



Business Coach Julian Sturton: "Seek And You Will Find"

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"I'm in the 'don't know' business," Julian Sturton proclaims pretty soon after we sit down to chat in his Mid-town East Manhattan office. Sturton is the founder of The Business of Leading, which coaches executives and entrepreneurs to develop further into sustainable success by committing to growth and a willingness to face difficult challenges.

He's a curious sort. By that I don't mean strange, though that is a compliment of sorts. He is naturally curious about pretty much everything. And that's precisely why he's in the 'don't know' business. He makes it his life's purpose to discover and dissect as much as he can.

Sturton's life is marked by the study of world cultures, often immersing himself in them, through his extensive travels.

In fact, when he was 17 in 1971, Sturton drove around the world with a couple of friends, covering 25,500 miles over five and a half months. Afghanistan, he says, was probably the most frightening and Israel one of the most fascinating.

Surprisingly, and a bit out of left field - though I think less so when our conversation ends, Sturton tells me he competed at the Olympic level in bobsledding. Aside from excelling at sports, that level of competition was a challenge he sought out.

Doing Things That Have Never Been Done Before

"The most important structure that lends itself to people who want to grow their companies; to increase wealth, build wealth, has to mean that they've got to do things they've never done before, or you'll just be squirreling around in the things you already know rather than things you don't know," says Sturton.

Part of his travels have been very much an inward journey, grappling with issues from a young lad that, as he says, held him hostage emotionally. It is this where he finds greater purpose now; in working with these executives and entrepreneurs to understand what motivates them and what holds them back to ultimately help them cross those invisible boundaries.

Sturton's book, *The Language of Leading* will launch later this year. It is a decades long effort that is an intellectual examination into successful endeavors based on his personal and professional learnings.

Sturton makes clear that his youth plays an instrumental part in his desire to become a business coach. I come to learn of some of his fascinating family background. A Brit now living in New York, his uncle George Morley, working closely with the celebrated Archibald McIndoe, was one of the founders of plastic surgery. Morley was a royal surgeon to Queen Elizabeth II and served as an Air Vice Marshall in the Royal Air Force. During World War II, The British government created The Guinea Pig Club, which consisted of a team of people that would operate on



pilots that were shot down by the Germans and who suffered severe burns. This is how plastic surgery began.

He's the self-proclaimed "black sheep of the family"; that devilish youth walking his own path, foregoing formal education to be a student of life. During his childhood education, he attended Kings School of Peterborough, founded by the intellectually minded royal King Henry VIII. "It was very similar to Hogwarts [in the Harry Potter book series and films]. "I hated school. I absolutely loathed it," he says.

But, it was a sort of survival instinct that kicked in during those early years; to escape his surroundings, traveling as far and away as possible where his true nature began to emerge.

Throughout our conversation, Sturton waxes philosophical. "The human condition is based upon how a person reacts to every situation he finds himself in; to what extreme proportions he is going to find himself in during and after that reaction," he says. "That is, in fact, how we determine whether or not you have succeeded."

Make the Right Calculations

He expands on the 'extreme proportions' point: "I think people have got to realize they've got to make the right calculations before taking it to extreme measures. If you are going to be a billionaire, you've got to regulate exactly what kind of outcomes you are going to permit yourself to be committed to."

A true 'unconventionalist', after his parents gave him an ultimatum of "get a job or get out", Sturton started working in the hospitality industry, eventually climbing through the ranks to become a senior executive in marketing and sales. Sturton worked for the hotel chain Grand Metropolitan Ltd. for seven years. It was through this experience that his ability to motivate people, initially the sales people in his office as well as the general managers, began to shine through. Sturton also began creating motivational events for clients, which saw him, again, off traveling the world. In the mid-eighties, Sturton

decided to set off on his own, starting up a consulting business, International Conferences, Ltd. in Sweden. But, after six years, he decided to head for the US. He formally launched the Business of Leading in 1993.

His goal at the time, which remains the same today, is to create the world's leading business model. Sturton relies on his vast and varied experiences to help his clients. Over the years, it was the natural ability to incentivize that really began to resonate outwardly. This was his whole motivation as a youth. He saw his own emotional turmoil mirrored in others and figuring out how to deal with his own emotional turmoil, mirrored in others, that drove him. "It sort of became contagious as other people gathered around me," he describes. "My whole work is to deal with people that are putting themselves in difficult situations that they may not have bargained for. Or they are so ambitious they want to get to a place, but are uncertain as to how to get there. So I turn people's lives around in a very extraordinary way."

In working with clients, he asks them: "If the managing editor of the New York Times rang you up tomorrow and said we are going to give you permission to write a headline on the front page of the business section of Fortune Magazine, what do you want that headline say?"

The parallel, says Sturton, is when you die - what gets written on your tombstone? "Then it's too late, nobody gets who you really are, they only get a memory of it."

Sturton hits upon a critical aspect of what he encourages clients to bring out into the open; their own inner conversation. "For years, when I was treating 'how to get out of my own way' kind of conversations, I had to face that conversation all the time. It's only because I found myself being put into more poverty situations [through his extensive travels] than most average citizens that I realized over time that I was far better off than most people," he says.

The Inner Conversation

He holds that inner conversation with great fascination



and regard. "If your dialogue doesn't have meaning, it's just about your own self interest," says Sturton. "Life has to have meaning, or else you won't have one."

Part philosophical, part reflective, part here and now, we talk about the backdrop of coming to the United States while he was carrying out his work. It's in this part of our conversation that the foundation for his business model and his soon-to-be-published book materializes.

Settling and marrying in the US, Sturton determined he would spend the rest of his life here. That all-encompassing curiosity reared itself once again. "Coming to the US, I was still motivated to find out what makes things work - I never take anything for granted - [I have this need] to figure out what is its relationship to everything that's going on around you," says Sturton, adding, "I wanted to get to some root cause of why this country has been so successful."

There's a word he points to that stands at the center of much of what drives his business life now: constitution. As he says, it means that one is not actually taking sides in a discussion. Generally, it's defined as "the composition of something".

But, in his deeply immersive studies, Sturton, without doubt, says it is the US Constitution that stands as the most successful business model throughout history, representing "the most successful of any sovereign nation the world has ever seen".

There is a passion in Sturton's voice as he talks at length about the process of learning. He enlisted the aid of one of what he refers to as his "intellectual supersquad", an erudite collection of people - professors from Harvard, Yale, MIT and the like - whom he has gotten to know and from whom he seeks guidance in his never-ending quest for knowledge. In this instance, Pauline Maier (now deceased), Professor Emeritus of American History at MIT, tutored him on the Founding Fathers and all aspects - full of dislike and mistrust of each other - of how they put this country together. We talk about the propagation of land; George Washington's warning of a disparate

nation in his farewell address in 1797; the US' version of the Whigs and Tories; the integration of the Federalists; even, readers, how if you look at a \$1 bill, there are 13 lines inside the pyramid on the back of the note, representing the 13 colonies.

The Constitutional Leadership Model

So strong is his passion that Sturton has even gone so far as to frame a core part of his work around it, creating the Constitutional Leadership Model, which aims to alter a manager's employee mentality to that of ownership, thus creating a more dynamic environment, he says. The constitutional framework is called The Language of Leading. "I lead executives into a whole new direction in which they can take their companies, with extraordinary results to show for that success," says Sturton.

This idea of conversation - of dialogue - is the critical component.

"Now in business, I don't just deal with society based on the 'colonial what' factor. That doesn't make any sense. I deal with a lot of mergers and acquisitions. A great deal of my work has to enrage people from different backgrounds - that's what makes mergers and acquisitions really mean and nasty. It's not because you are dealing with the economics of it, or the laws, but you are dealing with personalities...that's the piece I think is most fascinating. It's usually the part where there is all the attention. Being in business is just like being in battle," he says.

Dynamic Creatures

But, it is this battle with the self, getting back to that inner conversation, that continues to captivate Sturton. Sturton refers to it as the 'background conversation'.

"What we have with the self is a predisposition of subconscious and psychology that gets passed on from one generation to the next," says Sturton. "Ever wonder why you turn out like your parents? Because you are born with a background conversation. You are in turn taught to



speaking a foreground conversation so it makes it a lot simpler. But, you've got two things going on all the time; a foreground conversation unbeknownst to your background conversation. If you did separate the two then what you express is simply based on a subversive fear-based background conversation. And that's exactly how you are going to lead your life, based upon what you know, not what you don't know."

Our conversation comes full circle.

"We're dynamic creatures," says Sturton. Language, he adds, is the determination. "We've been inferior misrepresentations of the human species because we've only used intellect to base our very existence on what we know - not what we don't know," Sturton emphasizes, furthering his cause of embracing the unknown.