and say what you think. And to your point doesn't have to be polarizing or something earth shattering. It's just sharing the things that are going on in your world that are interesting, that are unique, that are yours, and being seen requires you to be brave. And I think leaders are brave. They need to be brave.

Dr. JJ Peterson (40:06)

Yeah. And I think what you brought up is so important. This is not about being controversial, to be honest. Like this is when I think about like what a bad-ass softie is in this. It's not about being controversial for clicks and to, it's not about that. It's about bringing your perspective and your wisdom to the table. It's that paradigm shift. And what we're, you know, what we're talking about is

Jessica Miller (40:11)

Yeah. Yeah.

Yeah, yeah.

Dr. JJ Peterson (40:33)

from, again, a research perspective is when you offer a paradigm shift in the way that you talk, you create what psychologists call cognitive reframing. Cognitive reframing kind of interrupts your automatic thinking, kind of something we talked about just a minute ago, and it invites people to think at something

familiar through a new lens. That's really what this is about. It's not about going, well, these people are wrong. It's about offering a new lens.

Jessica Miller (40:43)

Hmm.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Dr. JJ Peterson (41:03)

Because people actually remember when somebody helped them see something differently. There's research around the idea that when people hear a perspective that kind of just gently challenges what we've always assumed, like almost like everybody is looking one way with a camera, we're just gonna move the camera over here and help you look at something that might have been out of focus that.

Jessica Miller (41:20)

Yeah.

Mm-hmm.

Dr. JJ Peterson (41:25)

When the research says that when they do that in a grounded, non-defensive way, that's the key piece to this research, grounded and non-defensive, their trust actually goes up. It's not about the perfect answer. It's about real insight, right? That's kind of what we talk about here. And Yale found out that basically like when people hear a reframe that feels fresh and emotionally true, that's the key.

Jessica Miller (41:36)

Yeah.

Yeah.

Dr. JJ Peterson (41:53)

piece of this part, that it's emotionally true, they experience that communicator as more credible and more reliable. So, helping people see something different, to me, there's those two things that really stand out. It's not about like just clicks for click, save or create controversy. The research shows that when you do it in a grounded, non-defensive way, and when you do it in a way that feels emotionally true, that's actually when the impact happens on the listener.

Jessica Miller (41:54)

Yeah.

Yes, right.

Yeah. Yeah, I love that. And I always tell people like, say what you're going to say from a place of pure of heart. Because if you're just communicating, people feel it. It's an energetic exchange and you're holding the space. And it's a breath of fresh air. They don't have to agree with you. They don't, you know, it doesn't have to be again, something monumental, but they're just they're tuning into that energy. And it's really, really amazing. And to your point, I think if you take that

Dr. JJ Peterson (42:22)

not the aggressive.

Jessica Miller (42:51)

then you use the tools to leverage it. Then you get in front of a microphone. Then you stand on a stage, right? It is one of the most powerful things that you can do in your business.

Dr. JJ Peterson (42:55)

Yes.

Yes, and the thing is, that like that, that click game, that controversy game, here's, this is a part of, again, for me kind of why I'm doing this. I can play that game and I can win. Like that's the part that is like kind of gross to me. I know how to play that game. And there have been times in my life where I have played that game. Like I am going to shut this person down and make them look stupid so that I look better. There have been moments in my insecurity. I hate that, but.

Jessica Miller (43:13)

Yeah. Yep.

Mm-hmm.

Dr. JJ Peterson (43:28)

There been moments in my own insecurity where I have leaned into that game. And that is often the game of leadership that is put out there for us that says, this is how to lead, make other people feel stupid, make other people feel weak so that you look stronger. That leaves behind a wake of trauma. And I don't, and the other part is I don't feel good. That is not sustainable for me as a leader. I can play that game and I can win. I don't want to do that.

Jessica Miller (43:46)

Yeah.

That's right. That's right. Yeah.

Dr. JJ Peterson (43:55)

because it's not good for others and it's not good for me.

Jessica Miller (43:58)

Yeah, yeah, I agree completely. And there's a better way to do it. And I love the framework. It's such a great way for people to just anchor into, okay, if I do these two things and I do them well, I feel good, it's enjoyable, it creates results, I create connections, and then I can really be the leader and shape the business that I want because that stuff really starts at that foundation, which is so powerful.

Dr. JJ Peterson (44:24)

exactly.

Jessica Miller (44:24)

JJ, you and I could talk about this for like 10 years, I think. my goodness, I love this so much. I know people are gonna wanna come check out Badass Softie. They wanna find you. Where can they connect with you out in the interwebs?

Dr. JJ Peterson (44:27)

100%. Yeah. So, uh, bad-ass softie is on Apple and Spotify. And so, you'll hear some of these things that I'm talking about bringing this conversation to the table and interviewing leaders who are doing these things. yes, bad-ass softie, the podcast, and then, um, my website is drjjpeterson.com. And that's where I'm helping people develop their point of view and their messaging and marketing and leaders in their books and courses and certifications that putting out there. So, if people are looking to really like find that point of view and their voice and their message, that's what I do there. So drjjpeterson.com is my website and, and, I'll use the same thing on all the socials, **Dr. JJ Peterson**, and then bad-ass softy on Apple and Spotify.

Jessica Miller (45:25)

my gosh, so tell your story, have a paradigm shift, be yourself, infuse it with joy. Love, love, love, love. JJ, thank you so much for coming on this show today. It was amazing. And for everyone listening, we're gonna put all those links in the show notes. Go check out JJ's podcast, check out his work. He's been a huge influence in my life and in my business. You will not be sorry. Run, do not walk. Have a wonderful week. Thank you again, JJ. And for everyone else.

Dr. JJ Peterson (45:37)

This has been a blast.

Jessica Miller (45:54)

See you a few weeks. Take care.