

EPISODE — ZACH

[INTRODUCTION]

[0:00:17.8] LC: Welcome to this week's episode of the Art of Authenticity. Thank you for tuning in, we've got Zach Obront here, he is the cofounder of Book in a Box. Book in a Box is a new type of publishing company focused on allowing busy experts with important messages to share their book without the usual barriers. Writing a book can be almost impossible for people who are really busy so Book in a Box helps by transcribing the book for the expert, they grew from zero to 300 authors in a very short period.

Zach is here to talk about entrepreneurship, how he tried a whole bunch of different things, something took off, what that process looked like in real time, he really dives into the details. So for those entrepreneurs out there, anybody who is doing anything that requires them to figure out how to get something started, move it into the next level, Zach has a really candid, honest discussion here. Plus he wanted the life that was meaningful and authentic and fun. He was weighing all this different things about as they were building book in a box.

Thanks you so much for tuning in and I'm sure you'll love today's episode.

[INTERVIEW]

[0:01:30.2] LC: Welcome to today's episode. Today we have Zach Obront joining us, hey Zach, how's it going?

[0:01:35.9] ZO: All good, how are you?

[0:01:37.2] LC: I'm great, thanks so much for joining the conversation today. Zach and I go back quite a bit. Zach I met because I was launching of my book and at the time Zach was a guy who was helping others like myself launch books. So we have an interesting history together and it's going to tie in to actually Zach's business background, so we'll get to that but it's really great to talk to you today.

[0:02:02.1] ZO: Yeah, you too.

[0:02:03.1] LC: Zach, if you could take the listeners back through and truthfully, I'm not sure I know the full story of the behind the scenes. You are currently working in Book in a Box, it's a really successful business, helping authors launch, write, create their books, the publishing industry is changing so much but before we get into Book in a Box, could you walk us through, you're a young entrepreneur starting off in the business community, very unique and my perspective approach of starting a lot of businesses and seeing which one worked and could you take us through what those early years looked like where you were beginning this process of finding a business that really took off?

[0:02:45.0] ZO: Sure, my business partner, Tucker and I had basically decided that we were being overwhelmed by people who had problems in the publishing world, he's an author so we had to kind of insight into that space and some connections in that space. But primarily, the thing we kept seeing was that there were problems with the traditional system and as people tried to move outside of that and do more self-publishing, there were all kinds of issues they were running into.

So we knew that it was a space where you're like working with authors is always fun, working with books is always fun and it's a great challenge and it's a fun product to work on. But there was a lot of different things to do. Our philosophy rather than trying to sit and think through what sounded the most appealing was to narrow down, what's the list of six or eight things that are clear big problems that we know we want to solve.

So what that looked like was lunches for books, platforms for authors — so websites, doing some interior layout design because the options there are were and still are kind of dismal. Doing full writing and publishing services, which is what Book in a Box came out of, doing just the publishing side of things. All kinds of different angles on things that specific groups needed. The idea for us — did you want to jump in there?

[0:04:04.1] LC: Yeah, were each of these individual businesses, did you incorporate them? What did that even look like?

[0:04:09.7] ZO: Upfront we wanted to keep it as lean as possible. We created a very bad website for all of them and we didn't incorporate anything, we owned all of it under corporation that I think Tucker already had or I already had. The idea was just, don't put too much time, don't print business cards, just work with a few people and see what happens.

Our goal through all that was to say, "Which of this feels like something that could scale bigger, that doesn't require us to be the decision maker at every single point? Which of them are fun to work on and we enjoy the people we're working with, which do we feel like we're making the biggest impact and just how do we feel about this being our sole focus?" And so as we started working on that, a few things came to the surface really quickly right with doing design, for example, you're owning one little task and it didn't really feel very moving or like we were making a huge impact.

[0:05:03.9] LC: Design like on their websites you mean?

[0:05:05.4] ZO: Yeah design on the websites or even the book cover, it's like people could be excited about it but it felt like we were doing a service for the author and nothing beyond that. For other examples, if we were doing editing services, well it sucks to put a lot of time and effort into doing an amazing editing job and then an author doesn't market it all.

So we felt like owning one slice of the puzzle was in a lot of ways causing problems, same way with if we were just doing marketing but we weren't involved in any of the decisions in writing the book. Sometimes it would have been nice for us to have thought about the media angles earlier and things like that. Book in a Box was the one example where we own things start to finish. We started with a woman, Melisa Gonzales who is an expert in pop-up retail and we worked with her to develop the concept for the book, outline it, helped her through the writing process, publishing, marketing start to finish.

And both seeing how all those threads tied together and how we benefited from being involved with all of it and also seeing how much more of an impact we felt like we were making and how much proud we were of being able to say, "We didn't just provide the service for Melissa, the fact that this book exists and wouldn't have otherwise existed makes us feel a lot like we're prodding a service for all the readers and not just her." So after seeing how smoothly that went,

how clearly the book, like the process, really worked, how different it was from things that already existed, how excited we were about the impact we could make, we decided pretty quickly that that was likely where we would want to focus.

[0:06:37.0] LC: She is a self-published author?

[0:06:39.6] ZO: Yeah, so we handled all the publishing as well. We have an imprint called Lion Crest Publishing and we published her book, self-published through Lion Crest.

[0:06:48.8] LC: Interesting. For people who are like less familiar with the publishing world and if you go out and you get a book deal then the publishing house will deal with at least some of these components but nowadays, they do very little because it's so competitive and the cost are too high for the return for a lot of this publishing houses and so it's pushed the burden over to the authors.

So a lot of people have gone self-publishing which is what I did except it requires, as Zach is sort of laying out here, an ability to mark it, sell, create a book cover, these are all the steps that I did myself and I didn't realize it at the time but you're really embarking in an incredible amount of work as an author to navigate, editing and book covers and websites and marketing and sales and promotional materials, it's a big deal. So you guys took all that for this one woman and did it from beginning to end.

[0:07:43.6] ZO: Yeah, and that's I think the thing that we realized was, we were looking at the problem a little bit too small saying, "Okay, someone like you, where you knew Aron so you had a great book cover and you had figured out the interior so what are the little pieces that you were missing that we could help with?"

But the people that we felt like we can make the biggest impact with were the ones who said, "I have an amazing idea for a book, I know the topic cold and I have nothing else. I don't only need all the pieces, I also need the project manager to put all the pieces together." So that's what we're doing is taking people from that first stage all the way through both by surrounding them with the professionals but also putting those pieces together so they can just focus on their content.

[0:08:24.6] LC: Why is it more helpful to do it from bumper to bumper than it was say to do pieces? What did you find was the big difference?

[0:08:32.2] ZO: So the biggest thing that we found with authors is that the first question that most new authors should be asking is what do I want to accomplish with this book/ What are my goals on a purely personal level? What would make this a success? From there, it's much easier to understand who is the audience? What topics reach that audience best, what media angles and places will get me in front of that audience to work backward from the personal goals?

By jumping in at one point, what we would often run into was, "Hey, the book is finished and I want the book to be successful," and that's a lot harder to both understand the specifics of the goals and to accomplish then when we're able to make sure that there's a lot of clarity upfront and flow everything out of that. So the biggest thing is really the connection between the idea and the angles upfront and then the marketing and the delivering of the results at the end.

[0:09:25.3] LC: What do you say to an author thought that says, "I don't have — I just want to write a book. I don't have," — like a lot of people have an idea and they're really excited about the idea and the book but they're not necessarily so clear on what the, because what you're talking about are kind of marketing and business goals for the book, right?

[0:09:43.3] ZO: Yeah, so it's really hard, and I think this is honestly one of the harder parts of what we do and a reason why we end up not working with a lot of authors who otherwise may create great books is we're really concerned. Our service costs \$20,000 to do start to finish, we don't want someone coming in, spending \$20 grand, working with us and saying, "The book looks great but I have no idea where to go from here and actually now I'm realizing I didn't really care about this or it wasn't my priority."

Our focus upfront is to do all the thinking to say, let's figure out what you're really trying to accomplish and it doesn't need to be the only thing but if we know that at the very least you want to be able to send copies to people who work with your business and book more speeches and then those things would make it worth it, then we can make sure the book serves those

goals and everything else can be, all the miscellaneous things that come up are a bonus. Whereas if we start with the idea of, “Hey, just want to do a great book,” we may end up with a book that’s really awesome but isn’t useful for their clients and doesn’t lead to speeches and then doesn’t even hit the baseline requirements.

[0:10:49.3] LC: So it’s really much more entrepreneurial? I mean you’re basically looking at the book as the product for some other outcome as a business person, which is a very, very different approach to the mindset of an author.

[0:11:03.0] ZO: Yeah, absolutely, it’s a tough tradeoff and there are exceptions to that right? We’ve worked with people who they say, “Hey, I have an amazing story, I really want to write a memoir because it’s going to sell some copies and I’m mostly am just concerned with getting this out to the world,” and that’s fine but it’s fine if they’re clear that that’s the goal and that’s well defined and I think the problem a lot of authors run into is they have a mix in their mind of a vision of being on stage and a vision of being on a New York Times bestseller list and a vision of making an impact and all these things swirl together and there’s not a clear definition of what does this need to accomplish to have been worthwhile?

[0:11:43.6] LC: Yeah, because more than anything, at least I can speak for myself and people I’ve spoken to who, you’re also just so overwhelmed that the idea of finishing a book, it’s just such a difficult process. So you also help in that area that there’s ghostwriting where people have other people fully write the book and then obviously there’s what I did where you write it yourself but you guys slotted yourself in the middle where you sit down and you take the ideas and you interview the author, is that right?

[0:12:12.0] ZO: Yeah, we interview but our interviews are focused on — I’d say where our ghost writer interview is, “Hey, teach me all your stuff so I can turn around and go write the book,” generally there’s a range of what ghost writers will do. For us it’s much more focused on we should have the ideas fleshed out to the point that the interviews are almost like you reading a really rough draft of your audio book and then from there, we have the meat to work with where the editor on our team is doing a lot more than a normal edit but doing a lot less than a ghost writer would.

[0:12:40.7] LC: Yup, so it's basically taking the transcriptions of what you've said and using much more of your voice than a ghost writer?

[0:12:47.7] ZO: Yup, exactly.

[0:12:49.1] LC: Yeah, it's a very interesting process and I would think, tell me if this is true, does this open up the opportunity for somebody who just has a lot of value but can't write that much? They're just not writer's, right? and would otherwise never write a book?

[0:13:04.6] ZO: Yeah, there's a range. I'd say we tend to skew more towards people where the time is the issue. So a lot of people who, the issue we kept running into that actually started with Melissa is she said, pop-up retail is a growing trend in retail, people keep writing books about it but the people who are writing books are somebody who is bored and thinks that the book might make some money, not the seven of us who are behind all the biggest pop-ups in the world and actually know the industry.

The seven of us who do all this stuff, we're too busy to write it, we're running all these pop ups and getting six and seven figure deals. We're not — we don't have time to block of hundreds of hours to write and publish a book. So the goal with her was that the smartest people don't have time to do it, we can help them have time. But we've also seen examples of people who just writing is not their strong suit and their story is their strong suit but writing, if they had to do all the writing themselves, that wouldn't have captured the essence of what they were trying to get across.

[0:14:05.6] LC: So it's been, you guys started with an idea, you're up to we were talking before we jumped on 20 employees and how many clients have you had to date?

[0:14:14.8] ZO: We've done just under 300 books so far.

[0:14:17.1] LC: Oh my god. Has there been a lot of successes from this?

[0:14:21.2] ZO: Yeah, it's interesting, depending on who I'm talking to, what success means is very different right? We've had books that hit the Wall Street Journal bestseller list and sold

10,000 copies in the first week and had like traditional book success. But examples, I keep coming back to Melissa for some reason, but she's actually an amazing example of this as well because we were clear on the goals beforehand and her goal was to help companies who can't afford her to do popups on their own and lead to more business for her.

Maybe on speaking gigs but all in the name of generating business leads, we decided on a positioning for the book that that didn't have a big audience right? If we could have written about retail trends and sold more copies, writing about popups served her goals best. So her book is, it's been out for a year and a half, it's probably sold 1,800 copies. It sold pretty well within that industry but not huge numbers but it's like tripled her incoming leads, she's done four keynote speeches because of it, she's on panels, she has like an ongoing radio show that she got because of the book.

The CEO of this major mall group, said, "I need to learn about popups," read the book, thought, "Oh crap, this is not a trend that's going away," and hired her on a seven figure consulting contract to put popups in all of his malls across the country. So there's a lot of examples like that where because we were clear on the goals, the books have achieved huge success by those goals, even if they haven't had the typical huge book success that some of the other books have.

[0:15:51.0] LC: Got it, if you want more speaking gigs, you would sort of think about the book and write it in a different manner or fashion or placement for marketing than somebody who is say just looking for a copy sold nationally.

[0:16:04.1] ZO: Exactly, yup. That's why I think it's so valuable to own the whole thing is that if we understand those goals up front, that could inform the content.

[0:16:13.1] LC: Yeah, what a difficult process to put your author through. I bet that that is a bit of a hair pulling exercise for the author to commit to what their goals are.

[0:16:21.6] ZO: Yeah, so we've got awesome people. It's funny, when we started in the company I was doing all of those calls that will do book positioning and outlining and I was convinced for the first six months I'm like, "No one else could do this, it's only me, I don't know

how we're ever going to grow," and then we ended up hiring the executive editor of Harper Collins to come on board, I'm like, "Oh I wasn't very good at this compared to him. I guess I was totally wrong."

So since then we've got, that's mostly a freelance position but we train them a lot in advance and we've got a lot of processes for them to get that information out, we've got about 12 freelancers who do that consistently and are all really great ranging from like more literary people to psychologist who are great at doing this for memoirs and everything in between.

[0:17:07.2] LC: For the like solo entrepreneurs or people of like business that's got two, three people and they're struggling. You had this again, I'm just going to go back a little bit, this process of trying a few things and what did it look like when you realized okay, this is the — you did the one book with that one woman and you said, it hits some check, it was fun, it made impact, we were feeling good about it but what did it look like to make the ultimate decision? Because I would think it would be difficult to shut down a bunch of stuff, make the gut call to go with it, you had the one authors but it wasn't like you're 30 of them. How did that process really unfold for you?

[0:17:45.7] ZO: Oh it sucked and I was really bad at it. So I definitely air on the side of thinking I can do everything. So to be completely honest, the conversation was Tucker strongly of the opinion that this was more different and had more potential and was what we should be focusing on and then we should be winding everything else down and me saying, "No, we can do all of it at the same time."

There were a few points and we can get into this if you want where I kind of have to learn that I couldn't do everything at once and when we were faced with the situation of knowing that something had to be wound down, it was then obvious to us that Book in a Box was growing quickly.

At that point, by the time we made that decision, we probably already had eight or nine authors that we were in the process with and it was obvious that it was something people needed and it was really working. So once we were faced with realizing that something had to go, it was an easier decision but realizing that something had to go was the hard part for me.

[0:18:43.9] LC: Why was it hard? I'd love to know for because I think this is such a common problem right? Even if you have a singular business and you have branches or pieces or programs that you think should work but they're not working. I think people have a hard time figuring out when do I quit, when do I just man up and push through? There're such conflicting views out there and I don't believe there's a right and wrong way to do that, I think there's a gut instinct to the whole thing.

[0:19:11.9] ZO: Yeah, so I think the challenge for me, I can only really speak from my experience is that I would always air on the side of push through and it's not like I could have done a little better, it was just a matter of time until eventually, I would hit a limit that would actually be imposed. So I would just start working 14 hour days and being extra efficient and trying to do everything at the same time. At some point, you run out of hours in the day and run out of energy and it's not possible.

So for me it was just a matter of too many things, especially in this situation where we were experimenting with the different directions that we might go, there were too many things that we were building processes for the first time and that needed to be figured out like the exact tactics how to do it for the first time that I ended up spread too thin and fortunately I'm pretty quick to correct if I feel like I'm under delivering. So that just seeing that I wasn't able to completely knock things out of the park was enough to shake me back to reality that I was doing five people's job and I shouldn't be.

But before that, it's really easy especially in the early stages, a lot of the work you're doing is things that you wouldn't put on a list of job responsibilities. They are things that just pop up and need you. From a hypothetical on paper perspective, I could look at the roles and be like, "Well, it's only doing this here and this here, that here, I can do all that, that won't take that much time." But the all the one-off things that popped up ended up consuming so much time that I realized reality wasn't really aligned with the way I was thinking things would unfold.

[0:20:46.5] LC: Yeah, that's very commonplace with entrepreneurship is it's just putting out fires all day long, jumping from thing to thing, you don't even know exactly what your job is. Yeah,

interesting. Now you guys are downstream, you have 20 employees, 300 authors have come through, what's the next 12-month goal?

[0:21:05.3] ZO: So I think there're a few things, we've done a really good job so far, if I can say it without sounding too cocky, of creating books that are really great, we've not done a great job of making sure that the author experience through that is as smooth as possible. So I think this partially comes from my bias of like, "Oh, I don't need to communicate that because we're going to get it done and it's going to be amazing and they'll be happy in the end." that's kind of where things have turned out, right?

There's a revision process that maybe takes too long or, this isn't stuff that happens frequently but when you're working with 300 authors, 5% mistakes are still 15 stories that can be in my head. Just of not being as experienced focused as we should be, the big focus for the company now is really getting everything much clearer process wise and focused on making sure that the author's experience as they go through the process is as great as possible and it's not an experience of, "Well it was okay as I went but the book is so good that I'm happy with the end result," we want both to be great.

That's one piece, continuing to grow the team, obviously there's another piece and then now we're kind of coming full circle, we actually haven't talked about this but we're going back to now spreading a little bit thinner and we're doing it in a little bit of a more intelligent way this time I think. We're adding new divisions one at a time. My focus on the company is in that phase of getting something off the ground and getting it started. So rather than us having done all eight things at the same time, we've done books, we've got that process clear, we've had happy customers, we've made that impact and now we're seeing those same customers, what are the problems that they're running into.

So a lot of them said, "Hey, I really want video courses, that's not something we're going to do and a lot of them said, I want podcasts while there're people who would do that but a lot of them were saying, we want to build an online platform, same thing we had talked about doing before, that they needed that website design, ongoing content, marketing focus, promotion of the book, all those things put together and now we're able, because we have this base, to step back and handle that a lot more methodically of okay, now if there was only one thing that I'm focused on

and it's taking people from this place to this place, now we can get that process clear as opposed to trying to do all those things at the same time.

The company is going to continue growing on the author side and then my personal focus is in expanding into helping authors launch the book and create that longer term platform.

[0:23:30.3] LC: Very interesting, difficult to do too.

[0:23:32.9] ZO: Yes, and I'm sure you know that. You know that very well.

[0:23:36.0] LC: Also an ever changing industry right? One minute blogs are in and now video blogs are in and then Facebook live is in. You're always trying to chase after the trends, Snapchat. Very interesting. I love this story and congratulations on the success of your business, that's great.

[0:23:56.5] ZO: Thank you.

[0:23:57.3] LC: So, Zach, I talked to all of the people come on this show and I ask them the same question, what does an authentic life mean to somebody who is moving at a hundred miles an hour like yourself, trying to hack together this businesses and find success as an entrepreneur?

[0:24:14.3] ZO: Yeah, I think the interesting thing for me and I think you actually just nailed it in the question is when I haven't been kind of aligned with my authentic self, it's usually not been because there's something that's stopping me, it's usually just I'm moving quickly and I'm not taking time to reflect on that. What that looks like for me generally is just having my day to day or my week to week kind of be aligned with my idea of where that should be or at least on its way to being aligned with where I'd like it and what matters to me personally. So yeah, I think the big thing for me is just realizing that on a — it's making sure that I'm actually, the reality of how I'm spending my time is aligned with what I care about personally.

[0:25:00.0] LC: How do you get clear on what you care about personally? Again, when you're moving at a hundred miles an hour, I think this is the thing that plagues most people is they

have all these conflicting thoughts but they haven't taken the time to kind of muddle through them and get to their truth.

[0:25:14.3] ZO: Yeah, I journal a lot, like a kind of ridiculous amount. On an ongoing basis, that tends to be more focused on the alignment between kind of reality and that vision but at some cadence, usually about monthly, I'll spend a bunch of time focused just on that vision of what do I want my life to look like, what do I want to be spending my time working on, where do I want to be going? And really work through kind of the lies behind those things and thinking through whether that something that's really important to me or that I just feel like I should be saying is important to me.

[0:25:48.3] LC: Isn't that the most important distinction? We have so many ideas of what we should be doing versus what we actually want to be doing.

[0:25:56.3] ZO: Yeah, and it's shocking how hard it is to separate those like how deeply ingrained those should's are.

[0:26:02.7] LC: They're so ingrained and how do you separate them because for me it came down to understanding that the should always feel, like you can feel it in your bones when you're doing it and it's a definite no but you're saying yes and you just feel it all over, you do it anyways and then you wake up and it goes poorly and you go, "Well that's because it was a no and I knew it from the beginning." How do you know you're in a should moment?

[0:26:23.1] ZO: So a lot of it is what you just described of doing it and learning my lesson and trying to be in tune to pick up those issues. The way I'll try to model that beforehand and a lot of my journaling is saying, "Okay I believe X, Y, Z." Well, let's play out what that looks like. If the only thing I care about is X and I had a life where I only had X, let's really think through that, would that make me happy? Usually, when I put it into reality, this is something we do with authors actually when they talk about book goals. They'll say, "Oh yeah, my only goal is to make an impact."

It's like, "Great. If we print in 5,000 copies of your book and mailed them out to 5,000 people who they would impact like was it worthwhile or are you done?" And they're like, "No, well I

actually also wanted this other thing.” So I try to do that with myself is just put it back to reality so I can try to make that mistake in my head before I make it in real life.

[0:27:19.5] LC: Yeah, and it’s a great one to do in reverse if you have a fear and you’re freaking out about something and you say, “Okay, let’s just play this whole thing out.” I always think of it as calling out the impossible voices in our heads but what is that fear? Let’s just play it out, what’s the worst case scenario? What could that really look like and then it’s never as bad or treacherous as we leave that big dark boogie monster sense in our core, right?

[0:27:45.9] ZO: Yeah, that’s a good one, I haven’t done that before.

[0:27:48.7] LC: Yeah, I love it though. I love calling those things out because I think what you’re saying that questioning what your belief is and then thinking about it in reality, as an author I want my book to do well but the reality is, I didn’t want to jump around on 50 different airplanes to promote the book, right? So play that out in my head, yeah, I don’t want to do that and if it sells less books, so be it and other people love that part of being an author right? So you have to find what makes sense for you.

[0:28:13.8] ZO: yeah, I think the challenge, at least the challenge I run into a lot is the times where we’re working through that and my head doesn’t catch it are often things that I’ve just attributed as success so clearly and still I can play through it in my head and say, “Yeah, that sounds great,” and then something about real life, it’s like no, never mind, I think flying around and giving speeches on a book topic is a classic example that people could work through that mental exercise and say, “Yeah, that sounds awesome,” and then they do it for a month and they’re like, “That wasn’t as awesome as I expected.”

[0:28:47.3] LC: Yes. I do have the data point of having done that for my business for six months and I was like, “This is the worst.” Some people like it but I had to go to all my clients at the beginning. Four AM on a flight home at 10 PM I’m like, “This, it’s awful.”

[0:29:02.4] ZO: Yeah, I think that’s a big piece of it is just accepting the fact that a lot of that needs — you need to get it wrong and learn from that but as long as at least for me, weekly I spend some time really thinking about my last week, was it the kind of week that I want to keep

having? The upcoming week, is it kind of the week I want to have? Just taking that 30 minutes to think through things, I think I've benefited from picking up on trends a little faster rather than kind of sitting in an authentic situation for a longer period of time.

[0:29:34.3] LC: Do you feel like your life has been mainly authentic or did you have a turning point moment?

[0:29:39.1] ZO: I think it's been mainly authentic and the places where it hasn't, I maybe have just like — I think I have a tendency to chase things because I have fun with that chase. So I would more likely to I think what I was yelling especially like start a business I didn't care about because it's the starting process is fun, and the seeing if I can do it i is fun. I think it took a few of those situations of, "Great, I got there and I hate there." So very quick, just kind of correct to that and be more in tuned with what I care about.

[0:30:11.3] LC: Yeah, everybody likes to start, nobody likes to finish.

[0:30:14.6] ZO: Exactly.

[0:30:15.5] LC: I used to joke at my company, I'm going to create a T-shirt that said, focus on the front of your T-shirt and on the back, finish. Everybody loves the project, nobody like the end. Very cool and...

[0:30:27.2] ZO: Actually I'm curious, do you think that comes, it feels like to some extent, that comes from being, doing something that's inauthentic that the motivation is the fun of starting and not the actual caring about the thing and that at least for me when I'm doing something that I feel more aligned with or that's more authentic to me then the finishing comes a little easier because I actually care about it and it wasn't just a shiny object that was catching me.

[0:30:54.4] LC: Yeah, I think that's absolutely right and I also think we have a strange relationship with goals and that we like to set a goal and say, "When I'm finished I will be excited and happy because I will feel a certain way," and there was this big study done on this but essentially the short of the long is, that's actually the quickest way to be unhappy because as

you get to the end of the goal, you realize that moment of pure bliss and joy isn't really going to happen and I think your motivation starts to fall.

So there's the shiny object, it's so exciting, it's so fun but also you're also intrigued by the outcome that you're going to be a better person, life will be better, you'll have more friends. Your whole life will come in to balance the minute that thing happens and then it slowly, as you get towards the end, life is the same and I think it gets a little dreary. So I think yes, when I do things that are aligned with myself, I don't feel as motivated towards just the end point and then recognizing that the whole, once you finish, when opus tart the next is just endless, you're never going to be "done". Very cool. So you mentioned you do journaling as one of your daily practices, anything else you want to share with the listeners as far as habits or rituals or routines to stay in a life that's meaningful?

[0:32:09.9] ZO: Honestly, so there's a lot of other things that I think have benefited my life like working out more consistently has been great, meditating more consistently has been great. But for me at least, I don't think those have impacted my trajectory or my decision making or like alignment with what's authentic to me very much, it feels like, if there is the distribution of that, it's 95% journaling and getting clear on my thoughts and 5% everything else.

It feels to me like, and I tend to be a little bit overly cerebral or wanting to use words and thoughts to go through things more than emotions but for me, the thinking through and forcing myself to explain to myself those things that I'm thinking and dive deeper into them is what has given me most of the insights to stay away from the things that might have lured me in otherwise.

[0:33:05.1] LC: Very, very cool. Well thank you for sharing and thank you for coming on today's show and if somebody's interested in Book in a Box or talking to you more about any of these subjects, where can they contact you?

[0:33:17.3] ZO: Yeah, so my email is zach@bookinabox.com.

[0:33:24.8] LC: Awesome, well Zach, so fun to catch up with you and thank you so much for coming on today's show.

[0:33:29.6] ZO: Yeah, thanks, Laura, it was fun.

[END]