

Episode 44

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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

What matters most, Medela Map, faith finance fitness friendship family, church innovation, faith-based organizations, digital transformation, concrete company, blue collar millionaire, intentional living, real estate investment, Barberton Akron, manufacturing decline, JobsOhio, entrepreneurship coaching, generational change, gift of discernment

SPEAKERS

Jason Duff, Chestly Lunday, Jeremy Candelaria, Ethan DeLeon

- J** **Jeremy Candelaria** 00:00
I want to teach people how to win in the areas of life that matter most. They're F-words. So they're all F-words.
- C** **Chestly Lunday** 00:07
They're all F-words.
- J** **Jeremy Candelaria** 00:08
Yeah, they are.
- J** **Jason Duff** 00:09
F-words are our favorite.
- C** **Chestly Lunday** 00:10
Now you've got to, like, tell us what some of those F-words are.
- J** **Jeremy Candelaria** 00:12
Well, I call it the Medela Map. And the word medela means wellness in Latin. And so what I believe significance is or success is really figuring out in life what matters most to you.. And then every single day, making sure that you're intentional about those things. So they're all F words. And we started this, my wife and I, in 2018. It just started as, this is what we want to do for the new year. And, uh, we want to focus on these things. So they're faith, finance, fitness, friendship, and, um, family.

E**Ethan DeLeon** 00:55

Hey everyone, my name is Ethan DeLeon and I'm here with our founder and CEO of Small Nation, Jason Duff. Joining us on today's episode, we have entrepreneurs Chesley Lunde and Jeremy Candelaria. We want to welcome you to the Small Nation podcast where we share some of the valuable lessons with what we have learned about entrepreneurship, real estate, economic development, and more. The point of this podcast is to create value for you, the listener, and to create a space to learn, talk about what's trending, and inspire others.

J**Jason Duff** 01:19

Thank you, Ethan. Chesley, welcome back to Bellefontaine.

J**Jason Duff** 01:23

What is up? I had a lot of fun here the first time. Now I'm back.

C**Chestly Lunday** 01:27

Well, you're back and you're back with a guy that we were talking a lot about, and that's Jeremy. These guys are friends. And is friends the appropriate label?

J**Jason Duff** 01:36

Yeah. Anything more than that and our wives might get a little suspicious.

C**Chestly Lunday** 01:42

So I love that. But you— and they're going to be listening to this.

J**Jason Duff** 01:47

Yes, they are.

C**Chestly Lunday** 01:48

And I had a chance to meet your wife. She is super cool, by the way. Part of her background, she was also a, you know, self-employed, driven person. She's a barber. Yeah. At some point.

J**Jason Duff** 01:59

Right? Yeah.

C**Chestly Lunday** 01:59

She was. That's— I just thought that was, was really cool. And, you know, Chesley was introduced through a friend of mine, Jason Dorsey, which we share a mutual friend with Jason. Jason, about 20 years ago, was speaking in the college market and then moved to helping businesses and organizations understand young people, um, particularly understand the generations that exist in our workforces, in our schools, in our organizations. And, um, you know, having a friend that's a speaker that also is doing research, you meet other really creative, interesting people that are changing, uh, thoughts and minds and looking at trends in certain industries. And that's how, uh, Chesley and I created— because in the faith community, you've built a business around helping churches innovate.

J**Jason Duff** 02:50

Yeah.

C**Chestly Lunday** 02:51

Tell us about that.

J**Jason Duff** 02:52

Well, everybody went through COVID and most churches in America had no digital footprint whatsoever. And so I had been playing around with it for a few years with teenagers and young adults and also in church replanting, which is actually in replanting. What that means is restarting churches. So for those of you that are not in the faith sector, we started and restarted churches. That's actually how I met Jeremy. So 2020 happens, COVID, we're now trying to figure out how to get a church off the ground that doesn't have digital giving, doesn't do streaming services. And I, again, I had a lot of experience with that in the Gen Z sector and really started it thinking about, oh, this will work for a church, a church without a building, being more nimble and less geographically centric so that you can be able to be fully engaged in the mission of Jesus wherever you're at and be connected no matter where you're at. And so started doing that and then realized really quickly that churches don't innovate very quickly.

C**Chestly Lunday** 04:07

What do you mean? I'm sure it's very easy.

J**Jason Duff** 04:09

They're very institutional.

C**Chestly Lunday** 04:09

When you come in with a new idea to make change, that's got to be really easy. Oh yeah.

J**Jason Duff** 04:14

And I'm very smart, so I think everybody's ready for change. And yeah, no, I, that has been the thing that I've had to learn the most is just because change is necessary, it doesn't mean that everybody's ready for it. And so—

C**Chestly Lunday** 04:32

Well, there's a, the word tradition. Yeah. And I think to us, like, that is something that is solemn for a lot of our organizations. It could be traditions that we have in our family. And I, I know that for the churches that I have went to and belonged to over, over my life, like, there is something special about knowing the flow of the way things work. But to someone that is an outsider or new to that, it can be scary, it can be different. And then sometimes some of those traditions, you do kind of ask yourself the question, are we still doing it? Are we doing it for for the right reasons? Like, why are we doing this? Right? How do you reconcile those two things?

J**Jason Duff** 05:12

Good question.

C**Chestly Lunday** 05:14

I don't even think I'm like Oprah. I ask really good questions.

J**Jason Duff** 05:18

Why are we not doing it this way? This way would be better. I think, you know, I'm an avid reader. We've had the same model for 1700 years in the church. And it was built for a preliterate age. Right? So we would— there's this thing called Marchetti's constant. So no matter the technology that has allowed you to travel, people are normally going to travel within 30 minutes. Well, 1,700 years ago, that was on foot or on a horse. Or a donkey, maybe. Yeah, or a donkey. Nobody judges. Okay.

C**Chestly Lunday** 05:56

Include all of them. All the animals.

J**Jason Duff** 05:58

But maybe sheep.

C**Chestly Lunday** 06:00

Who knows? I don't know.

J**Jeremy Candelaria** 06:01

I like that.

J**Jason Duff** 06:02

But, you know, I think what you see is they went to a place to hear Scripture because they could not read Scripture, and then they hung out with each other all day. So church wasn't an hour on a Sunday. It was an all-day event on Sunday because they'd work the other 6 hours or 6 days out of the week. And so the model hasn't changed in 1,700 years, but we have digital technology that has actually blown everything out of the water. And it wasn't— it wasn't just information. Information was a big deal. Like, when we had the free flow of information because of the internet, like, it made me be able to listen to a preacher in Edmond, Oklahoma, even though I'm 2,000 miles away, easy.

C**Chestly Lunday** 06:42

Right.

J**Jason Duff** 06:43

But the church still had the community aspect of connection. Well, you can't connect unless you're here. And then this little dude in MySpace named Tom. And nobody knows MySpace anymore. But Mark Zuckerberg, yeah, you know, creates social media. And now the church doesn't have a monopoly on relationship now. Digital technology has literally undercut it. So now you take away the pulpit, and you take away people from the church, and what do you have left? Well, you have a organization that's mired in institutionalism and tradition that has built a theology around their method rather than their message. And so now they're ripe for disruption because of that. So what I learned is I could have all the tools for an organization, a church, a local church, to help them move into the 21st century, but if they don't have a clear and compelling why, they'll never move. And so that's how I met Jason Dorsey was 'cause it's like, we need to have research about how the next generation wants to practice and participate in faith formation. And so it was like, we can do innovation, but we really actually have to help the hearts and minds of the people even be willing to change and take the journey 'cause the journey's not easy, But if you know, like, we can't stay here if we actually want to leave a legacy, we actually have to move towards a new methodology that won't look anything like what you're used to. And there's a lot of grief and loss to that because you can't say things are going to be the same. You're like, you're not— the older you get, it's just, everything's impermanent. And so, but you have to give them a compelling reason why. And so that's what we did. Yeah.

C**Chestly Lunday** 08:43

So you created a company that is helping faith-based organizations, churches, be able to do that transition. What, what are the ways— how do you help them?

J**Jason Duff** 08:56

Well, I think, you know, mostly it's research and speaking on it, and then really just helping wherever they need. What I find, um, is really taking a readiness assessment is the most important thing. Where are you at today? Where do you say you want to go? And let's figure out the gaps in between that and really build a strategic plan. And then people need to be held along the way accountable, if you will, or just with encouragement. Yeah. Otherwise you fall off the wagon because it is a long process. So the assessment's most important, but for most churches, because you don't know where to start if you don't know where you're at. And then after that, research, like I said, is super helpful, which we do a lot of. And then what I like to do is I like to help some of the churches that are ready begin to think about what would church look like if you didn't have the constraints of a building? What would that look like? How do we innovate there? And so I have bunch of ideas about how that works. And I've seen some really good— we've had some success with some organizations really moving towards digital communities, which we had a wonderful conversation at lunch about, and learning management systems. And it's all backed behind the data that we did with Jason.

C**Chestly Lunday** 10:20

So yeah. I love that. And I think that what's happening in higher education, what's happening in healthcare, what's happening in faith-based churches and organizations, Those really large structures, it is not easy to make and move them quickly. Like a lot of it, but what has been amazing, and you are demonstrating this, is through technology, through innovation, through helping show examples of churches that are making those great successes, then other folks can have a little bit more confidence to making those decisions and those steps, so.

J**Jason Duff** 10:58

Yeah, I think, so digital is a tool, it's not the end-all be-all. There's a big gap and an opportunity, I think, for churches to begin to think like you and what you guys have done here at Small Nation rather than thinking through how do we build our organization and our— and everybody needs an economic base. However, if you can really say, how do we actually help the city flourish? There's real opportunity there that you would that I think a lot of churches need to really start thinking about because they can have more local impact today than they've ever had.

C**Chestly Lunday** 11:36

We hosted Pastor Brian Meadows on a previous podcast, and he is a part of Cornerstone Church here locally, and previously it had a very long tradition in United Methodist Church, and they've been going through some innovation and changes, but in particular, our local pastor serves on the Chamber of Commerce board, and he kind of spoke about his role of being a part of that, that board and organization and seeing that the positive changes with economic development, how that relates to improving community. And even in our downtown this year, we had a local church, Bell Fountain Grace, uh, really support and sponsor and bring their congregation out for our Christmas event in the downtown.. And, you know, seeing those volunteers, those people plug in, that's community. Yeah. And it breeds community. So, I mean, as terrible as 2020 was, I think that is in the church world, at least one positive that came out is it at least got churches thinking about next steps in technology and make it less intimidating and just like, here's some, some places to start. So I love to, you know, that you're doing that. But yeah. You guys are both not originally from Ohio, so I mean, uh, Jeremy, we haven't heard from you much, so why don't you tell us a little bit about your story, where you're originally from, and, uh, where you're at today?

J**Jeremy Candelaria** 13:01

Okay, well, first of all, I just want to say it's been great. Like, the whole team, everybody has been wonderful to us, very kind, very helpful, very knowledgeable. I feel like I know just about everything that I could learn from Nick. So he did great. There was only 2 questions I asked that he didn't have the answer to and said you would. I don't even remember what they are.

C**Chestly Lunday** 13:24

Save those. I like those questions.

J**Jeremy Candelaria** 13:26

So for me, I was born in Palm Springs, California, and when I was 4, my mom hitchhiked us back to Ohio where she's from. And so I've grown up like a fun fact about me is my last name for 36 years was Shwire. And that, uh, that changed. I planted a church here. It, it did well. We decided that we were going to go do it again in California, so I went back, and my wife and my kids and our two dogs loaded up everything in a Penske truck and went 2,200 miles away to Palm Springs. And I really didn't know anyone there, but we planted again, and then we had to come, we had to come back. But, um, just because my, my— that's, that's, that was— I'm all over the place here, but the Oedipus of, of my company that I started came out of that. It was a place of pain because my daughter really struggled out there. And, and so I had to make a decision whether I was going to do ministry or I was going to take care of my family. And I wrote down on my trusty little book, uh, I'm gonna start a business, make a lot of money, and take care of my family. And then came back. And so the, the Schwyer thing though, when I was out there, my dad and I kind of rekindled our relationship, and I realized that I needed to have his last name. So, um, because every, every son should, I think. And so my wife and I and our 4 kids all changed our last name, and now everybody thinks I'm Italian. But before that, they thought I was just a dark, like a, like a tan hillbilly. It's really wild how that transition is. Um, so yeah, Jeremy Candelaria. And you, you know, you're like, okay, I'm gonna let you say that. I'm still trying to figure it out.

C**Chestly Lunday** 15:14

Yeah, you know, kind of got a mafia ring to it.

J**Jeremy Candelaria** 15:16

Kind of does.

C**Chestly Lunday** 15:17

Yeah, it's Spanish, but yeah.

J**Jason Duff** 15:20

And hillbillies don't tan, they just get their, their necks get red.

C**Chestly Lunday** 15:26

Yeah, we know about that. You know, we're probably going to be canceled, you know that? That's all right.

J**Jason Duff** 15:32

But in 2023, you can only cancel for 5 minutes. Great.

J**Jeremy Candelaria** 15:38

We call that a vacation. Oh yeah, that's exactly what we are in so much trouble, you guys.

C**Chestly Lunday** 15:42

Okay. Yeah. So you're here in Ohio. What is your business now? What are you, what are you doing?

J**Jeremy Candelaria** 15:48

So I am pastoring again. I got suckered back into that.

C**Chestly Lunday** 15:52

And funny how that works. Yeah, always bring you back.

J**Jeremy Candelaria** 15:54

They, uh, so that's a full-time thing. And then, but when I got back, immediately what we did was we moved into my in-laws' house. And so my 4 kids and my wife, uh, were upstairs, and then they would rotate on where— who got to sleep on the futon, floor, futon, you know, just like that. And, and so started the company from scratch, and that is a concrete company, uh, because as I talk about in the book, basically when I was 15 years old, the very first time I ever met my wife's dad, she said, do you want to meet my daddy? And I'm like, sure. And he came barreling up the driveway from home, from work. And, and we went out there, and the very first thing he said to me was, 'Can you work, boy?' And I— wow, I never had a job. And he was a big man. You ever seen Shrek? He has these Shrek sausage fingers. And at the time, I was 100 pounds. And I said, 'Yes, sir,' because I really liked her. And so he's the one that taught me the trade. Wow. And so it was brick, block, stone, concrete. And so when I came back— and so I would work. So when I was young, I would work in the summertime and then went off to Uh, the military, but then when I came back, I worked again with him. College, would come back and work. And, uh, long story short, when, when I came back, we started this company out of nothing. We lived upstairs in his house, very small place, didn't have anything. I had done ministry for 22 years, and that's how I met Chesley, because back in the day when I was awesome at doing this stuff—

J**Jason Duff** 17:23

um, he's still awesome at doing this stuff, don't look—

J**Jeremy Candelaria** 17:26

no, that he's far surpassed. Me, but he actually became a coaching client of mine. Yeah. And that's how we formulated a relationship. And so, you know, with this, with this concrete company, the first year I was in it and working, and we did \$400,000. The second year, \$700,000. And for me, somebody who's been in ministry and, and poor, you know, that massive amount of money, that's, that's, that's a great change. And so able to buy a house in the, the allotment that my wife always wanted to live in and get her Suburban, and the kids went to the schools they want. We kind of put the equilibrium back into the family by moving back here. And, um, but, but at the same time, I really just started to fall apart because I wasn't pastoring, didn't have an identity, making so much more money. The company, the third year did \$1.2 million, fourth year \$1.7 million, and just it kept growing. And yet at the same time, I'm feeling this massive amount of emptiness and thinking that somehow I would attain it through monetary gain or living in the right area, or it just didn't. It just, it just got real bad. And so I just felt like my whole entire family have everything that they want, but who am I and what am I doing, you know? And I just gave it all up. And, and so that's been a journey, and that's really where he and I are different. You know, we both motivate But my, my motivation really comes— it's almost like a Tony Robbins kind of thing where I really want to— I want to teach people how to win in the areas of life that matter most. They're F-words, so they're all F-words.

C**Chestly Lunday** 19:05

Yeah, they are.

J**Jason Duff** 19:06

F-words are our favorite.

C**Chestly Lunday** 19:07

Now you've got to like tell us what some of those F-words are.

J**Jeremy Candelaria** 19:09

Well, I call it the Medela Map, and the word medela means wellness in Latin. And so what I believe significance is, or success, is really figuring out in life what matters most to you, and then every single day making sure that you're intentional about those things. So they're all F-words, and we started this, my wife and I, in 2018. It just started as, this is what we want to do for the new year, and we want to focus on these things. So they're faith, finance, fitness, friendship, and family. And so yeah, he knows them better than I know them. But, uh, so faith, fitness, finance, friendships, and family. And so like, you know, in here you'll see if I open it up, like every day I'm writing those down and I'm writing down something I'm gonna do intentionally to support or undergird that. So for example, you know, working out today, that's the fitness box.

C**Chestly Lunday** 20:07

Nice.

J**Jeremy Candelaria** 20:07

So I already did that. So the faith Today for me, it's I'm going to have a conversation with God. It doesn't have to be anything, but I'm going to be intentional about it, right? Yeah. And then for family, I'm going to text my kids today, each of them, and just tell them how much I love them and something that I appreciate about them. Friendship, I'm checking that box because I'm here with you amazing people and one of my best friends. And then the finance, I'm still, I'm still working my company even though I'm not there. I'm project managing basically. So phone calls and coordinating and just checking up with my foremen and things like that. So I'm hitting all the boxes.. And the reason why that's important is because if these things are things that I say that matter to me, then I need to be intentional. And the days that I feel the most empowered or aligned in my life is when I, when I can check those boxes. And it's not easy and it doesn't happen every single day, but that's where I find, that's what allowed me to climb out of that success hole that we talk about.

J**Jason Duff** 21:03

Yeah.

J**Jeremy Candelaria** 21:04

You know, it just isn't about money. You know, it just isn't about, it's about the things that really drive me as a human being, and then I want my life to reflect that and everything that I do. So that's, that's really where I'm at and trying to figure it out, you know, learning from people like you. Uh, the next step for me is real estate. I really have a passion, a deep passion for that, and to learn about it, you know, I've, I've read books about it, and the number, the number one thing that I think just prevents people from doing it is what the book says, that you're, you're a, you're almost like a, you're a wannabe investor, or, you know, you just don't pull the trigger.

C**Chestly Lunday** 21:43

And I have the action step.

J**Jeremy Candelaria** 21:44

Yeah, it's that just doing it, that first property. And somebody who didn't grow up with money or stuff—we never had a home. I always lived in apartments or hotels, um, you know, not good ones either. I hear you guys have a Super 8. That's like kind of like home, uh, to me.

C**Chestly Lunday** 22:00

We do.

J**Jason Duff** 22:01

Yeah.

J**Jeremy Candelaria** 22:02

So, uh, you know, I'd never had anything. So to own something or multiple somethings is a dream, really. You know, one of the, like, the, the corner, a corner building where you have nice, you know, restaurant underneath, coffee shop, and then apartments up top. Like, that's a dream. I never would have pictured it would be in a place like Barberton or Bellefontaine, or— but I always want— I'm thinking San Diego or somewhere down in Tampa or something.

C**Chestly Lunday** 22:34

Well, and you've lived in a lot of places outside of Ohio and a lot of bigger cities too. And I think, you know, just hearing your story, it is inspiring to me. And I think that's what's unique when you meet people that are different from you but also sharing the same value of wanting to see their town or community better, wanting to see their family thrive. And oftentimes money is a limiting belief. No matter— I talk to folks that have had situations that have lots of money in their life. And there can be issues and had trash and junk with that. And then folks that have never had money. And so I appreciate you being vulnerable and kind of sharing like, this is, this is where I started. But also, you know, having some confidence to say I took a concrete company from nothing, sleeping, you know, in, on the floor and rotating with my family and my, my kids. But like to do \$400,000, \$700,000 and then having— tell us like for you, what does that million-dollar number mean? Like, what— you, you put it in the title of your book, and for those of you who are listening, Jeremy's book is called Blue Collar Millionaire. So what— why is a million dollars important? Why is that number significant?

J**Jeremy Candelaria** 23:46

Well, for me, I don't think the number to me matters. What I think matters is the ability to help people. Truly, with money, the thing that I enjoy most about it is giving it away. Truly being able to help someone, and even if it's something as silly as, you know, there's a— Chesley and I were eating at a restaurant, and there was a back kitchen person that was just running food. And, and so I just felt compelled to give her a little bit of money, and she just, she wanted to hug me. She was just, um, she almost was crying.

J**Jason Duff** 24:24

She was very overcome with emotion.

J**Jeremy Candelaria** 24:26

Yeah, and, and it's just, it, it's, it doesn't— so to be able to give it away to, to help people in need, that to me is, is the reason why a million dollars is— means something. Like, it's— if you just hoard it, like, if you had everything you ever wanted on an island by yourself— I'm an introvert, but that still sounds pretty miserable.

C**Chestly Lunday** 24:47

Yeah. Wow.

J**Jeremy Candelaria** 24:48

You know, so what's the point? The point is, is money to me doesn't matter beyond the ability to actually go out to dinner and not have to look at how much we paid for it. After that, it doesn't really— it doesn't matter. Who can we help? What can we do with it? And, and so for me, it's not— I'm not driven by the money. Actually, what real estate I think does for me is it challenges me. It's the game. You know, I, I wanna see if, if we can actually acquire something, make it better, make it have a profit. And, and that— I mean, I'm not saying money doesn't matter because it does. But that, I think, the chase of the game motivates me more than the money does at the end of the day.

C**Chestly Lunday** 25:29

Yeah, I think that's a super important piece. And, uh, you know, as we're thinking about how we can help other entrepreneurs, it's good to hear that feedback and just, uh, identifying why you want to do what you want to do. Because I think just the, just the pursuit of money just for the pursuit of money, like, I don't know, you can try Hollow, you can see where it takes you. It is a tool and a resource, and I think I think the things, and part of where you guys are in town today is Chesley and I met and had a chance to meet his wife. You came up in conversation and the work that you're doing in the Akron area. What is interesting about the Bellefontaines, the Barbertons, is that 25, 30, 50 years ago, Ohio was a center for manufacturing. We build things here. It was a place where you know, after the war, the '60s, '70s, you had companies like Rockwell and Siemens, and then the automotive manufacturing came in to Lordstown and to GM. And you look at Akron, you know, what, Cooper Tire, or you have a Goodyear Tire. And like, I mean, big, big national brands that we— where things are manufactured.

J**Jason Duff** 26:40

Yeah.

C**Chestly Lunday** 26:40

But like a lot of things, when globalization took over, we started losing a lot of that industry, that investment. And then you could see the lifeblood be drained from the streets, the properties, the people of the towns. But we're at a time in history where the pendulum has been and is swinging back. We've had many guests on our podcast, the chairman of the board of JobsOhio, Bob Smith, who basically said last year that it has been Ohio's best year economically and maybe ever. Right? Like, ever. With announcements like Intel moving back here and Honda and many of GM and other companies now moving from, from engines to, to EV, electric vehicles. So that change is an opportunity for entrepreneurs who are good change agents and also having the trade skills, not being afraid of getting a little dirty and doing some hard work. Yeah. Are you— tell us, what are you seeing in, in the Akron area? What, what's getting you excited to want to invest and do more in that region?

J**Jeremy Candelaria** 27:58

Well, I think Chesley would probably be able to answer that better because he, he came from outside. So when you're in it, you kind of just— everything becomes right, sort of white noise to you. So what do you — I'll just deflect that to you. What do you see when you see Barberton or you see places in Akron?

C**Chestly Lunday** 28:16

Yeah.

J**Jason Duff** 28:16

Um, well, yeah, as an outsider, um, you walk in and I am from, you know, Phoenix is like the 5th largest city in the US. Yes. And so, uh, one thing is the lack of amenities, but then you got these beautiful buildings that are just sitting there and decaying. And, um, you can tell this is like You know, you look at the life cycle of an organization and you start seeing professionalism in this treadmill, and then they long slide into oblivion. And most— I think most of the cities, the smaller towns that I've been a part of, um, you know, even in Barberton, looking at the stuff there, it feels like they did that. What, what causes that to happen is bureaucracy and vision leaving. And I love looking at broken, dilapidated things and seeing a brand new product. Like, my wife and I flipped houses, and Jeremy's helped invest in those. And, um, that's what I bring to the game. So I walk to Barber Den and go, oh my gosh, all these beautiful buildings that they need a lot of work. Yeah, but I don't see a beautiful building, or I don't, I don't see a dilapidated building. I see a pizza shop in there.

C**Chestly Lunday** 29:33

I see, you see the potential. I see potential every—

J**Jason Duff** 29:36

my wife, like, it bothers her at times because I'm like— she's like, really, you are the worst judge of character. Like, you see the positives. Yeah, I am potential all over the place. Yeah, you know. And so, um, and, and that sometimes it's a great skill, right, and gift, and then at other times it's like, really, that's not doable.

C**Chestly Lunday** 29:55

Yeah, you know, that's my kind of people right there.

J**Jason Duff** 29:58

Yeah. And, you know, and I'm dumb enough to actually start trying to do it. You know, it'd go, well, we'll try. And I, I work as hard as I can and I, I've got good friends around me like Jeremy. Jeremy's great at discerning whether or not things are gonna go the right direction. So I can do change agent, change agency and like start inventing and doing these things. And he's gonna be like, I don't know if that one's gonna work.

C**Chestly Lunday** 30:23

The gift, the gift of discernment is an unappreciated at times. I feel like it's underappreciated because you need people in your life who will be real with you. And doesn't mean that they're trying to tear you down or trying to hurt you, but they'll at least ask the clarifying questions to get you thinking differently. And on the flip side, having people that can dream and think about what oftentimes people would define as impossible. Pushes the— it helps you kind of find that balance. So it's kind of cool that you guys found each other with those different skill sets.

J**Jason Duff** 31:03

Yeah, I mean, he was— he coached me while I was leading a church. And so what I learned really quickly is Jeremy knows what he's talking about. And so I started putting into practice in the church world the things that he was teaching me, and I became a better leader because of it. And then business, as he grew his business, it was like, oh man, he actually knows how to make money. I've been in church world my entire life and I was dirt poor too. So we ended up homeless when I was a teenager. So I'm like, there's things that Jeremy has that I still need to learn. And that was a big driver in moving to Akron was like, well, I'm going to start a business. I would love to help him start coaching because he coaches. I mean, he is a leader of men and and he's great at it. And I see that in his book. So we started building all the curriculum and coursework for him to be able to start coaching and doing that stuff.

J**Jeremy Candelaria** 31:59

And really for us. Yeah. I mean, I never wanted to do it alone.

J**Jason Duff** 32:03

Yeah. And but through that whole process, like you're sitting here today because I walked down and barbered in and go, this could be amazing. And he's like, 'Barberton?

C**Chestly Lunday** 32:15

Are you sure?

J**Jason Duff** 32:16

Are you like, really? Yeah, nothing good ever comes from Barberton.' Yeah, it's the armpit of the world.

J**Jeremy Candelaria** 32:20

I'm pretty sure that—

C**Chestly Lunday** 32:22

well, that was the same kind of stuff that people from here were saying. And we started— after you keep hearing it over and over, you start to believe it. Yeah, you find out that our country is actually made up of all these small towns that once had a heyday, that everyone, you know, admires these beautiful buildings, wishing somebody would just do something with this. Really?

J**Jason Duff** 32:43

Well, and the problem is people believe the stories that have been told to them. Yes. And this, I mean, this is true in economics. The narrative, the soundbites creates the trajectory. And so if you want a new trajectory, change the dang story. Yeah. And I think Jeremy's helped me a lot with that. Obviously, like, I am an idea generator. I have 100 ideas a day. I cannot turn it off. I don't know which one of them are good. That's why I have Jeremy. Jeremy's like, those 3, great. The other 97, bro, like, can you just shut it off? And I'm like, no, no, I cannot.

J**Jeremy Candelaria** 33:23

You know, no, no, no, I'm just saying, I think that our strengths were— and we're still figuring it out because you got to remember, you know, Chesley is top 2 best friends that I have, but we have never lived in the same zip code ever, ever, except for the last couple of months.

C**Chestly Lunday** 33:42

And now he lives in Akron, Ohio.

J**Jason Duff** 33:43

In Akron, Ohio.

C**Chestly Lunday** 33:45

Everyone right now is moving to Akron, Ohio.

J**Jason Duff** 33:48

Do you hear?

J**Jeremy Candelaria** 33:48

There's a swoosh.

C**Chestly Lunday** 33:50

The whole country from the East Coast to the West Coast is moving.

J**Jason Duff** 33:53

I am solar powered. So about half the year here, I'm like, why did I do this?

J**Jeremy Candelaria** 34:00

And that is so funny because our strengths and weaknesses are so diverse. Whenever it's, it's, uh, like it is outside, I'm energized. I love it. When it's raining, I feel great because I own a concrete company, and I hate— so if it's sunny outside, you're out there working. Yes, I equate that with—

J**Jason Duff** 34:16

yes.

J**Jeremy Candelaria** 34:16

And if we're not, I feel less than a human being. What am I even doing with my life? We're not pouring concrete today, you know. And he's like, let's take a walk. And, you know, it's just so different between us.

C**Chestly Lunday** 34:27

Yeah.

J**Jeremy Candelaria** 34:27

But the thing is, is he is so good at, um, seeing potential in things. And for me, I'm almost like a CEO. So you have like on a spectrum of 1 to 10, you have the ones that are like the accountants and they're just, you know, zeros and ones and that's it. And the 10s are dreamers. They can see what everyone else can't see and everybody thinks that they're just— they're out of their mind. And I reside at like really on this graph a 7, but so I'm closer to a 5. A 5 is like a CEO where they can have a conversation with the ones and the twos about things that are just— you just want to stab yourself in the eye. Uh, and then also a conversation with people like him where you also just want to stab yourself in the eye. The dreamers.

J**Jason Duff** 35:09

Yes. Like, really?

C**Chestly Lunday** 35:10

And come out of the clouds, please.

J**Jeremy Candelaria** 35:12

Pulling those worlds together, that's kind of where I live, somewhere in the middle. And I just think that it works for us and our relationship because, yes, that's why I wanted him to answer that question. I don't look at Barbadin and go, oh my gosh, this could be awesome.

C**Chestly Lunday** 35:26

Yeah, he's like, really?

J**Jeremy Candelaria** 35:27

Yeah, I look at Barbadin going, well, it's the armpit of the world. I believe the I believe the story. And that's me coming here asking your team those questions, like, okay, what are people saying about Bellefontaine? Which, by the way, is called B-Town. I've seen B-Town, which is Barberton.

C**Chestly Lunday** 35:42

That's—

J**Jeremy Candelaria** 35:43

they do that too. It's very eerily similar. So, and I took a walk today for 45 minutes down these roads, and it looks similar. It looks sort of run down, sort of like— but what you're doing to transform I'm seeing the potential in front of me actualized. There's no denying that. It just becomes whether or not this is the right next step for us.

C**Chestly Lunday** 36:06

Yeah.

J**Jason Duff** 36:06

I think as I have grown in my leadership, part of this is being a student of Jeremy's. Another part of this is just getting my butt handed to me in the church world for trying to change so many things, is learning that if you want to move people with vision rather than tell them, because you can't tell them. You can't tell them— if you're an Eskimo, you're not going to be able to explain a palm tree in a way they'll understand. You gotta get them to San Diego to experience a palm tree, right? Then they will. And so I think, you know, that's a slower process, but it's the only one that I know has consistently worked. And so, you know, There are times, like, there's a building we almost bought that I walk— I knew about it in August when I came here, and I'm like, oh man, this is beautiful, I wonder if we can do this. And, uh, and I knew if I could get Jeremy in the building, then the wheels would start turning. But if I couldn't get Jeremy in the building, then I'll be like, well, whatever, you know. So even with here, like, I know how he feels about Barberton.. And that's a big deal.

C**Chestly Lunday** 37:20

Yeah. Well, in a big— I appreciate what you're saying is that a lot of folks will call and say, can— how can Small Nation help our town? And we can go there and take our PowerPoint presentation, take our banner stands, and I can speak. But there's nothing more powerful than say, come to Bellefontaine, let's go on a walk.

J**Jeremy Candelaria** 37:42

Yeah.

C**Chestly Lunday** 37:43

And when we go on that walk, we'll walk into the business.

J**Jason Duff** 37:46

Yeah.

C **Chestly Lunday** 37:46

And you'll get to meet some of the— it could be the owner, could be the employees. And then you get to experience what they're selling, what food they're making, and you can ask more questions. And that's kind of— you gotta almost see it to believe it. Um, and, and then when you do see it and you learn that data and you can take pictures, you can rip and duplicate ideas and take them back home.

J **Jeremy Candelaria** 38:07

Yeah.

J **Jason Duff** 38:08

Well, and I think the thing that you have done so well, um, that is the secret sauce is You created a new narrative. I remember walking down here the first time, I'm like, what the heck is the pineapple around here for? And then finding out the story about the pineapple on the fountain and it was supposed to be a bell because it's Bell Fountain, but it's actually a pineapple. And then you owned it.

C **Chestly Lunday** 38:30

It was an urban legend that we owned.

J **Jeremy Candelaria** 38:33

Yeah.

C **Chestly Lunday** 38:33

And, but the thing of it is that narrative, people would tell that story over and over and over. And it speaks to exactly what you guys were saying.

J **Jason Duff** 38:39

And I think the secret sauce in the towns and churches and organizations is find something that you can create a new story with, run with it. That's the only way you get a new ending.

J **Jeremy Candelaria** 38:51

Right. Right. Well, I heard you say embrace your weird.

J **Jason Duff** 38:54

Yeah.

J **Jeremy Candelaria** 38:55

I've heard that several times from your people, and that's exactly what it is.

C **Chestly Lunday** 38:58

Because we're all a little weird. We are.

J Jason Duff 39:00

Okay.

C Chestly Lunday 39:00

Who wants to be normal? We are a little, especially weird around here.

J Jeremy Candelaria 39:03

Especially weird. A little bit more weird.

J Jason Duff 39:05

Exactly.

J Jeremy Candelaria 39:06

Yeah.

J Jason Duff 39:07

I, I feel, you know, I get motivated by the transformation of a dilapidated building into something beautiful. I get even with people. I mean, this is my— I've done it with houses. I've done it with leaders. I've done it with church. It's like this transformation of moving something or someone, seeing the potential and then them realizing the potential even in the houses. And I think that's so important. And guys like you and I, we see it, and it's very hard to communicate what we see.

C Chestly Lunday 39:45

Well, it's very lonely. Yeah. And that's the thing where just hearing what you guys have done— and there's probably a lot of people that are listening today that might be more like Chesley or more like Jeremy, but you recognize you found each other. And, and I do think that partnerships, you know, we've spent some time on the podcast speaking with uh, folks that have charted out to have partnerships, those are not easy.

J Jason Duff 40:09

No, it's trust. Yeah, complete trust. And I mean, we work at it too.

C Chestly Lunday 40:16

Yeah, it's kind of like a marriage in the aspect that there is conflict that will come up from time to time. There are feelings, there are emotions, there's money conversations. Like, it's a, it's a good test of all of those things.

J Jason Duff 40:29

I have said some stupid things.

C Chestly Lunday 40:31

No way.

J**Jason Duff** 40:33

Very stupid things to my wife and to Jeremy. And yet at the same time, I think the thing that allows us is when we know we're wrong, we're quick to admit it and own it. And I mean, that's one of his core values is ownership. And so more than anything else is my relationship with Jeremy worth the conflict over this, you know, this situation, or going into business. If, if I had to pick a friendship with Jeremy or a business, my friendship with Jeremy is gonna win every time. I don't care about the business that much. Yeah. And coming from somebody that moved 2,200 miles away to be here, like, it was like, you know what, I— we could go into business together. We don't have to. Um, but I know that because I care about him first and not about the money, that's what makes it work.

J**Jeremy Candelaria** 41:36

Yeah, because— and it's reciprocal too. Yeah, you know, it has to be both ways. And we don't have the partnership thing figured out, I'm sure, but we are very quick to be honest with each other and open. And, you know, because I, I grew up as an only child, I like to— I like to call the shots. I like to be alone. I like to make the decisive decisions. But I think we can go further faster if we utilize our strengths together than if I just was doing this all by myself all the time, you know. But, you know, yeah, I mean, if you think about the fact that we, like I said, for 6 years we would rendezvous, like his wife and my wife, we would meet in LA and spend like a couple days there, or we would go to— we met in what, Vegas, Charlotte, just different places. Um, but in and out. And, you know, it's a honeymoon period. Well, he's moving his wife and his children all the way from Phoenix to Ohio. Not just Ohio, but my city. Not just my city, but my, my cul-de-sac. I could throw a rock.

J**Jason Duff** 42:41

I was looking at other places, but, uh, that house was just the one that was—

J**Jeremy Candelaria** 42:47

yeah, which, it's nice, but it, it is, it's a, it's— and then we're in business together. So we went from not hardly seeing each other but talking a lot, to seeing each other and talking a lot, to working together, to living near each other, to going to the same church. And I just basically had to have a heart-to-heart with him and say, I need to be away from you for a little bit. Yep. And it was tough, you know, because I didn't want to let him down. But that's just the essence of relationships and partnerships. If my, my relationship with Chesley means more than any business, right?

C**Chestly Lunday** 43:16

There is that term boundaries. Yeah. And what's been interesting of my entrepreneurial DNA, and we've had many of these—

J**Jason Duff** 43:23

my bad, that was just my foot, you know.

C**Chestly Lunday** 43:25

Hey, okay, are you, are you bleeding?

J**Jason Duff** 43:28

No, no, no, I'm good. That sounded way worse than it actually was.

C**Chestly Lunday** 43:32

But no, we, we, I, I grew up in a family business. We blended the love of family with business. Yeah. And, and for a lot of folks, there are, there are positive upsides to that, but there are also major deterrents where, um, I've had to work with other business partners or employees it's, it's not a family. We're a business. And so you sometimes have to create boundaries. And it's been something that I've had to personally work on because I've had trash and junk of the way I grew up, because that's how we showed love. Yeah, how hard you worked was also equated to like showing love for someone else. And kind of in my company, like, you know, I, we would do exit interviews for, you know, when I first started. Some people would leave. And, you know, one kind of stuck out to me. It said, when I work here, I feel like I have a loaded gun to my head. And I'm like, that seems a little extreme. Wow. Because it was just the culture. We were all buried into the mission, heads down. But for some folks, it was, it was too intense. Yeah. Some people need to leave that and, and, you know, they'll come and go home at night, 8 hours. Yeah. But then when I'm gone, I'm gone.

J**Jason Duff** 44:44

Yeah. Yeah. The problem is in a mission-driven organization, and I can speak speak to this, and you can too, Jeremy, for churches is when you're so inundated with the mission, it's all-encompassing, it's 24/7. And what we do is we do have this weird motif of a family together because it's the mission. The mission creates a family. The reality is you are an organization and organizations have teams and you have seasons on those teams. As a military person, They cut me when I'm no longer useful for them. Am I a part of them? Yeah. Once you're a soldier or an airman, you're always one, you know, but you're not on duty anymore. And so there is camaraderie to be a part of the family without being part of the team. And so I think for mission-driven organizations, you really got to get very clear on when you're here, you have a role on a team. Some of you may be the superstars scoring 40 points a game, and some of you may be picking up trash. You know, and that's okay.

C**Chestly Lunday** 45:48

That's okay.

J**Jason Duff** 45:48

Right? And so, but your team, your team first, you can always be part of the family. Family is forever. Teams are not. And I think having that fundamentally honest conversation actually helps move the mission forward faster because people don't have the emotional baggage. When you fire a family member, it feels like, oh my gosh, we broke— I broke my community.

J **Jeremy Candelaria** 46:09
Right.

J **Jason Duff** 46:09
I no longer am a part of a community. I have been ostracized. And exiled.

C **Chestly Lunday** 46:14
Well, and we see that in the church world all the time. Oh, all the time. Yeah, it just seems to blow up and be more dramatic because everyone holds everyone to a higher standard.

J **Jason Duff** 46:21
So that's what's happening. Yeah. And so you go, no, the organization serves the family and serves the mission. It is not the family and it is not the mission. And that allows you to go, okay, there is some, uh, some separation between the two to allow us to have to have a more emotionally healthy connection here.

C **Chestly Lunday** 46:42
Love that. That's, that's great stuff. Gold. Yeah, that's crazy. Um, we're already kind of— I'm a little shocked this flew by for me, but we're gonna have to have you guys back for sure.

J **Jason Duff** 46:54
Yeah, and Jeremy Candelaria.

C **Chestly Lunday** 46:58
Can I just say, you guys, you can see how experienced they are and just how they're sharing. You launched a podcast. Tell us about the work that you're doing.

J **Jeremy Candelaria** 47:07
Go ahead, Chesley.

C **Chestly Lunday** 47:08
You're—

J **Jason Duff** 47:09
this is— this is— yeah. We've been— so we had the Blue Collar Millionaire podcast, and they currently still have it.

C **Chestly Lunday** 47:16
Yes.

J**Jason Duff** 47:16

So the first was— since we posted— yes, the book, and then I came and we started doing a lot of that stuff. So we've got a few episodes of that. We've taken a hiatus because we've been busy. We had, because Jeremy and I were doing coaching and building it, I had to get some money because I was no longer employed by a church. So we're like, hey, let's take everything that Jeremy has written about in the book and let's see if we can show people how to do this. And so I created, uh, from scratch in 100 days a kitchen remodeling company from zero, from zero. And in 100 days, challenge— had a challenge of can I get \$100,000 in sales? So that was January 5th to the 15th of April, and we did \$115,000. Nice work. Mostly just doing, uh, yeah, doing what Jeremy had taught.

C**Chestly Lunday** 48:04

And I've seen some of these photos, the before and after photos, like you would not believe it's the same place. But you know, sometimes when you see a kitchen that's been renovated, they have taken out all the cabinets, tore out all the countertops, it's like spent \$50,000 plus. What's amazing is these kitchens look completely new but they're using innovative building materials that make it look gorgeous and get the longevity out of the product while also saving money. Yeah, like really impressive stuff.

J**Jason Duff** 48:38

Yep. So we can reface, and, and we do, and we're, we're moving into, you know, remodeling full kitchens now because, uh, and we got— I— we could talk about marketing all day long. I love marketing. I think it's so super important, and being different But that's helped. But everything— I mean, Jeremy's mission in life is to teach leaders and entrepreneurs how to win at life and win in business. And what we wanted to do is we wanted to show, hey, there's credibility here. This works. Yeah, I knew nobody in Akron when I started. Yeah, I had— I had to literally go and get, you know, Secretary of State to file my—

J**Jeremy Candelaria** 49:17

like, we're talking about zero, like, zero. Yeah. No, no business name, no website, nothing. From zero to \$100,000.

J**Jason Duff** 49:25

It was an idea on a car ride that I said, I think this is what it needs to be. Michigan.

J**Jeremy Candelaria** 49:29

Yeah, to a small town.

J**Jason Duff** 49:31

Yeah.

J**Jeremy Candelaria** 49:32

So, and he's done it and he's done fantastic. I'm super proud of him. He is constantly trying to, to pivot, figure out where he can maximize, you know, profitability. I mean, he had no employees, now he is employing 3 people. Wow. If you include his wife and himself on payroll, that's 5 people. People from zero. And it's just been probably now, what, 130 days?

J**Jason Duff** 49:54

Yeah, just not, not even that. Yeah, he's probably 115. It's May 2nd, 117 days.

J**Jeremy Candelaria** 49:59

One of the smartest people ever. So yeah, that podcast, we have a lot of fun, you know. It turns out that we, we're, we're funny. And if you have to say that, really, I mean, but we really are, because I'll go back and listen to it, I'm like, oh my gosh, you know, just some of the things that we that we— that come out of that. It's just awesome. It's great to work with one of my best friends. Yeah. So yeah, that podcast, Blue Collar Millionaire Podcast, check it out. And then of course, you know, I'm on Instagram, and Chesley, even though he's a digital guy, doesn't really do—

J**Jason Duff** 50:31

I don't do social media at all. I really could care less about social media. I know how to use it, but I don't care. Yeah. So yeah. And if you like the faith side and innovation, Um, chesleylunday.com, and I do podcasts with, uh, interviews. You were on my show. Yeah, that was great. Um, and talking about innovation in the church space and innovation as a whole and how to build change processes and all that sort of stuff. So if you like that, and we had data, you know, for the future of faith in America, um, and we wanted to find out what Gen Z and young millennials were thinking that faith should look like in the next 10 years. And so we used Jason, our friend, uh, his company, uh, to build, uh, a study that's 1,276 people all over the country that says, hey, 13 to 55-year-olds, what do you want it to look like? And so we did this humongous study. It's actually groundbreaking in the church space. And there's some really crazy, um, stats and, uh, data points that we pulled out. And we said, oh, it's crazy. So if you want that, we give that out free. All you have to do is chesleylunday.com/futureoffaith.

C**Chestly Lunday** 51:48

Awesome. I don't even give you my email address? What's that? Do I get it just from that link, or do I have to give you my email address?

J**Jason Duff** 51:54

You do have to get the email address.

C**Chestly Lunday** 51:57

You better be marketing. I'm a marketer.



Jason Duff 51:59

I do want to talk to you in the future.



Chestly Lunday 52:02

Yes. Yeah. Yes, sure.



Jason Duff 52:04

And that was a very expensive study, so the least we could do is get an email address.



Chestly Lunday 52:09

That's awesome. And I'll try to link, uh, that podcast. And you have a couple books out, right? Yeah, not just the one, but—



Jeremy Candelaria 52:17

yeah, so it's Blue Collar Millionaire is, uh, is, is the one that we've referred to. And then my wife and I co-wrote a book called Life 45. And so it's just, um, it's a book on discipline, and it was really fun kind of going through that book with my wife. And, and so, yeah, you can check it out. Both of them Amazon bestsellers. You can Uh, get on Amazon, you can purchase both of them there. Uh, just Jeremy Candelaria and then the books will pop up.



Chestly Lunday 52:42

Yeah, I'll link them in the show notes too. Thank you. Um, and then where can people follow your businesses?



Jeremy Candelaria 52:48

Right, so Creative Concrete Ohio, I mean, that's, that's me. creativeconcreteohio.com. Um, and again, it's just a concrete company. So if you need concrete or you know someone who needs concrete or you want coaching when it comes to business and not, and not just concrete, any kind of blue collar Uh, please just, just look us up. But yeah, that's my website.



Jason Duff 53:07

And speaking from somebody that's been coached by Jeremy, you don't move 2,200 miles to be next to the guy if he's a bad coach.



Jeremy Candelaria 53:16

Yeah.



Jason Duff 53:16

So I'll just say that as a plug.



Chestly Lunday 53:18

Great, great.

J

Jason Duff 53:18

Um, thekitchenrefresh.com is, uh, our company name too.

C

Chestly Lunday 53:26

So yeah, great domains, by the way. Yeah, I'm impressed, guys. Uh, Thank you. This has been a great, a great episode today. I think the encouragement mixed with the accountability is one of the many special things that you guys have accomplished. And I cannot— I love the, the F power statements that you shared with faith and finance and fitness, friendship and family.

J

Jason Duff 53:52

And we really love F words around here.

C

Chestly Lunday 53:53

Well, you need the F words on the good days. I need them in the bad days too, right?

J

Jason Duff 53:59

It's the most utilitarian, versatile. Yeah, yeah.

C

Chestly Lunday 54:03

There you go. But guys, thanks for being on the show today.

J

Jeremy Candelaria 54:07

Thanks for having us.

J

Jason Duff 54:09

All right.

E

Ethan DeLeon 54:09

Well, thank you everyone for tuning in and checking out the Small Nation podcast. You can find us anywhere that you listen to your podcast, including Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and even the Small Nation YouTube channel. I hope you're able to pull some value from that conversation and we hope to see you in the next one. If you enjoyed it, be sure to leave a like, comment, or 5-star review to help more people to discover this podcast.

J

Jason Duff 54:27

Stay tuned to Small Nation on social media to keep up with all the cool projects that are happening here.

E

Ethan DeLeon 54:31

And until next time, this is Ethan with the Small Nation Podcast signing off. Thanks everyone.