YOUR TEAM SUCCESS PODCAST

Fight Less, Win More: Author Interview With Jonathan B. Smith

Shannon Waller: Hi, Shannon Waller here, and welcome to Team Success. And I know I say I'm always excited, but I am extra excited today because I get to do an author interview for one of my very, very, very favorite books on Tactical Empathy. Some of you are familiar with Chris Voss' book, Never Split the Difference, and I've had the pleasure of interviewing your co-author, Jonathan, on this one, Derek Gaunt, on eco-authority failure, and this book, Fight Less, Win More is rocking my world. So kudos on writing such a brilliant, clearly articulated, business-friendly book. I literally could not put it down as I was preparing for today's call. And I was like, oh yeah, I forgot. The amount of stuff I've forgotten, because I've done training, I've done all the things. But anyway, just a very powerful, well-structured book.

So part of what I love to do and why I love to do author interviews is because I love A, curating, and B, sharing. Resources, I think, are really exceptionally powerful for relationships, for communication, for teamwork. And this, to me, is like my new best friend. So, Jonathan, welcome to the Team Success podcast. Thank you very much for making the time today. And I love that our paths have crossed over decades, which is really wild. So I'm gonna let you introduce yourself. And one of the things I really appreciate about you is you come at this from a business and entrepreneurial standpoint. So please share some of your journey and what got you here. And again, thanks for being here.

Jonathan Smith: Oh, thanks for having me. I'm excited to be here. So John Anderson actually originally introduced me to Strategic Coach. So I started in Strategic Coach in like 2002 or something like that. So I know he was a big referrer in the chain. So I was with Patti Mara, that's how we got here. Gino has been one of my mentors forever. I remember him before Traction. Very few people remember him before Traction, but I remember him before Traction and Coach 2, where he built out the whole leadership training manual. So in 2013, I became an EOS Implementer. I have been an expert EOS Implementer for a long time. Chris Voss happens to be one of my clients. Actually, Mark O'Donnell was one of my clients also. So Mark O'Donnell, who's the Visionary of EOS. And Chris is one of my clients; I actually helped him with a negotiation in Abu Dhabi before I knew he was a negotiator, because I had relationships in Abu Dhabi. So I knew Chris before the book. He does this book. I'm like, you and everybody else wrote a book. Of course, he wrote this amazing book that has sold six million copies so far, and he's a world-renowned A-list celebrity. And I said, Chris, I want to learn these skills. He taught me the skills, actually. The first time I really used the skills, I was negotiating my grandmother's hospice.

Shannon Waller: Your grandmother's hospice? That's fascinating.

Jonathan Smith: Well, she was in hospice and refusing hospice protocol.

Shannon Waller: Oh, so, okay, tell me more. That sounds like a fascinating story.

TM & © 2026. The Strategic Coach Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced in any form, or by any means whatsoever, without written permission from The Strategic Coach Inc.

Jonathan Smith: Well, for some reason, God had Chris in my session room that day, right? And my grandmother had broken her hip. She was 93 years old. She wasn't going to get better. Her doctor said, if she does have surgery, he's not going to make it through the surgery. We had her in a safe and comfortable place. I had been very close with her all my life. I said, Chris, I know we're in an EOS session, but I need help. And who better to have than Chris Voss in a hospice negotiation? He said, "What do you need?" So my grandmother's refusing hospice protocols. She left her home at 14. You know, she left the farm at 14. So she's pretty tough. I said, okay, so what do I need to say to her to accept hospice protocol? Her doctor has told me what the prognosis is. The hospice doctor has spoken to me. My uncle wants her to go have the surgery and guess who has the power of attorney? Me. I didn't know it was such an important task. I thought it was just an honor. It became a burden at that point. Chris was with me. Chris said, "Explain to your grandmother what's happening," because she was lucid, and then say, "How would you like me to proceed?" Going back to a calibrated question.

Shannon Waller: Thank you. Yes. Okay. And so what happened?

Jonathan Smith: She said, "I will accept the protocol" in a basically an Analyst tone.

Shannon Waller: Okay, interesting, interesting. So we'll talk about calibrated questions. We'll talk about the different types of negotiators that there are, which is really interesting. When you talk about calibrated questions, that was one of the ones I'm like, oh, how could I have forgotten? Because I do some labeling. I do seems like, sounds like. I do a lot of those things. But I need to ask more calibrated questions. So thank you for sharing that. And I'm going to presume that actually led to a relatively peaceful end of life. Does that make sense for your grandmother? How did that work out for her?

Jonathan Smith: I spoke to the hospice doctor. All I remember are three words, maybe four. "I'll take care of it."

Shannon Waller: Oh.

Jonathan Smith: I'll take care of it. He was gone in 24 hours.

Shannon Waller: No.

Jonathan Smith: Yeah.

Shannon Waller: Wow. Amazing. With that question, you gave her back a sense of ownership and a sense of agency, and she got to do it on her terms. She didn't feel manipulated. You gave her back some honor, some strength in that.

TM & © 2026. The Strategic Coach Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced in any form, or by any means whatsoever, without written permission from The Strategic Coach Inc.

Jonathan Smith: Well, we say in a negotiation, you have to remove yourself as a threat. I was in a negotiation with her. It was just over hospice because I wanted her to accept a protocol. But vision drives decision. So she was the one who needed to own it.

Shannon Waller: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm. Well, this is so cool. As we go through the different elements of Tactical Empathy, which is our topic today, which is, again, 100 percent what Fight Less, Win More is all about. And this is a key point that you've already said. I told Chris this last time I saw him, "Chris, it's finally sinking in. When I go into a conversation, it's not about me, it's about the other person." If anyone's ever met Chris, he has a resting, what's the nicest way to put it, scary face. He's just a little intimidating to look at. And I had to negotiate with Chris one time because he wasn't happy with the level of the workshop that he was in. And Babs put me in charge of negotiating with Chris Voss. Basically, I'm like, whatever you want. It wasn't much of a negotiation. And I was trying to give Chris this gratitude and this praise, and he was pretty much having none of it. I'm like, Chris, I'm finally getting it. It's not about me. And he goes, he just lit up when he realized that I really was getting it. I wasn't just saying nice things to him. It was really, really funny. But that's the thing, to take yourself out of it.

And the point, again, that came a little bit more home to me in this book was to remove yourself as a threat. It's kind of amazing. I feel like we're jumping ahead. So let's go back to the beginning. Let's talk about, what is Tactical Empathy? Why is it important? Why is it important for anyone who's, well, a business person, I'm gonna say, who's invested in quality relationships, growing companies, entrepreneurial teamwork? Why is having these skills important? And then we'll kind of define what it is and how you can do some of the things. Literally, I was taking notes on what to say, and I sent this to you, Jonathan. There's way too much to talk about in one conversation. So we will skip lightly over some of them and do a deeper dive into others, with my goal being that you are intensely interested if you're listening and want to go learn more for yourself. But let's talk about what is Tactical Empathy, why is it really important for someone to grasp this idea, this concept, and this approach?

Jonathan Smith: So I'll start with negotiations are not just a business skill, they're a life skill. Just start with that baseline. And then Tactical Empathy, this is like a technical term, the calibrated application of EQ, emotional quotient.

Shannon Waller: Say that again—the calibrated …

Jonathan Smith: Application. Application of emotional intelligence.

Shannon Waller: Nice, the calibrated application of emotional intelligence, which means you have to have some. And the cool thing about this process is you actually gain emotional intelligence as you go through this process.

TM & © 2026. The Strategic Coach Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced in any form, or by any means whatsoever, without written permission from The Strategic Coach Inc.

Jonathan Smith: Yeah so interestingly the way we calibrate the emotional intelligence is you have an intuition about what's going on. Your supercomputer processes 20 million bits of information a second, your conscious processes 40 bits of information per second. So your supercomputer, your subconscious is telling you something's going on, something's things going on. Most people are unwilling to share that. What we do with Tactical Empathy is provide you a framework to actually share that intuition. And that's how we actually calibrate the emotional intelligence. So there is an intuition. And as I've learned the skills, it actually requires a bunch of mindfulness. Like you have to be present enough to make it about the other person instead of making it about you.

Shannon Waller: I would actually say that's the biggest shift to make in a conversation, in a negotiation, is because most of us, I am no exception, go in with, here's what I want to have happen. Here's what I want to get across. Here's the result that I want. And it's interesting because you have to flip that and make it about them for this to be successful. And it's incredibly powerful. It also is very different than most people's habits, in my experience,

Jonathan Smith: One hundred percent. And so when we define empathy, we say it's about them. And sympathy is about you.

Shannon Waller: Oh, say more about that, because I totally agree. And I find sympathy kind of cloying. Help pull apart that distinction. I find it really useful.

Jonathan Smith: Yeah, I didn't understand it when I started. So I was like, oh, well, sympathy sounds good. And then sympathy to me is I walk in and I'm like, have a cold and I'm blowing my nose. And you're like, oh, last week I had a cold. And this is what happened to me, like that person who's telling you about when they were in the hospital. And did that ever help make you feel better? As opposed to you saying, oh my God, you must have had a terrible night's sleep. Can I get you some NyQuil or DayQuil? Do you need to go home and just take a rest? We can do it without you today. We'll fill in for you, whatever. And that's empathy. What's going on in their life, Derek calls it crossing the street. Can I cross the street and actually put myself in that person's shoes?

Shannon Waller: Let me just ask you a question that comes to mind. I don't know if this ever happens to you, but I'm about to have a conversation about something like this, and then I'll have a circumstance where it will challenge my way of doing things. I'm like, oh, that would have been a good time to use Tactical Empathy. I find that the world delivers me opportunities and sometimes I pick up on them and sometimes I don't. But with crossing the street, it goes back to this mindfulness, you have to have yourself kind of handled, like self-regulated, right? If you've got a huge head of steam or if you're upset or if you're mad, it's hard to cross the street. Is that accurate?

TM & © 2026. The Strategic Coach Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced in any form, or by any means whatsoever, without written permission from The Strategic Coach Inc.

Jonathan Smith: Almost impossible to cross the street. You're 31 percent smarter in a positive frame of mind. If you think about this, like we say, accept the fact that you are going to be triggered. We are all going to be triggered. Then you get to decide how you're going to react. That's screaming and yelling negative or respond. And we're not always going to do it right. So even those of us who train all the time don't always do it right, and so we have to accept the fact we've talked about this C.A.V.I.AA.R concept where I will actually vent before I walk into a meeting so things don't show up sideways with a trusted partner.

Shannon Waller: That is so good. Yeah, just so that you can get yourself clear and you can go in and actually be present to what the other person is saying and get yourself in hand. I like that. That's really powerful. So Tactical Empathy is the calibrated application of emotional intelligence, right? Now there are so many different dimensions, skills, applications of it. I was gonna ask you, what are your favorites? It's sort of a terrible question to ask, but what's a good starting point? And stories that you have, like your grandmother, which I love, are super helpful. And that's, again, this book for me, because it had like, here's a thing, and then here's a story. It was just very easy to ingest. And I appreciate that when someone makes learning easier for me. So what's a good starting point for people if you're like, oh, okay, I know I've heard this term, or maybe I've read about it, but I'm not sure if I actually get it. Where does one start?

Jonathan Smith: All right, so I just want to back up for one second.

Shannon Waller: Yeah, yeah, please, please.

Jonathan Smith: This is the Strategic Coach shout out. So if you have had a bad experience and you reacted, use an Experience Transformer. Okay, so that's where you would use that tool. That's where I use that tool. And so I just didn't want to step over that because the frameworks tie together very nicely. So that was my Strategic Coach shout out number one.

Shannon Waller: Thank you. Much appreciated.

Jonathan Smith: Yeah. And then, you know, one of the things that we've learned is that one of them, we call it go-to skills because everyone has their go-to skills. So Chris will say my tone is my go-to skill. And I learned that, probably growing up with two narcissistic parents, how important tone is. We all get benefits from different parts of our lives, but the skill I would start with is label. So we've found that label is even more powerful than calibrated question.

Shannon Waller: Okay.

Jonathan Smith: When in doubt, we go back to a label, because a label, people aren't used to hearing a question as a label. So it doesn't feel like a threat at all. So you wanted me to go back to an example. I'm in an EOS session. The HR person tends not to want to name the person that they're talking about because it feels like confidential. So I will go, it seems like

TM & © 2026. The Strategic Coach Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced in any form, or by any means whatsoever, without written permission from The Strategic Coach Inc.

there's a reason you're mentioning that. And they're like, oh, by the way, it's Johnny in the corner who had the problem. See? Bingo. Gotcha. So they didn't even know they were being asked the question and then they will actually fill in the blanks and the blank needed to be filled in to actually close out the issue. So when in doubt, we say use a label. It seems like, it sounds like, it feels like, it looks like. And ideally, as you get better at labels, we want to label the latent dynamic like under, if you think of it as an iceberg, under the water, below the waterline. It is hard to do because now sometimes you're guessing what that dynamic is. It sounds like you're running out of cash. If you're in the room, like that's really ugly, right? But if you do that, the urge to correct is irresistible. So if you get it wrong, they will actually correct you.

Shannon Waller: This is so true. They're like, no, that's not it at all. It's this. And one of the things that I've heard from Chris is you label before you have all the information. It's your way of getting information. It seems like, it sounds like, and then you're either on track, which case there's certain words that come back to you, or that correction is right there. So then you're so much further ahead, so much faster is what I understand.

Jonathan Smith: Yeah, so really interesting, the correction is the truth. So they will correct you with the truth. So sometimes we will mislabel, like intentionally say something different, and then you can get the truth.

Shannon Waller: That's so sneaky. I love it. Fun fact, go back to Coach, not trying to brag, people compliment me on how I interview Dan, okay, on Inside Strategic Coach podcast or on the book interviews, the quarterly books. If you actually listen to my interviews, I don't ask Dan very many questions. Basically it is, it seems like, it sounds like, it feels like, it looks like. That's what I am saying with, I am labeling all over the place. And then I'll be like, tell me more. You know, it's really kind of funny. There aren't that many legitimate question questions that I actually ask him. They are phenomenal conversation extenders. So when you want to get more out of someone, and that's kind of my job in those conversations is to get more information to have him expand on it. He's a short Fact Finder on Kolbe. So I've got to get more of that meat, right? And that's exactly what I use. It's kind of funny. People think I ask good questions. I don't ask very many questions.

Jonathan Smith: And then the one thing I would say after that is that we would say, drop the label, then use dynamic silence.

Shannon Waller: Yeah, I'm not so good at that.

Jonathan Smith: We need to work on that.

Shannon Waller: Because one second to me feels like 10 years.

TM & © 2026. The Strategic Coach Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced in any form, or by any means whatsoever, without written permission from The Strategic Coach Inc.

Jonathan Smith: And we want you to wait six.

Shannon Waller: Six seconds? That's torture.

Jonathan Smith: So when you say we're looking for information—I call it hunting Black Swans, looking for the information that wasn't provided to you. If you wait six seconds, they will fill the awkward silence with something. The only time we break the silence is if we've clearly offended them. So if you clearly offended someone, you would say, it seems like I've said something to offend you, as a label, as an example.

Shannon Waller: And if you haven't, they'll correct that. So it's interesting, some people just had like, they ate something sour. It looked like they did it. Now, if you have offended them, how do people tend to respond that way? Do they agree with you or then they clarify just out of curiosity? What happens next usually in those situations?

Jonathan Smith: Yeah, I didn't like your tone as an example. Okay.

Shannon Waller: Right.

Jonathan Smith: I was with Derek in Washington, DC. I asked him a question. He is an Analyst, a negotiator type. He needs time to process. So I'm sitting at a bar with him, ask him a question. I could see like, it's like almost like on a cartoon, his eyes are spinning. Like I could see him thinking and he's thinking and it's more than six seconds and it's like 20 seconds. Then he responds to me after the 20 seconds. So when we're sort of done with the moment, I said, "How did that dynamic silence feel?" He's like, "Oh man, I'm so appreciative. He just gave me space."

Shannon Waller: Whoa, interesting. Well, actually, let's jump to the different negotiator types. You've mentioned Analysts, your grandmother and Derek. I'm not, as you can probably tell. So what are the types? How do you determine what you are?

Jonathan Smith: Well, we have a survey to do it. So it's on the Black Swan website. We don't know the exact link, but we do have a survey we created. And basically, we have three types of negotiators. So your friend, Chris, with the resting scary face. He's an Assertive, if you didn't know. So an Assertive is like, time is money, very direct. If you don't talk, they're going to fill in all the space. And don't interrupt him because he does not like to be interrupted. So Derek, who is an Analyst, he likes to have information. He doesn't like feeling backed into a corner. He needs time to process what's going on. And then the third one would be like Patty. So Patty's an Accommodator. She's always really happy. She wants to make friends with everybody. The only time you're in big trouble is if you upset an Accommodator—you're done forever or life. Once you get an Accommodator it to that point, they're done. And so what you need to know is that what type of person you're dealing with.

TM & © 2026. The Strategic Coach Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced in any form, or by any means whatsoever, without written permission from The Strategic Coach Inc.

So I gave Derek a lot more time than I otherwise would have because I knew he was processing. With Chris, I'm very clear about letting him finish his thought and not interrupting him because that does not help to interrupt him. And then once he gets it out, it's fine. And you know, with Patty, she's always happy-go-lucky, but the Accommodators, you need to make sure they're not giving you a counterfeit yes, because they want to just be friends.

Shannon Waller: This is what I found fascinating, and again, I've had the benefit of some Black Swan training, is that they may not tell you an untruth or a lie, but they also may not tell you the truth. It's really interesting. It's kind of like an aspirational, they hope it's true. I find that kind of fascinating. As someone who actually just wants to know one way or the other, it's so confusing to me.

Jonathan Smith: So if I was dealing with Chris, he's just going to tell me the answer. That's not going to work for me. We're clear. With Patty, she's going to want to be friends. She doesn't want to hurt your feelings. So I was on the call with a podcaster to remain unknown. I wanted the video from the podcaster. The booker was like, "We'll talk about the video after we shoot the podcast." So I said, "Well, that sounds like a counterfeit."

Shannon Waller: Yes.

Jonathan Smith: Which means I'm telling them they're lying to me.

Shannon Waller: You actually called it out.

Jonathan Smith: Yeah, I called it out. I'm Assertive. So I call it out directly. My assistant, Brittany, was on the call. The producer then goes, I'm sure we can work something out. I said, oh, that was a confirmation. Yes, it's a confirmation. It's like, yes, I heard you with no implementation. And then they said, well, this feels like a negotiation. And Brittany, who's my assistant, goes, "It's a negotiation. Jonathan wants the video." So they said, "Okay, by Friday next week, we will have the video for you after we shoot the podcast." And I said, "Oh, thankfully I now have a commitment, yes." So we went through all three in one call.

Shannon Waller: That is amazing. So the first one is counterfeit.

Jonathan Smith: Counterfeit. Counterfeit generally is the first one.

Shannon Waller: Right. Okay.

Jonathan Smith: And I have learned with the right tone to be able to say that sounds like a counterfeit cuss, which is scary. Even for Chris and Derek, it's scary to say that at this point, because I'm basically telling them that they're lying.

TM & © 2026. The Strategic Coach Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced in any form, or by any means whatsoever, without written permission from The Strategic Coach Inc.

Shannon Waller: It sounds like you could say it in a light way. You're like, that sounds like a counterfeit, yes. In other words, here's an invitation to tell me the truth. And it's not like you're super judgy or being a B-I-T-C-H or whatever. Just challenging that a little bit. Seems like there could be a way of saying that that would not be completely offensive.

Jonathan Smith: An Accommodator tone, like I'm jokey, it's a jokey tone. And it's like, oh, that's a counterfeit, yes. Dynamic silence.

Shannon Waller: I'm going to use that.

Jonathan Smith: That's good. That's counterfeit. Confirmation, yes, is like, I heard you. So I'm confirming that you said you want the video. I'm not committing to give you the video, but I'm confirming that I heard you. Better than a counterfeit. True. And then you need to convert the confirmation to a commitment. And Derek would say a commitment involves implementation. So I'm going to record the podcast. We're going to cut it up. We will send you the details by Friday.

Shannon Waller: Yes, sounds like there's a definite action and time, right? Like you will have this by ... Yes. Yeah, perfect. Oh, this is so good. I know as I'm having this conversation, I'm like, oh, I could have used that this place. I could have used that this place. All the conversations I've been having just filtered through my head in terms of this context. So that's very helpful. I love that. So actually, can I ask you a question? And we haven't run into each other for a little while, but for doing the question, and they actually divided the room up, which was kind of funny—I think I was having a hard time between, I mean, I'm definitely not an Analyst. We can just cross that one out. And I think I was flipping between Assertive and Accommodator. Do you have an opinion on what I am? I'm curious.

Jonathan Smith: Assertive. Okay.

Shannon Waller: Tell me why, please.

Jonathan Smith: You're directed to the point. So it's sort of like Kolbe. What's your leading instinct? It's not that if you have a lot of energy, you couldn't do something that required Follow Thru. You just have to be really interested in it. So one of the hostage negotiators taught me, she's like, well, if someone upsets you, how do you respond? And that's really the indicator. So if you think about it like Kolbe, then you won't second guess yourself. It's like someone saying, well, I'd like to be a Quick sStart and I also like facts. You're one or the other, what's your leading, I forget what leading Kolbe thing is called.

TM & © 2026. The Strategic Coach Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced in any form, or by any means whatsoever, without written permission from The Strategic Coach Inc.

Shannon Waller: Your Kolbe MO. I mean, there are people who are both, but Catherine Nomura is actually one of them, one of our friends. But it's, yeah, you can't be a long Quick Start and a short Quick Start at the same time. That does not happen. So thank you. I appreciate that clarity and I think you're right. And this happened actually yesterday. So I was upset after a conversation and I could not sit on it. I had to communicate back to the person. I can't let it go. Like I had to, like this bothered me, which was really interesting. So yes, I have to speak up in a situation. So that's very helpful.

Jonathan Smith: Thank you. Or you could do C.A.V.I.AA.R and do that venting mechanism first. I don't know what the situation was. And if you're going to start and respond like that, please try to use an Accusation Audit and say, I have bad news. Start with, I have bad news, so you brace them for impact. That's an Assertive.

Shannon Waller: So let's talk about an Accusation Audit, because this is really interesting and it's somewhat, I'm going to say counterintuitive. So an Accusation Audit is a list, and this requires incredible mindfulness and intuition and empathy, right? To crawl into someone else's head to see the objections and the issues from their point of view. Is that an accurate description of Accusation Audit?

Jonathan Smith: Yeah, it's like all the negative thoughts in their head.

Shannon Waller: Exactly. So you're kind of going in there and you need to get nine of them.

Jonathan Smith: Yeah, we say nine and with the juiciest one.

Shannon Waller: I know, I would be like three tops, just saying, without your coaching, so I love that. It's powerful, and I've learned this from other communication coaching as well. When you can actually go across the street and look at things from their perspective, whoa, that is so, first of all, educational for you, and that it really does allow for, I'm gonna say a productive dialogue. The thing I hear from people is like, well, what if they don't have that fear or that issue, and I'm planting a seed? Isn't it gonna make it worse? Can you address that?

Jonathan Smith: Yeah, we can't plant a seed unless you're trying to manipulate them.

Shannon Waller: Oh, say more.

Jonathan Smith: Well, you can't plant a seed because the urge to correct is irresistible. So they will basically go like, no, no, no, that's not the problem. If you're trying to manipulate them, Derek would rub his nose and say, humans can smell intent. So if you really upset someone and they feel like you're trying to manipulate them, that's the only time you could really plant. So don't manipulate people, just come out there and say, you know, you probably think, you might feel, and we use probably, may, might, to start an Accusations Audit. And then my description of Accusations Audit is actually, I think of it as negative emotion canceling. So if

TM & © 2026. The Strategic Coach Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced in any form, or by any means whatsoever, without written permission from The Strategic Coach Inc.

you had noise canceling headsets on, you now have a, basically a negative emotion canceling tool to take those negative emotions off the table so you can clear them off the table and say, I acknowledge this may be how you feel. And at that point, again, we'll go back to one of the original thoughts was, you're 31 percent smarter in a positive frame of mind. If I can get them in that positive frame of mind by taking the negative emotions out of play, we're more likely to be able to get a deal.

Shannon Waller: Actually, I'm really glad you brought that up again, because this explanation of the 31 percent smarter is the best I've ever read. And I love that you referenced in the book, Sean Ahcor, who's one of my favorite people ever. His video still makes me burst out loud laughing, and he wrote The Happiness Advantage. So can you articulate that as to why we are smarter? Because I think that's a pretty profound point. And if we're triggered in a conversation or our counterpart is triggered, we do not have access to our best thinking. And so for no other reason whatsoever than this one to take these tools to heart, I think this is one of the most crucial points ever.

Jonathan Smith: Well, the point is if you're triggered and your amygdala is going off, you basically have your prehistoric brain going off, you don't have your best thinking. And the only way to get back to your best thinking is to address the fears that are coming up for you. And that's why we use this Accusations Audit.

Shannon Waller: And it ties back to what you said at the beginning about removing yourself as a threat, right? When a human being is under threat, we're in fight, flight, freeze—fawn, I've also heard. And so we are, literally our blood pulls in from different places to focus, right? Like certain things happen physiologically, and that's not how our prefrontal cortex works the best, right? If we want access to all of our rational thinking, then we need to be in a calm state.

Jonathan Smith: Yep, that's why going into a negotiation, we want to get in the right mindset. I tend to do box breathing and have a whole bunch of physical activities I do in advance of doing that.

Shannon Waller: Do you know I've done box breathing in a speech before?

Jonathan Smith: In a speech?

Shannon Waller: Yep. It's really fun. I'm like, okay, everybody, we're going to do this together. Breathe in for four, hold for four, breathe out for four, hold for four. And they're like, well, obviously this is not the very beginning, but it's wild. And then they actually get it. I like to physically demonstrate 5 Implementer and then they calm down, which is really cool. So you actually get a calmer, more receptive audience. So it doesn't hurt. Yeah, it's wild, but it works. And I've done that coaching more than once. I don't do it every time, but it's pretty fun. Okay, there's so many more things I want to talk about. So let's go back to C.A.V.I.AA.R for a

TM & © 2026. The Strategic Coach Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced in any form, or by any means whatsoever, without written permission from The Strategic Coach Inc.

moment. Again, we won't have time to go into all of them. But this is really powerful. It's a real structure, a flow. I think at any point, I'm only really good at two of them. So just define what that is. Because first of all, it's a great acronym and easier to remember. So it's a good way to kind of hang your hat on things.

Jonathan Smith: Sure, so my mantra is stay curious. I sign off everything as stay curious. So the first one is curious, okay? You have to be curious.

Shannon Waller: This is my little friendship bracelet with curious on it.

Jonathan Smith: We are—wonder twin powers activate. Curious, accept the fact that you are going to be triggered. So like, just accept the fact and, you know, you keep going back to negotiations where you think you could have done better. And I'm like, be kind to yourself, just be kind to yourself. It's an opportunity to get better. So accept the fact that you're going to be triggered. We need to vent with someone we trust outside of the negotiation. You need to identify the type of commentator, identify the type of negotiator we're talking to. We need to build accusations on it. So there's two ways, AA, Accusations Audit, and then remember, and the remember is, remember it's not about you, right? It's really like 10 percent of the time, it's about 90 percent of the time, something else is going on in their life. And so would you be opposed to me telling a little story around C.A.V.I.AA.R? I used a no-oriented question, sorry.

Shannon Waller: Very good, no-oriented question. Thank you very much.

Jonathan Smith: Smooth, smooth.

Shannon Waller: No, I would not be. But before you do that, can you share a smidge of context around why no-oriented questions are actually safer for people? Again, no threat. That was one of my profound insights from this.

Jonathan Smith: Yeah, so people are bombarded with salespeople who are trying to get them to say yes. So saying yes is giving up control. And if you can actually invert your question, so it's a no-oriented question, it's a pattern interrupt. And it now gives people an opportunity that they feel they have control to say no, because no feels powerful. So that's why we use a no-oriented question.

Shannon Waller: Okay, I wanna hear your story and then I have a question for you about no-oriented questions.

Jonathan Smith: All right, so quick story. On Park Avenue, I'm speaking at J.P. Morgan before Jamie Dimon at J.P. Morgan at this super beautiful space. I get a call two hours before the talk, they're like, you have to change your PowerPoint. I mentioned Jamie Dimon in the PowerPoint. That's illegal at JPMorgan and no one had told me. I had given them the PowerPoint three weeks before. So Joe Kim was with me. He's my mentee. I'm like, okay, Joe, we got to just

TM & © 2026. The Strategic Coach Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced in any form, or by any means whatsoever, without written permission from The Strategic Coach Inc.

change the PowerPoint. So we physically changed the PowerPoint. But now I'm walking to J.P. Morgan, to the giant J.P. Morgan, at 1 Vanderbilt and going, I'm not sure they're going to let me in. I'm going to get to security and they're going to now tell me that you are not allowed in, because a week before the guy from the health insurance company got shot on the street in New York. So I'm like, I don't know. Everyone's freaked out right now.

So I get there, I hand them my license. They let me through. Joe and I go upstairs. I now have to see the producer for the show. I can't find him. There's coffee, but we can't get into the green room or where the presentation's happening. So Chris loves this. So I see the security guard from the door. I walk up to the security guard. My subconscious goes, got to get through the security guard. So what am I going to say? I say, "You look important." So you look important. They're used to people asking them for directions and treating them like a square badge, not a proper security guard. And he stands up straight. "So what can I do for you?" "I need to get to Chris." He's like, "Oh, Chris is right in here." So he lets me in the door. I see Chris. I go, "Chris, you probably want to kick me out of the program." He's like, "This happens all the time at JP Morgan. So don't worry about it." Because I needed to be clean with Chris before I got on stage.

And then Jamie's coming on after me. And I ended up two minutes before I was supposed to be done. And Chris was like, thanks for giving us the time. We need to get Jamie's people on the stage. Everyone wants the picture. It's like being with the president. And oh, the whole point of this was Joe and I were walking down Madison Avenue doing C.A.V.I.AA.R as we're walking. Sorry, I missed that part. But that was where we did C.A.V.I.AA.R, because C.A.V.I.AA.R was so second nature to me. And I'm so close to Joe that when I showed up, I could actually be present enough to say you look important and then clean it up with a producer.

Shannon Waller: That is very cool. I love that story. Well, there is something, and Chris Voss has shared interesting stories too, about just really seeing people and paying attention to them and get sometimes more out of them than the person who works most closely with them. He's got a couple of good stories like that. There's something very generous about Tactical Empathy. There's a generosity of spirit, and it's the opposite of manipulation. It's actually about going to where other people are. Yes, you want to get where you want to go. That's totally cool. But at the same time, the way that you're doing it is you are seeing people, you are feeling people, you are intuiting what's going on in their heads. I think that's one of the things that appeals to me so much is that it's not a manipulative, graspy, takey kind of thing.

Jonathan Smith: It's not at all. Like I could have been the guy, don't you know who I am? I'm speaking on stage. You think I would have gotten through the security guard? Nope. We say, don't piss someone off who could hurt you by doing nothing. Right? So he could have done that. And my subconscious was like, what's going on for this guy? I had never done that

TM & © 2026. The Strategic Coach Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced in any form, or by any means whatsoever, without written permission from The Strategic Coach Inc.

before. Chris has actually now used it to get his car in Vegas from the security guard when there was a big long line and he used it and he like gets to, I don't know, gets access to whatever he wanted. He's like, oh, that really works well. So he and I riff back and forth and it's kind of fun.

Shannon Waller: Well, hearing about how he and Brandon would compete for who got the better upgrade at the hotel.

Jonathan Smith: Yeah, of course.

Shannon Waller: By the way, Brandon won, the one he was talking about. Brandon is Chris' son. Anyway, it was quite entertaining. And that goes to actually practicing in small ways. So this is not something you just bring out the big guns for during some super important negotiation, personal or professional. The only way to actually get good at this is to practice it all the time. In the book, it talks about, I think, well, I'm presuming it's, you know, just like a daily journal of all the conversations and which of the skills, the talents, which of the skills that you used during different conversations. So can you talk about that a little bit? Some of the things are intuitive, but some of them are not. And talk about just the idea of putting it into practice with smaller things, not only the high stakes things like getting into the green room, because that is pretty high stakes.

Jonathan Smith: Oh, it was pretty high stakes at the time, but thank God I had done the low stakes practice. So I'm a pilot. So, we log all of our time. So, I've flown into Brampton before. Go see Patty.

Shannon Waller: Nice. Not far from Toronto if someone's not familiar.

Jonathan Smith: Not far from Toronto. So, the idea was we call it a logbook, but it's a journal. When I was training originally, Chris allowed me to train with a couple of the hostage negotiators and what I did was I just decided I was going to journal. So I made up this journaling mechanism because I'm like, otherwise I can't even remember when I might have tried to use these skills or when I missed using these skills. And I came to the conclusion that the best way to remember is to have a journal and just do one a day. You don't have to do 10. Don't be an overachiever. Just do one consistently. I don't know, what did you guys say, 63 days to make a habit or something like that?

Shannon Waller: Yeah, 21 times three, yep.

Jonathan Smith: I still remember. Good job. But 63 days to make a habit, so by using that journal, that was super helpful. And then what's happened is I've decided that learning Tactical Empathy is like learning another language. So it's best done through immersion.

TM & © 2026. The Strategic Coach Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced in any form, or by any means whatsoever, without written permission from The Strategic Coach Inc.

Shannon Waller: Okay.

Jonathan Smith: So I was with a group in Israel, in Jerusalem for seven days. And I decided to teach them Tactical Empathy as we went through the city. And we end up at the chute, which is like the, it's like the market in the city, you know, it's the old market. And we're in the market and typically we're having like steak dinners every night. And this night we were in the price fixed place at the market, which is hilarious. So the woman is very Israeli. She walks over and she says to us, "No Fanta. You can't have Fanta. You can have Coke, but you can't have Fanta." This is how we start. Okay. So I go, "You think I can get Fanta?" Go to the rest of the table. They're like, no way you're getting, you're not getting Fanta from that Sabra. Sabra is a name of a cactus.

So the Israelis are like said to be Sabras that are prickly on the outside, but juicy fruit on the inside. So I go to her, "It seems like you're really busy tonight." She's like, I am, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. "And it sounds like Fanta really comes at a premium." She's like, "Yeah, well, Fanta's special." It comes from wherever. I'm like, "How hard would it be for me to get a Fanta?" "For you, a Fanta." So I got a Fanta. But like low stakes practice, like what's the worst thing that happens? She would tell me I can't have a Fanta. And then the whole table was like, you got Fanta. We didn't have to pay extra.

Shannon Waller: That is so fun. Yeah, it reminds me of trying to get a girl's phone number. Something like that, too.

Jonathan Smith: Something like that. Anything where you're just trying to do something super simple, like Brittany, who is my assistant, I will basically say to her, if you can't get it, I'm going to get it. And she's like, well, then I'm going to go do it, because she's Assertive. So she will generally go get it.

Shannon Waller: I gathered that from the previous conversation.

Jonathan Smith: Yeah, Jonathan wants the video, right?

Shannon Waller: I love it. Yes, exactly. So I have a question. By the way, the way that I know I do, especially labeling well, is in interviews with Dan, as I said, and also in our leadership meetings. So someone will be talking and they've noticed it and I try to make it very genuine. I don't want it to feel like a thing, like I'm doing something, because I'm usually trying to understand. So I'm being curious and I'm leaning in. I'm like, it sounds like this is what's going on, or this is what you're experiencing, or whatever the reflection is. And it's great because the people in the meeting are feeling stuck and they're very appreciative, which is super cool. But there's another person I'm close friends with who uses the no-oriented questions a lot. Like, would it be outrageous if, or would it be completely unreasonable, to the point where there's a bit of an eye roll with that one. So what is your coaching? What's your advice on, I don't know,

TM & © 2026. The Strategic Coach Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced in any form, or by any means whatsoever, without written permission from The Strategic Coach Inc.

if it's not being too obvious with it or being genuine with it. What's your take on using versus overusing of some of the strategies?

Jonathan Smith: We would say you can't sound coached and it has to sound natural. So we've had people walk into a negotiation and they're like, what happened to you? Why are you talking like that? That sounds odd. So you can't sound that way. It has to sound super natural. And that's why I say it has to sound like language. And if you probably dropped that in the no-oriented question earlier, you knew what it was and you kind of looked at me like, yeah, I saw what you just did. But I didn't drop 10 no-oriented questions throughout the interview.

Shannon Waller: No So thank you for validating my experience. Because I do think it's key. It needs to come from when you are genuinely curious, right? There has to be a naturalness to it for it to come across the way that it's intended, I believe.

Jonathan Smith: This might sound preachy, so I'm using an Accusations Audit to you. But you owe your friend feedback.

Shannon Waller: Okay.

Jonathan Smith: And you start the feedback with an Accusations Audit.

Shannon Waller: Oh, okay. What would I say?

Jonathan Smith: You're going to think I don't appreciate your commitment to Tactical Empathy. There's using a no-oriented question. You're like, oh my God, this is amazing. I'm using Tactical Empathy. But now you're saying you might think I'm raining on your parade here. You might think I don't appreciate your commitment to Tactical Empathy. You might think I'm raining on your parade. It may seem like I'm just here to criticize you. It may feel like, you know, I'm your boss, not your buddy, or I'm your buddy, not your boss. I don't know, whatever things you want to say. And then they're braced for impact. And all you're going to say is like, it doesn't sound authentic when you use no-oriented question five times in a row in the conversations.

Shannon Waller: Yeah, and I think what I might do is tease a little bit like, oh, interesting, no-oriented question.

Jonathan Smith: As long as it's not passive aggressive.

Shannon Waller: True. I tend to think of myself as aggressive aggressive.

Jonathan Smith: Okay, cool.

TM & © 2026. The Strategic Coach Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced in any form, or by any means whatsoever, without written permission from The Strategic Coach Inc.

Shannon Waller: Yeah, kind of going on with that assertive now that you mentioned it. That would be clear. This is so good. Oh my gosh, what else can I drag out of you? I want to talk more about the dynamic and latent …

Jonathan Smith: Present, we call it presenting.

Shannon Waller: Presenting, I'm misreading my notes, thank you.

Jonathan Smith: Okay.

Shannon Waller: The presenting dynamic versus the latent dynamic, which I find intriguing. And again, this is part of how this works. You've already touched on a little bit, because I thought, ooh, that's not a term I have ingested all that well yet. So what's a presenting dynamic? What's a latent dynamic? And how can we get from one to the other?

Jonathan Smith: So the presenting dynamic is, let's take it home. Your spouse, who knows you very, very well, is clearly angry with you. And you go, you seem angry. So that's the presenting dynamic. And they're like, why are you speaking to me like that? But if you say something like, it seems like you think I'm spending too much time at work. Because the latent dynamic is they're frustrated about how much time you're spending at work or how much time you're traveling or whatever that issue is, something below why they're angry.

Shannon Waller: Right.

Jonathan Smith: Because now all of a sudden they feel heard. Even if you get it wrong, they're going to be like, no, that's not what it is. I'm upset that the food is cold and you came home late.

Shannon Waller: Okay. So what's the next step? And this was something I grappled with, because we've done some Tactical Empathy for sales coaching and sales training and the rest of it. So at some point, there's crossing the street and getting to their side of things. How do you then make your proposal or get to a resolution? Once we've kind of mirrored and labeled and done those things, then what? I admit I've struggled here a little bit.

Jonathan Smith: So I don't have a visual here for you. I can describe how it works. We start with Tactical Empathy. So there's like a ladder. We start with Tactical Empathy. We don't start with rapport. Chris will say, we don't go, I'm a Strategic Coach. You're a Strategic Coach. Oh, we should do business. That's weird.

Shannon Waller: Yeah.

TM & © 2026. The Strategic Coach Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced in any form, or by any means whatsoever, without written permission from The Strategic Coach Inc.

Jonathan Smith: But if I start with Tactical Empathy, that person feels heard. We start to build rapport.

Shannon Waller: Okay.

Jonathan Smith: Whatever that rapport is, you know, because as soon as people are in, let's say 10x, and they know each other and they're like, oh, I'm in 10x in LA and I'm in 10x in Chicago and like, you know, so-and-so and who's your Program Advisor, blah, blah, blah. So you have some rapport, but that's only after using Tactical Empathy. Then what you're trying to get is empathy reciprocated. So can you get them to have empathy reciprocated, which is getting to a that's right moment. Like that's right, you totally understand me. Then you have trust-based influence at that point.

Shannon Waller: Trust-based influence, such a key term.

Jonathan Smith: So like you are in a position where you can now make the ask.

Shannon Waller: Okay.

Jonathan Smith: You have trust-based influence. And that person is open and hearing you and going like, oh my God, I've never felt so heard. What do you need? Then you can make a deal

Shannon Waller: Okay. And one of the things that this is at the beginning of the book, slow down to speed up.

Jonathan Smith: Oh yeah, because everyone's like, oh, it's a negotiation. Oh, my God, I want to get through it as fast as possible because I'm feeling anxious. And the reality is, you know, I had a negotiation that resulted in a multi-million dollar settlement. It took a year and a half. And we had to take it in chunks. And we were dealing in New York with white shoe law firms and accounting firms and hedge funds and finance people. So people are really in a rush to make a deal. And actually, if you use the skills and slow down, the deal will actually go faster. It just doesn't feel like it's going faster at the moment, especially for Quick Starts.

Shannon Waller: Yeah. Yeah, of which we both are 9 and Jonathan, you're 10.

Jonathan Smith: I am a 10.

Shannon Waller: So basically, if you can do it, anyone can do it. If I can do it, anyone can do it.

Jonathan Smith: That's for sure.

TM & © 2026. The Strategic Coach Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced in any form, or by any means whatsoever, without written permission from The Strategic Coach Inc.

Shannon Waller: I love that. Oh my gosh. There's a few more things I want to touch on. And again, this book is so rich. It has all the things. So please go grab it for yourself. And that's incredible guide that you have. The workbook is amazing. You talk about the five levels of listening. There's laws of negotiation, gravity. Those are genius. You've mentioned what a Black Swan is, which is that thing that no one thinks exists, but it's actually the hidden piece of information that you need to know.

Jonathan Smith: And then I would just add that if you're doing it well, you're going to get three to five pieces of hidden information that people didn't expect to give you in the negotiation or in that conversation.

Shannon Waller: And there's always hidden information. Even with the most, I would say, transparent people, they're not sharing everything because they may not think it's relevant or they don't know that you want to know. So when you actually take the time and listen and ask and have dynamic silence, they will, well, some of us will happily reveal those things, but not until we know you want to know them.

Jonathan Smith: And not even know you revealed them sometimes.

Shannon Waller: Yeah.

Jonathan Smith: Not intended to reveal them.

Shannon Waller: Yeah, very cool. So can you just talk about the five levels of listening? And by the way, level five is extraordinarily hard to me. You're very good at it, by the way. So can you just list those down? Because I think it's very educational. And at least I think it hit home because sometimes in our personal lives, we might be super focused in a podcast conversation or what have you, but then we go home and we're not really paying attention. So I thought that was very useful for everyone in every aspect of their life.

Jonathan Smith: So fundamentally, these skills come down to listening. That's why we put it early in the book. The five levels are listening for the gist. That's like if you're on your cell phone and someone's talking to you and you're like, uh-huh, uh-huh, uh-huh. No one ever felt heard there. Do not do that. Listening to hijack. So listening to hijack is level two. Level two basically says, you're saying something, Shannon, and I'm just waiting to respond. And as soon as you take a breath, I jump in and hijack the spotlight. Never feels good, right? Whether it's in a meeting or at the dinner table or, you know, you could be at a cocktail party and you're like, oh my God, this person's just sitting there waiting to pitch. How annoying is that? So one and two, no go.

TM & © 2026. The Strategic Coach Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced in any form, or by any means whatsoever, without written permission from The Strategic Coach Inc.

Three, listening for logic. Everything is logical. We just don't have all the facts. So even if you don't know what they're talking about, if you just listen for the logic, like they in their mind have a reason for saying that. I may not be able to tell you why, but they have a reason. So level four is listening for logic and emotion. Where are they logically and what's their emotional state? Level five listening is listening for their worldview, their point of view. You don't have to agree with their point of view, but you have to be able to articulate their point of view. So Chris says it best when he's like, I'm negotiating with Al Qaeda. I have to acknowledge their worldview. If I don't acknowledge their worldview, they will not feel heard.

Shannon Waller: And then people die.

Jonathan Smith: And then people die. So when he tells this story about Abu Sayyaf in the Philippines, it's all about level five listening. But 30 minutes of level five listening feels like eight hours, because you have to be super duper present. That's why they swap out hostage negotiators, because people just can't focus for that long at that level. So the best you can do is stay in level three. Don't be too hard on yourself when you are in level two, but pull yourself back to level three, because level two is icky. It's like, oh God, why did I just do that? Look at how that person just shriveled in the corner. It's terrible.

Shannon Waller: Yeah, I do think it's possible. if you have any relationship, anything, to listen for emotion as well. I mean, logic and emotion, it really is about going to where they are. And even just like, what's their tone? What's their body language? And the percentages are really interesting. I got totally triggered by someone's tone yesterday. Their logic was fine. Didn't disagree with it, actually. But the tone, oh my God. And then, ironically, I go on to my email and what's the newsletter that I just got from Black Swan? The one on tone. The one on tone. So I downloaded it. I almost sent it to the person and I thought, no, that's a little petty. Probably won't be received the way that I'm sending it. But I know that Chris has an opinion on tone as well. So let's wrap up. Again, there's so much more good stuff we can't get to, but let's just wrap up talking about the importance of tone and how it comes across.

Jonathan Smith: Yeah, so the tone you probably got was an assertive tone. Aggressive.

Shannon Waller: Yes.

Jonathan Smith: Right. Snarky. We use that 0 percent of the time. Okay. No snarky? No, don't use that tone, please. Darn it. Maybe if you're a police officer and someone's going to get hit by a car, right?

Shannon Waller: Okay.

Jonathan Smith: But that tone is basically for crowd control.

TM & © 2026. The Strategic Coach Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced in any form, or by any means whatsoever, without written permission from The Strategic Coach Inc.

Shannon Waller: I'm going to remember that. Snarky is for crowd control. I like that. Thank you.

Jonathan Smith: We call it assertive, but the late night FM DJ voice, we use that 20 percent of the time. It's when we want to deliver deliberate information, we want people to hear it, but only 20 percent of the time. And then 80 percent of the time we talk like Patty, like in an Accommodator tone, like happy all the time, like just try to stay in that mindset. Like even when the person's like, I'm not getting what I want out of my Strategic Coach investment. You have to get behind what's actually going on for them. And if we could get that, it may have nothing to do with us, just may have to do with where they are in the world, I don't know. But we say stay in the Accommodator tone 80 percent of the time.

Shannon Waller: That is super helpful. And I think that's why I was a little confused as to what I was, because I think I do stay in the Accommodator tone a lot. That's how I like my interactions to go. But then the whole question, who are you when you're upset? I'm like, oh yeah, that would be Assertive.

Jonathan Smith: So that's a great … it's a little confusing because the tone and negotiator type are the same, but they're two different skills.

Shannon Waller: Okay, I got you. Thank you for clarifying. So does Chris do that too? Does he do those ratios?

Jonathan Smith: We can all try.

Shannon Waller: I love this.

Jonathan Smith: I mean, it's like you dealing with Dan. I get to deal with Chris, you know, in all parts of his life. And it's not easy to be as popular as he is. Everyone wants his time all the time.

Shannon Waller: All the time. Yeah. And Chris is a great human being. I appreciate him. He's interesting. He's very fun to hang out with, especially at the bar.

Jonathan Smith: Oh, yeah, for sure.

Shannon Waller: He's also, when I've seen him last, he was super happy, which I was just filled my heart to see, too.

Jonathan Smith: He's pretty happy. I mean, he's getting to live his best life.

Shannon Waller: Yeah. Yeah. It's very cool. All right, is there anything I have not asked you that I would be remiss in terms of that? And then I would love to wrap up with how people can

TM & © 2026. The Strategic Coach Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced in any form, or by any means whatsoever, without written permission from The Strategic Coach Inc.

get the book, find you, hire you, resources, all the good things to get this out even further. What have I missed though?

Jonathan Smith: The only thing that I would say to you is what I found the best way to learn the skills is through finally just decided I'm going to build a cohort. It's almost like a Strategic Coach, but the cohort has the following: You meet in person. You have to have some way of having asynchronous communication. So that would be, let's say Slack or Microsoft Teams. So the team can get together. You have to meet on Zoom like every other week to learn the skills. It's called a community of practice. Like you want a group of people going together, walking together, using the skills. And then the books and the resources support all of that. But that's the best way to learn it. Otherwise, you're like out on an island by yourself.

Shannon Waller: Right. And it's cool because I'm thinking of our sales team or Program Advisors, like there's a natural community of practice there already. And they could definitely lend their existing structures to this. And we've had training, which is super cool. So, yeah, you can actually do it in a very focused way. And one of the things that we found, and this has been true for a few things, but especially Tactical Empathy, we are learning it for work purposes and the massive benefits come at home. People's relationships with their partners get better, with their children get better, with their parents get better. So it is one of those things that just has a 360 degree win associated with it. So yeah, whatever you improve in one area of your life will automatically transfer to the other. And the more practice, the better.

Jonathan Smith: And it's much better to do it with a group so you can reinforce and you'll have a go-to skill different than I will. And then you can show me how your go-to skill works for you.

Shannon Waller: I love it. Perfect. So Jonathan, how can people reach you? I mean, I got the book off Amazon, so what would you recommend? Where do you want people to buy the book?

Jonathan Smith: I think that most people buy it on Amazon. It seems to be the easiest way to do it. The only thing is if someone wants to buy more than 25 or something, you can buy it from the publisher, which the publisher is Amplified, but Amazon is really the simplest way for everyone to do it.

Shannon Waller: Okay, good. And if someone wants to reach out to you, and one of the things, again, that I really appreciate is that you come with this business mindset and this business experience and you're a business owner and business coach, and you're familiar with Strategic Coach and EOS, more than familiar integral to the whole thing. So you bring some unique capabilities to that. How can people find you?

TM & © 2026. The Strategic Coach Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced in any form, or by any means whatsoever, without written permission from The Strategic Coach Inc.

Jonathan Smith: So the funny thing is my name is Jonathan Smith, so John Smith. I'm cursed sometimes. So my handle everywhere is Stay Curious and then my three initials JBS, staycuriousjbs.com. And that's where you can find me.

Shannon Waller: I did not know that. Staycuriousjbs.com. Okay, we will definitely do that. Jonathan, it is so great to see you again. It's been a hot minute. Again, kudos on this book. It is brilliant. Thank you. And I am picky with my praise on books, so you know I mean it. It is incredibly well written, super easy to read, very, very clear. What I appreciate about having a conversation about it is it kind of comes to life. And to get to hear you, the co-author, talk about it and share examples and be in conversation about it just, to my mind, brings it to a whole other level of understanding. So thank you, thank you, thank you for this. It's just a joy to talk to you again. And again, thank you for contributing to all of our capabilities with regard to communication and success, really. So thank you.

Jonathan Smith: Thank you, Shannon. It was a pleasure.

Shannon Waller: Great.

TM & © 2026. The Strategic Coach Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced in any form, or by any means whatsoever, without written permission from The Strategic Coach Inc.