Voice Over: Welcome to the R.E.I. Diamonds Show with Dan Breslin, your source for Real Estate Investment, Jewels of Wisdom.

Dan Breslin: Welcome to the R.E.I Diamond Show. I'm your host, Dan Breslin. And this is Episode 200 with Life Lessons on Prosperity with The Wealthy Gardener author John Soforic.

If you are into building wealth through real estate investing, you are in the right place. My goal is to identify high-caliber real estate investors and other industry service providers. I'd invite them on the show and then draw out the jewels of wisdom, those tactics and mindsets, and methods used to create millions of dollars or more in the business of real estate.

Dr. John Soforic was once a chiropractor with more than \$200,000 in student debt. He retired at age 49, with a retirement income of \$240,000 per year. He then wrote a book for his son in college, The Wealthy Gardener: Lessons on Prosperity Between Father and Son. The book went on to become an Amazon bestseller. Hit number 46 worldwide on Audible and has been translated into six languages.

Generational wealth is not just money. It's not just equity or numbers on a balance sheet. One very critical component of wealth is the knowledge on how to steward that wealth, a critical piece missing from so many estate plans. John viewed this challenge in his own life as he sought to inspire his 19-year-old son to absorb and learn the wisdom he discovered over the decade or more building his own wealth. And so, The Wealthy Gardener was born.

I listened on Audible myself and then found myself immediately recommending the book to a few friends of mine who are early in their real estate investing career. I describe this book as the Rich Dad Poor Dad for the new generation, but with a greater focus on real estate and the mindsets needed to actually create that wealthy life.

John and I discussed real estate, my juvenile delinquent past, our shared experience of having a child attend Temple University and, of course, his book, The Wealthy Gardener. Please enjoy this conversation with John Soforic.

All right. Mr. John Soforic, welcome to the R.E.I Diamond Show. How you doing today?

John Soforic: I'm doing fine. Thank you.

Dan: Nice. So let's location and timestamp for us here. I'm recording from Chicago. We're in the fall of 2021 and whereabouts are you there, John?

John: I am in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and just outside of a small-town outside of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. I used to live in Chicago though.

Dan: Okay. I used to live in Grove City, which is north of Pittsburgh. And then I also lived in Greensburg, which is just outside of Pittsburgh.

John: Okay, Dan. We're narrowing down. I went to Grove City College. And Greensburg is 10

minutes from where I live.

Dan: Nice. I probably drove through your town on the way to like the driving range or something like that.

John: Yeah. Wow, that's pretty close. I lived in Naperville, Illinois.

Dan: Okay. Yeah. How about that? I've obviously driven through there. Cool. So for the listeners that have not discovered the wealth of knowledge and inspirational book that you had written so far, do you want to kind of give us the storyline of The Wealthy Gardener, that book as a good place to start here.

John: Sure. The Wealthy Gardener was a book I wrote for my son. He was graduated from college. I had achieved the goals I wanted financially in my life. I achieve those and retired at the age of one just before the age of 50. And I was compelled and pulled in the direction of trying to advise my son who was just coming out of college on while my life lessons of getting, they're coming from nothing to, you know, point of financial power that I know I always wanted to. That was my life goal to free myself.

He was coming out of ready to start his own journey. So, I wrote "The Wealthy Gardener." I-when you're talking to your son, you can't write a cookbook of dry information that will crush you, worse than anybody. So, I had to try to formulate a parable, a story kind of in the vein of the richest man in Babylon. That was always a story that spoke to me. And so, I had to audition side.

That I could actually do this, and do it on a scale that would compete with that kind of a book. And so that's how it all originated. I didn't have the quite, the book to give to my son. I wrote a book called The Wealthy Gardener, a garden is a parable for life, you know, it's classic Perrigo-for parable for your time on Earth and so wealth, in this book.

Yeah, it's about money. I wanted to stick to that topic. It can be a lot of things to a lot of people but in this book, The Wealthy Gardener is about a prosperous life in a time you're given. And it spans over four or five characters and basically, distills everything I've ever learned on along the way. It's my drop of every life lesson I learned on the way, and every struggle and everyone in defeat, and it went for my son. That's all. Eventually, we published it and it took off.

Dan: So, we had it. We had the path of a young gentleman and an older gentleman who are not necessarily related in the story. Do you want to just briefly summarize the transformation and maybe mentoring relationship? That was one of the parables throughout that book, John?

John: The Wealthy Gardener, he has, he got in the situation where his wife was killed by a drunk driver. He started mentoring at a juvenile, delinquent, delinquent center. It's actually at that juvenile delinquent center. He came to meet a really special young man that they just clicked with, and it was became one of his best students thing was Jimmy.

Jimmy in the story represents ambition to me and their story goes on and on with Jimmy. He's just having the hunger have any ambition, having the ability to absorb the information and do

something about it. Having the courage to actually take action. So, he was a useful character in the book that could actually listen to the wisdom of this wealthy gardener, who was on his way out. He has some unfinished business.

He was close to dying and Jimmy just one of many characters there was other characters that might represent futility. People that don't take the right choices. There were characters that represent aimlessness and a lot of times is an allegory. It said I wanted to show my son, have him experience the consequences of decisions in real life. And so sometimes you do that through story. Sometimes as the most impactful way you can teach things.

And so that was my goal. Jimmy to me, he was an ambitious guy. He had a lot of drive and all the frustration that comes with it, and he was able to absorb the what the wealthy gardener's lessons and actually take the Baton, I guess, is what I'd like to say. Yeah.

Dan: So, it was interesting for me. So just to kind of like really put, I don't know, set the frame, a little further for everybody listening here. I read Rich Dad Poor Dad, early on. It's one of the-- if not, the most recommended book on the podcast, and we're episode 200 here, which is milestone for the REI Diamond Show, really cool episode. And I thought, what a great serendipity that you and I are talking here.

So we have Rich Dad, Poor Dad, which was kind of the same parable-like awakening of the difference, let's say, between like assets and business ownership and just taking a job, which is most people's, you know, 9 to 5, 40 hours a week. This is the path that Americans go and then there's just like lower percentage path, that most of the people listening to the show. You, me, you know, hopefully, our family someday are going to take, which is like the parable or the lesson we were learning from Rich Dad, Poor Dad, and I think that I've already recommended The Wealthy Gardener. It's like more than one person, especially at the beginning of their investment careers, and I was blown away by several different things throughout that book.

I felt like there were actionable items in there and a lot of things that I had to pick up from a large variety of mentors and books and coming to my own conclusions. And here it was all laid out in The Wealthy Gardener. Like wow, this is the kind of thing that I do every day. This is how I like live my life already.

It was probably even more impactful for me, John because the reason I lived in Grove City was because George Jr. Republic is in Grove City, which is a juvenile detention center. So that's where I graduated high school.

John: Wow.

Dan: For getting in trouble, I was on my way to you know, my grand plan in Senior year was like dropout, got myself in trouble, wound up there. I think it was the Westmoreland County Community College. So I was in Greensburg at like a-- you know, I got privileges, and it was just like unique situation because this kid is going college, who's still in the juvenile. I think I was like over 18 at this point, and I was going to the Community College, like, down in Greensburg. So, it's like how I ended up living in the Pittsburgh region there.

John: Wow.

Dan: And then, like, to take the whole thing, another level deeper, I've used the garden with people. It's like you got to plant seeds. You got to invest your time and my hobby is like bonsai trees. You can see I have two of them kind of over my shoulder here. And I've shared with people like my experience in the last, like three or four years. Since I got the bonsai trees has been taking care of these small trees, which need kind of like a consistent amount of attention daily, often sometimes, more in daily. Sometimes it's things like pruning off the roots and pruning off the leaves. Sometimes it's being sensitive to weather, too much waters to use, not enough water.

So this like this, like attention, and this like, little tweaking here, and there is a big part of what I've applied, that mindset into the business of diamond equity investments are house-flipping business, and I've been able to kind of observe that same continuous attention. And, you know, the principles of gardening like you talked about in the book, carry over to building a business. And if we're talking about building a rental property business, or a house-flipping business, or probably even a tech business.

So, somebody were doing something of that nature. I think that for me, gardening and I live in a condo, right? So it's like my succulents and my bonsai. This like little-known habit of mine and if anyone wants to check it out, you go to YouTube to see the video, so you can see what John and I are looking at here. But, like gardening mindset like having to develop that mindset and that hobby also, applied to the business, and I was like, kind of surprised. And then here you wrote this entire book along those same lines. So, I'm curious, that's how this book sort of impacted me personally. And I felt like, wow, it's like I almost could have written it, but I'm wondering how much of the story is actually inspired by your life. Are you a gardener? I mean, did you have some other ideas there, or was it, you know?

John: It's a metaphor then. But I always say this, one of the reasons I got into writing this book is because I felt like a book needed to be written by a person who's been through the things you're writing about. And what I found was so many times the books that I have read them. And, I was always frustrated a little bit because the books that are out there are oftentimes regurgitated by people who haven't done it. They're hoping to make their money in the book sell business.

It's a really bad business to make your money then. So they should really try to find a different strategy. It's-- I want to have from a very lucrative business with real estate into a book business was just one of the worst you can ever go into if your goal is money. So I yeah it speaks to you because I did it. I'm a warrior who fought the war. You're fighting second to Kyle. I want this speaks to me about your story. Then I didn't notice anybody listening here. We didn't have this conversation, but I had a time.

What impresses me, I had to learn a lot about a juvenile detention center to write this book. And what I found was that within five years of parole of getting out of a juvenile detention center, over seventy percent nationwide of those juvenile delinquents will return to prison an adult prison, 70 % failure rate. And so, it was an interesting place for the wealthy gardener, to go to try

to teach success to a group that we just-- It's just that we're feeling, there's a lot of good people there. It's a tough nut to crack and look at you. Jesus. You're among that statistic. We can't even keep 70% out of gel, let alone your level of success.

So to me, my eyes are open here in your story because you're Jimmy. And I was part of the 70%. So it wasn't all peaches and cream after that. But 2011 for me, I found myself broke again. Got it to the business or real estate in 2006, and I had this like nice, you know, rise and my personal life and some money came, and then the drinking and partying came again, and I crashed again.

And in 2011, I remember it was like, you know, I don't want to say suicidal because it wasn't like I was contemplating that but maybe like, just completely destitute and out of options. And the only thing that came to mind was, "Dad, can you drop off a Bible for me? That was like the inspiration I had, and I remember it started reading the Bible and not much of it made sense, and I was determined to read it all the way through and I did that for several years. I read every day. Read the Bible and made it through a few times. And it was like, it was like instantly.

I remember I did a deal. I completely broke, right? I mean, it's like my dad's dropping food off with the Bible. And I remember doing a deal that kind of came in, with no marketing running, and it was on Christian Street and like, whoa, this is like a big sign and there was like the guy selling, like, you can take whatever you want out of there or not going to like take anything out of the house. And I found this, like, big box of Bibles and took all those with me. It was like this very interesting treasure that came, and I gave my life back to God and you know, the sun has continued to shine brighter since 2011. I quit drinking in January 21, 2012.

And then, the diamond Equity Investments that everybody knows of, who knows the company now that had slowly been built as the you know, the garden was planted and tended since 2011. Until here we are, a decade later from that I guess, you know?

John: So here we are with me. I appreciate this story while what a great story then. You know, you're talking about spiritual things that nobody wants to talk about in this genre. That's okay if you talk about it in the spiritual genre, but not in finance, but I love to talk about that over here.

And I love that because, you know, okay, why? Why the metaphor over garden? One of the things I always say is the gardeners are busy, man. They're not happy unless they're dirty, but they also are aware of a silent voice, the silent mysterious force in the background that makes the plants grow, and this book you read it has a lot of spirituality in it because that's my life.

And you know, it's one of those things you can say if you're not-- if you self-published like if I went to New York first, they wouldn't let me put that stuff in a book, right? So I self-published first, then New York. Those Publishers came and got me later when they saw the bookselling, but they came in even. So I'll tell you a story. They wanted to change the capital letters of anything that referred to Divinity, like the unseen force or universal intelligence or the silent voice. Things that I might highlight with a capital letter because I mean more than just, you know, your brain they wanted to put those in lower case.

Dan: Wow.

John: I said no deal. No deal if you want my book. That's my book. And I stood the ground, and they said okay, they rolled their eyes at make cynical, cynically, right? So I love the fact that you're saying that. That's fantastic, and you know anybody that has a doubt of that, just go and study Steve Jobs, and I would say this, I want to tell you the answer. Look to see what book he gave everybody attending his funeral. What book was that? He gave one book. You hear all kinds of stories about Steve Jobs. You never hear that story. Look it up.

Dan: So we're not going to share that, right? We're going to make them, actually including me, go look for that.

John: I would say, I wouldn't want to leave it out there. So people get can't just sigh. Look that up. The most important thing, he did. He invited a select group to his funeral. He gave him a black box. In that black box, he gave him one parting gift. That parting gift was a book. Look that up. It's a hard book to get through, and it is a spiritual book, and it'll blow you away as far as what Steve Jobs... if you hear a person refer a book to you, you know, that's what they believe in. You want to know what Steve Jobs believe in? Look at the thing he gave, everybody at his funeral.

Dan: We will leave that topic there. We will shift gears. So let's talk about your personal life, right? The 20s to the 30s were a certain way. You started to build this other thing. Can you kind of talk about the businesses you built? Maybe a brief summary of how you got to a place of financial freedom, John?

John: Sure. I can try to brief that over. I kind of follow the traditional packed-in. I graduated from college. I was a chiropractor, graduated at the age of 24. I came out. My wife was from the same graduating class. So combined, we had over two hundred thousand dollars in student debt on day one. We moved into our own practice. We had to get 40,000 more of student. That's down a quarter-million down on day one with that one patient. So that's how it started. Okay. Within three years, we have two kids, my wife stay at home with them and that's the start of a hard journey for me.

By the time I'm in my early 30s, I'm still paying back that student loan. And I'm getting to the point where your life can become an existential crisis because you know, you're stuck man. I mean, despite all your good blessings for which you're happy, and you're playing, you're thankful. I mean, you're still kind of a waste label, a quite, in many ways. And that's what I got really dissatisfied with life. 2001 came around, and the stock market blew up on me and I lost 70% of everything. What little I had, and now I just have a dead all over again.

So, I think was the critical time Dan with the first five years of any journey, mine was probably like the 31 to 36 around that ballpark. It's like the liftoff of an airplane. That's where all the energy goes to change that direction around. You know, when you talk about the Bible and you talk about the time when your dad drops out off, those are the years. Those are the years, that's where all the energy has to go. And then you hit this platitude of cruising altitude, where life, it's a lot easier at that point. And your job then is just to carry the momentum forward.

So after 35 and 36, I just carried the momentum forward. I already had the momentum going. What did I do at that point? So from 31, I'm a chiropractor. I'm starting to build a rental portfolio, quietly. I paid down my student debt quietly, one day at a time. Everything's one day at a time. I started flipping houses because I ran out of money. I used the profits from my flip build the rental snowball, and that was my process.

I had a Chiropractic business. I had a rental business. And I had a flipping business, and it just didn't end. That was my river. I created a big snowball at the end. I was like I said, a really big goal for financial power. I wanted to throw a fist at it and that number was big. I ended up reaching that, it's \$20,000 in residual profit a month. Through rentals is absurd. It's certainly nothing that...it was attainable. It was impossible, but it was attainable in the end.

So that's what I did when I was dead broke, Dan. I made a big goal that only an insane person could make, and I did it while raising a family. I did it in a middle-class. I did it with a job. So all those excuses that people come up with are just not, they're not valid to me. I had those disadvantages too. I worked my way out of it. So, can you? And it's not that hard. It's actually a time of really empowerment to work your way out of it. Just time focus.

Dan: I'm curious. So like, I've only owned rental property myself, maybe for the last five years or so. And I see some of the compounding occur, and I didn't have the capability to buy enough so that the compounding made a big difference. And one of my friends on Facebook that I saw, he's kind of like, just a few weeks ago, you know, buy a bunch of rentals and then give them enough time to compound a bit. And like, as I look at, let's say having four rental properties with for rents for units versus let's say having 28 or 38 rental properties and then having 28 or 38 units with leases where you know, real estate. The value of real estate is somewhat a function of the cash flow produced by the real estate.

And so, I think what I'm coming to the realization of more and more, day by day now, is like that compounding of those rents like they don't have to go up but like, maybe what 1, 2, 3 % of really lucky here. We've had 10% increases in rent lately. And so, I feel like I'm on a path with putting my savings into rental properties where you know that compounding is what makes a difference. So like those twenty thousand dollars a month, you know, that's not really liked what you saw when you were buying into those deals. I'm assuming there must have been some compounding where the rents had increased and stuff that you'd bought it, you know a decade before suddenly the needle has moved because the compounding is happened. Right? You hear Warren Buffet compounding is the greatest thing, and you hear stuff about compounding, and yeah, sometimes it's in the context like a savings account. Is where my mind was about compounding like, oh no, like a half a percent or 2% compoundings, really not going to move the needle but if we've levered up, and you know, the ten grand that was in savings was a down payment for a \$50,000 house and then that rent happened. Now, the rent and the 50 grand is where the compounding happens. And that compounding makes much more of a difference.

So, I guess the simple question I'm asking is like, could you describe... how that compounding happened, and maybe you were sharing that with... I don't recall if it was in The Wealthy Garden or not. Maybe you're sharing it with your son, and you're trying to describe it to him, and he's 23 or 24. Like, what affected compounding have on, you hitting that goal? Because you had done

this work, 10 years, 14, 15 years prior to get to that end result.

John: So the word compounding to me was is all about, like, first of all, when I dipped my toes in this business. What I liked about it, Dan, was that if I bought a rental this year, just one, let's say. Next year, I still had that thing, and it was still pumping was like a gas. Well, it was still pumping back there pumping, pumping, pumping. So, if I buy three rentals that year, I have three guests wells. And now if I move in a year or two, and I bought three more now, I have six gas wells pumping and it-- they didn't go away. I-- so much of my income as a chiropractor you would always go in, make your money. See your patients. There's never an end to it, and there's never an accumulation of it.

At the start of the year every year it's always a new generation of all that income. But this gave me a sense that the years mattered, a little bit more, because I left something there and those things followed me. So the compounding, yeah, in my area I'm not sure the rents... they don't--we don't live in a high inflationary area. So you better buy your profit right now. You better have cash flow this minute. Where I'm from, everything's local, right? So that's what-- that's where I started from, and it's just kind of snowballed.

Once I saw that it was working. And once I became more competent. I started throwing more money into it. So now, maybe I have three houses going at once for renovating, and then boom. We put nose in, move it under three more, and maybe now I'm five houses at once, but that stuff doesn't happen at the start. At the start, you just do one. And then you move up and move up and move up.

Now, I can tell you the momentum just goes right through there. And I think that half the time, you know, dreams have died of boredom as much as they do of lack of courage because it just turns into a big slug and people want to have this glamorous life and it's going to be so eventful on the way up. This is so exciting. Well, no. Yeah. Well, sometimes it is. Sometimes it isn't. It's fun when you buy them. It's fun when you rent them. The in-between is the long time, and it's a lot of slogging that's said, to answer your question, the arc of it, the great success of compounding, in my life occurred in the last, probably three years. I stuck with it.

And at that point, you know, you start to get more and more money, and you start to get to the point where you have the knowledge and the financial power to take advantage of the bigger opportunities. All of a sudden you're not shooting little rabbits, you're shooting elephants. And now I'm buying a 36 unit apartment building. I know what I'm doing. I'm buying a 10 unit. I'm buying a block of duplexes. And so it's the natural evolution of power that happens over the course, the span of a lifetime.

That's how it works. But it would have never happened without those little tiny houses I bought at first. And that's the Warren Buffett thing, he's talking about how it's always on the back end, and it is. But boy, I'll tell you what, a lot of people don't make it to the back end because that, that front end and the middle-end, a middle part, that's where you just got to stay steady. Stay the course. One day at a time. Get over the boredom. Yeah. And just do it. Do it. Do it. That's the game of it. The challenge is in the middle to get to the back, the back end of that compounding, you're talking about, right?

Dan: So let's talk about that first deal. Would you mind touching on? You know, a few parameters there?

John: Absolutely. I-- the way I did it then was I learned everything I could, you know, you try to bring it in he's, so you don't make a mistake. And I would look-- I was calling Realtors, and I'm terrified of a realtor at that point, you know, it seems crazy now. So I'm calling a realtor. I'm looking at their houses, and I'm trying to pretend, I know what I'm doing, and I'm trying to fool this person. And I'm trying to live, walk around this clipboard, and I'm looking at this looking at things. Look at what after about 25 of those houses. I'm no longer feeling as dumb as I did when I started.

I can really fool the Realtors now, a lot better than I did at the start. They think I might know what I'm doing. And so I'm working on my clipboard, huh. This is, I don't know I'm doing. It's all new to me until we walked into one and because of all that experience. I walked into one. And I couldn't check off something wrong with it. I said, wait a minute. This is a different animal. This is a different animal. And as you can see it based on your past doing, like people talk about doing real estate. If your ass is not in a house. If you're not getting an [inaudible], or you're not doing real estate. All right, you're just not. There are impact activities that you must do, and you're kidding yourself if you're not doing them.

My goal was to get in houses. I was in about 50 houses before I walked in that one and because of those 50 houses, I walked into that house stood out. I bought it for \$34,000. I put \$10,000 into it. It rents for 750 a month, in my area. So the parameters in my area that I was looking for, I'm always cash-on-cash done that. I want cash-on-cash return. I was looking for about two thousand dollars, maybe 200 a door works in my area. I can get to maybe 150 a door with leverage when I come back and refinance. Bottom line is, that's how it happened when my first one, I just kept doing it, until that fish swim along that looked like looked different than all the other fish and I caught him. That's how it worked.

Dan: Yeah, it's ironic. I mean, it brings up the skill of underwriting. So when I'm doing these deals in three different four different markets around the country, I am looking at, I can't tell you how many deals. I do all of my underwriting from the desk. So I'm looking at, you know, Clemson MLS here. I'm almost there 'cetera, et cetera. And I know that the compounding effect happened for me. And the ability to underwrite a lot of those deals. And I recently began by and multifamily properties myself, and I kind of did the same thing, I got on people's lists, right? So that I'm seeing, you know, this is a 15 unit building and the heater is paid for by the landlord. Oh, this is a six-unit, it's going for XYZ price. And then finally, I mean, I'm looking at opening these emails intentionally, and they weren't making any sense to me, right? As far as a buy or anything near the price. And finally, I see the one in my, oh, yeah. This is the one, you know. No headaches gone right in close and it's-- you know, perfectly stable. And I'm happy with that purchase.

So early on, at least I had the perspective when I'm looking at my multifamily stuff if I've been doing this for 15 plus years already. But for somebody who's brand new, getting on the wholesaler email lists, if it's looking at Zillow, you got to get a grasp of the market and even

asking prices and looking at these properties a lot of them to your point. First fifty, like this, is not a deal. Like, I don't feel good about this at all. And it's like, you know, number 48, I'm wondering if you're thinking like, am I ever going to find anything? That makes sense to my questioning, my own buying ability?

This is, you know, is this even for me? Like, well, what's going on here? And it's like 49 and 50. And you walk into his like, boom. I was lucky to-- I can't remember, not too many. I probably had only looked at three or four in the very beginning. Before I ended up on my first deal early on, they were single-family houses. And I was just wholesaling those houses to other investors. So my risk profile was different, the fact that I had no cash was different. But yeah, the underwriting skill is something to intentionally develop on that first deal. So when you had that property under contract, were you still feeling any experiences of terror, I mean, what was the conversation going to bed, when you guys maybe send out the deposit or the night before closing between you and your wife, John?

John: Between me and my wife, my wife wasn't a believer for sure. That's it. That's an understatement. So now, I-- conversation was Patty, I think this works. Here's why I think it works. I mean, keep in mind that you do have a responsibility to your partner. You're going just together. And so I presented her the reasons why I always, always did ask for everybody to tell me why I'm making a mistake.

And if you do that, you've done me the best favor of my life. So, here's what I think is right, tell me what's wrong in what I'm thinking. That's the key man. And you know, to your point of going 50 of these units and not having any. Yeah, you're saying you're-- you think it's possible. Yeah, you know it's possible. The problem with real estate is it goes 50 and then all of a sudden, 51, 2, and 3 are deals. Oh, was. What!? Why can't we just even this out on a convention-- doesn't work that way.

We don't have an... even conveyor belt. It's just, it's always sporadic and random. So my hands were shaking, men. I mean, I still remember that deal. I think the realtor that son of a gun, I think he wanted to buy the thing because he saw the same thing I did, you know. So we walked in there and I thought the realtor is going to beat me on the deal. That said, my hands were asleep. I wasn't sleeping. It was the \$34,000 deal by the end of that.

By the end of this time then, I could buy a 10 unit and tell him to tell my wife. Some-- you know, I just got a 10 unit today. She know I'm thinking about. She got-- she knows that I'm going to worry way more than she would ever worried. Because she knows who's going to take the stress of this if it's wrong. So it's a point-- at the end of it, to your point, I could talk to my wife and tell her we're doing this. And she just says, "Okay, I'm busy." Whatever. She knows that it's going to be okay, but your wife won't trust you nor should show you on the first deal, you know. That she have to give people a little experience of this is going to work, and then they start to trust you. It's only human nature. I didn't hold her against that against her.

Dan: So yeah, I'm getting chills because one of the guys that I grew up with he's probably 29 or 30, and he made some money doing some kind of online, arbitrage thing. So he's got a little cash. He has a decent job. His name is Justin and I referred this book to him because he's like, "I want

to get in real estate," and then we happened to be talking, then the book recommendation came. I'm not even, not even all the way through your book, and I'm like, fire it off to him. And I get chills because the conversation that he's having with his wife trying to get to his first deal is kind of going like that. And I imagine that something that I was single. So I was lucky, I didn't have that challenge in getting to my first deal at the time. And I didn't have anything else working in life. So, it was like the boats were burned. So it was like it's relatively easy for me to go out and do my first deal, make it happen compared to people who have other levels of, you know, society, acceptable, success already. Let's say, right? Safely. If that were safety before the first deal, actually happened and other people who were accountable to in our lives. So I think, you know, as he listens to this episode, he'll be happy to hear that. The other end of that pathway could be something like you had.

John: It's an advantage. I would say to Justin, "That's an advantage." Your wife is going to try to pick a part for you, the problems of this deal were letter. Letter, man. And you know, because what you want to do is not make that mistake. I always felt the same way about Bankers people get so frustrated because Bankers are conservative, and they will--

Hey! When a banker's on my side, and they're looking at a deal. I want that input, you tell me why this doesn't work, please. I want that. What you want to do is not make mistakes in this business. That's the key to survival, and you can always hold your money. The way people die in real estate is they make mistakes. You don't die from missing a good one. You buy from getting a bad one. That's how you die.

Dan: Yeah, good call for sure. So one of the things to is... separate topic. We're going to change gears, but my daughter is 19. She's at Temple University now, and she's never--

John: My son was in Temple when I wrote the book.

Dan: No kidding, huh? Here we go. Again. Too cool men. This is very inspired. And so that was part of the thing, you know. Reading a story in the backline, and you're like transferring this knowledge, and I'm thinking like, you know, my daughter wasn't thinking real estate at all, and it was cool. She took like a part-time job over the summer and the office and like, I don't go into the office to team is working there. So she didn't like have to hear dad telling her about real estate, which she just couldn't pay attention to her here, but she heard it from the people who are like, working in the office and suddenly, she's like inspired about real estate. And I think it's really critical.

So, like, most people would think of, like, what is my family inheritance? While my dad owns to 36 unit, building the 10-unit, bop, bop, or maybe like, I, my dad doesn't own anything, but I'm looking at this other person whose family inheritance is going to be bunch of multi-families. It bunch of rentals think, "Wow. They got it all together." And then recently, partially from your book, partially just from my own meditating and thinking on it, but I feel like the inheritance passed down from your family is so critical, and you've taken it upon yourself to make a plan to pass it down to your own son. But I would even highlight, there's people who are going to have strengths, habits, disciplines, waking up early, other kinds of this like knowledge inheritance to comes down from the family that you can leverage. And someone might be listening to this and

they never met their dad. Right? They may have grown up with foster parents and not even known either their parents or maybe their parents had some bit of you know, knowledge inheritance passed on. But maybe it's not like we're talking about today in real estate or who knows what else. And I think that like, not much acknowledgment is always said to the starting position of where people are at in life and I felt like the book that you wrote helped to really highlight a lot of this stuff that I had to figure out from this variety of places. And my dad, he's... you know, great guy. He's the one that paid for the seminar for me to get into real estate. He's the one who tried to flip a couple houses and failed as I was growing up. And suddenly we were like broke by the time the high school years came, but my dad did a lot of things like quitting drinking before me. So that was like a piece of my inheritance I got for my dad. I was able to like be inspired from him doing that and finally clean my act together. Like God forbid. What if he had never cleaned up? I probably won't be having the conversation here today with you, John. So I was blessed to have that one thing, you know. Something as simple as, like, my mom keeping the kitchen clean.

Like, now, I can keep my kitchen clear. Answers like a lot of the subconscious stuff that some people may not have a lot of that already. Some of us may have had it, you know, maybe parents didn't graduate from college and so getting to that point as this other piece. But I just feel like for me looking at my daughter who's 19, and I set, you know, I'm setting up a state plans and thinking about what would happen if God forbid a bus were to hit me, right? But there's so much more besides just the money that goes in the estate plan that I think a lot of families neglect to pass down to the children.

And if we were to go and look at Rockefeller's life, so the book Titan by Ron, sure know, I believe... you could read Rockefeller. Also, very spiritual journey for Rockefeller, but one of the things that Rockefeller did was to make sure to pass down how the family's going to live. And I think that's like a topic that many people may be just don't acknowledge. I know for me in the last three or four years, my daughter became older suddenly became real and something that I want to make sure I'm intentional about passing that down.

Of course, she's going to, you know, see the way we live and there's assets. Hopefully, will still be there, the day I leave Earth. But the knowledge inheritance is something that even if all the money stuff was not there, almost can be more valuable, right John?

John: Well, yeah, I remember Carnegie actually had that quote. He said that the greatest part of my inheritance coming from the richest man in the world. At the time is the knowledge that I'm going to impart to, you know, I'm going to try to impart through a philosophy of success. And that was-- that's when he commissioned Napoleon Hill to write the law of success book. So, you know, I think highly of Andrew Carnegie, no question about it.

And I think that you know, it's our job to try to help our children learn or adult children learn. That said, they're not always going to listen or be at the time of their life when they are going to listen to. So, it's your job as a parent, in my opinion, to get out of this with a clean conscience. I did my part, man. They can screw up all they want. They can-- you can't control the choices. We all make choices that our parents didn't agree with. It's-- that's how it works. But I have a clear conscience. That's all I can-- That's all I can get out of parenthood. I did my best, man. And that--

I think that's, that's the only goal there. So...

Dan: Yeah, I think... as part of my spiritual journey, I remember one of the first humongous mindset shifts, spiritual shift maybe was Proverbs 8:11. And that is, "For wisdom is more valuable than rubies. Nothing you desire can compare with it." And I'm thinking, well, I believe this was inspired by God. And if God were face-to-face with me, telling me that... what that means for me, is, it wasn't that you know, the deal was always what I was looking for, the money just you know, all the other stuff that's fine. I just got to figure out how to make a hundred grand a year, so I can send my daughter to college and be able to pay for it. Right? This is-- I'm desperate. This was a juvenile mentality of mine. And so I'm like 31 years old reading this and this like shift happened and the highlights of my day today, John, it's not like, "Wow, we close this great deal, and we made," but the highlights are more-- the little tweak in the business or the little piece of knowledge that I get that I can share was someone on our podcast here today, or I can share with my daughter. I could share with one of my business partners, me observing the world for that next piece of wisdom, that next piece of knowledge, right? And being very intentional about that and just like focused on that. And when I was able to kind of shift, their reward in my brain from like a monetary thing and hitting the goal's thing to perhaps getting the knowledge and going through the book to actually make those goals a reality. For me, that was a real critical piece of, you know, the last 10 years of my life, right?

John: Now, it's like, I think when I'm-- I think of what you're saying, it just reminds me of Maslow's hierarchy, and you know, we got it-- we got to get over that initial survival part of life, you know? If we're struggling down there on the bottom, and we're just worried about our own survival financially. If we're at that level, I'm telling you, man, there's not a whole lot else you can think about, you know. And what a joy it is to get above that level and so you can actually have the opportunity to think of other things. And then, you know, if you see what happened in my trajectory, I couldn't have written this book, Dan, if I didn't get financial freedom because I gave full-time work to this. Sometimes, you'll hear authors say that, you know, that it took three years to write a book. Keep in mind, what they're doing is working a full-time job, nine times out of ten, way more than that, and work in their writing in the margins of their days and maybe two hours in the weekends. It adds up to seven hours a week at best, maybe four, maybe three. So when you-- they say three hours, three years for a book, I couldn't do that. I-- that was a big purpose for me, writing a book for my son and maybe for others, maybe for other generations, just imparting everything I know. I couldn't have that self-actualization, that thing that was destined for me, unless I had the financial thing figured out first.

You know, and it gave me the freedom then to pursue a higher purpose and I think that's to me, that's the value I wanted. What I wanted was all invisible. It wasn't stuff that you can see. I wanted that freedom, the time freedom to pursue purpose and to make a difference in my short time here on this Earth. I think that's important in life, and we start chasing meeting once we get those lower levels of human survival taken care of. That's what's important to me. Yeah.

Dan: Yeah, I think that's pretty cool. So what are some unusual or maybe not so obvious habits that you developed that helped create wealth? So obviously, impactful items like looking at the 50 houses is actionable items. But what are some things where, you know, someone here is they're like, really John? Like, yeah, I'm meditating.

John: Yeah. Yeah, stops. You're talking about hard skills at-- all these things are about hard skills when you get on a podcast, but they always want to know what did you do? Well, I signed a contract. It's just physical stuff. Right? Skill work. What goes on behind the curtain, I say, what's the secret life behind that nobody saw? Oh my gosh. I'm a guy who actually do. I do believe in pictures. I do. If I can't see it, I draw it. I will say, what does it look like for me? What does financial freedom look like for me? I start drawing images so that I can see them. There's no doubt, I do that for everything there is. Whenever I set a goal for a book, my next book, I see it right now. I know what this is going to look like, feel like, shaped like, and I do that daily.

I'll tell you, you talk about something uncommon, Dan? What I found is that it's so important to keep your goals in front of you, and it's so difficult. So frustratingly difficult to do it forever. It's an easy thing to do and an easy thing to not do it. And nobody does it consistently. So what I started doing was I started making recordings, I would-- along the philosophy of Napoleon Hill, I would make my goals and I would record them on my phone and then I'd stick that in my ears. So I'm out there working in life on my worst day, I can still listen and think about my goals. I had bring it down to the easiest stuff I could do. Those are the kind of things that I can admit in my book later to my son that I didn't tell my closest friends. Do I believe in faith and put in your mind on something and then the serendipity, the chance coincidence of life? Yeah, I believe in spirituality. I do. Do I have I seen in my life, forget what I believe? Here's the stories that I can tell you, and you decide for yourself. That's what my take on the book. I'm not trying to convince you of something. But here's what I can tell you, happened to me. One, two, three, and you can leave that for yourself. We can decide what nobody knows for sure. This is just my belief. So yeah, I did a lot of spiritual work, a lot of mental work. And then you know, at the same time, God will give everybody every bird its food, but he doesn't throw it in the nest, right? So you got to get out there and work, and so I did that too. I'm not just sitting on the couch waiting, like the secret waiting for a checks in the mail. I do believe in a lot of the things to secrets talks about, if you work. So you got to combine those two things together. You're never going to be harmed by getting clear. You never going to be harmed by getting faithful and building a certain certainty. Talk to a person going into any sporting event. We all do that. We all accept that, we expect that. But when we do it in our real lives day-to-day, no... you're a little bit out there, dude. Well, what's LeBron James do? What is a boxer do? What-- it's all mine. It's all mind. And then the body follows with the mind has in it. So, yeah, I do a lot of that stuff every day of my life, including this day right now. It's part of my psyche. Yeah.

Dan: Nice. I hear you talk about the images and drawing and the pictures. And people put the vision boards up and mine could use an update and I already have in my mind, the couple of images. I want to add there. I just haven't sat down, printed them out and kind of like replaced them. But I remember 2011, right? I go to one of these Meetup real estate investor events, and I meet someone who had a mindset, like, you can't remember his name, and we're talking outside after the event, and he's like, so what do you want? And I'm like, probably did it, dealer, too.

I'm trying to get back on the horse and ride him. Like if I could just do, if I could do 10 deals in the next 12 months. Like my life is going to be, it's going to change. This is going to be ideal. This is like nice concrete, I could see it, and he's like, so what does that look like? And I think, I closed my eyes, or I looked up, and I said, "Oh, it looks like this is 10 years ago." It looks like

the manila folders in my filing cabinet. There's like a stack of them in there and there's a bunch of addresses on there and there's paperwork. There's contracts I sign because I went to the living room, and I was able to kind of see the end of that. So rather than like a money goal in my bank account. It was like I could see the contract sign that paperwork. I think we did, like, 15, 18, 20, and it was like this instant, and it felt like the universe was giving me the image almost like instruction or showing me the future.

And so like one of the things that you did mention meditating in the book and I go in waves, sometimes I'm doing it every day and sometimes not, and I started doing it again after I read the book, and I've done it for, you know, years intentionally. When I meditate, I'm quieting my mind. And I'm not like suggesting the images, necessarily. I feel like I'm waiting for the universe to sort of deliver. This like flash of something I'm supposed to see that maybe I'm going to work on, maybe it's something coming down the pike. So it's almost as waiting for instructions from God or from the universe in a sense, and sometimes it's just 10 minutes of quiet and there isn't anything. And I go about my days and then other days, it's you know, I'm seeing the 10 file folders kind of a thing or these days I do a lot of technology-driven stuff, running the business that I'm in, its app design. It's you know, website design and updates and things of that nature. Maybe I thought them all up on my own, but maybe the universe was delivering something to me that the universe sees occurring in it, and it's going to be me that puts that piece of the action doing my part, you know, in the universe creation of itself. And that's my action item for, like, waiting for that. And I believe that the Universe God, what you believe in wants... wants more for you, for us, right? And it's going to show me how to do that. Now, if I'm busy all through my other thing where I was like drinking and partying and all that like I'm not paying attention for the images, even if they did come nor was I capable of executing on them? And so, for me, it became living the right way, doing what I can to keep my body and spirit and mind healthy. And then having this action item of like, okay, I'm going to intentionally sit down and listen to see if there's anything else.

I should be creating in my life, right? Contrary. You're a testimony to the wealthy Gardener philosophy. You don't need it because you lived it, and it just reaffirms to you what you already know. Because you've done that, your results are impossible. If you talk about 2011 to 2021, tell me even a 2020 eve-- 2012, you can imagine where you are today.

Dan: Yeah, you know what?

John: Impossible. I mean, you know-- I really believe in five years, just plan for the next five years because when you're at the next five years, you're going to have a whole new view of this world to look at it. You're going to be a different person. If you strive forward that's impossible to get what you're, you're talking about these things that lesser people that haven't yet used their full potential. They haven't dug deep, and they haven't tried these things. They're going to judge you for what you just said there. He's a little wacky. And you know what? I do the same thing, right? But they ignore the fact that you have extraordinary results. Extraordinary. Let's not forget that and then maybe we can learn from a person's success, leaves clues, man. How about we look at-- How the heck did Dan? Do what he's done in 10 years, and I have a feeling you're not even close to being done. But that's the big time with that. I would say, from 2012 to 17, there is a lot of change right there in your life.

I'm suspecting and then, then you have the next years you can set new goals. And it's not really worth your time to set goals beyond the five years because you're going to change them anyway. Just get yourself to the next five-year goal. I really believe because it was the rest of it, you're going to be a different person than you are back in 2011 when you're thinking smaller. You're going to think bigger by that time.

Dan: 10 deals. Yeah, 2011. I mean, we've done 10 probably this week...

John: At me saying you're insane.

Dan: So cool. Next five years for you, John, you're financially free now. So, what's on the agenda for the near future here, for John's fork?

John: I have a God. I don't know why, but I have a calling right now to write the sequel to The Wealthy Gardener. When I say a calling... I say, I get possessed by a demon and the demon takes over. And so I've had a lot of people, you know, the book has sold over a hundred thousand. It's been translated in 10 languages.

I get a lot of feedback and people ask me about this thing called a five-year crusade enough times that it gets through this thick skull of mine that people want to know more about five-year crusade. And so, we're outlining an actionable system that is usable, doable, and cannot fail for a five-year crusade. There's so many examples of systems in life that produce actionable results and produce things that you cannot do Weight Watchers, a-- people have a system to control behavior, that's what we need to do. I'm convinced the people a lot of people really know what to do, Dan, to succeed. We just don't do what we know. That's the big game of it all. And so, if we can just get our, you know, shrink the gap between our intention and our execution. If we can do that now, we've changed some lives. And so that's, that's a big goal for me. The book is called the "5 year Crusade" and I'm under that rock right now.

John: Well, that be a real estate-focused Crusader. Is this going to be a--?

Dan: It's not. Well, I mean, it's going to be an every-- it's how to change your life. How to turn your life around? Like, I'm pretty sure that when you're sitting there 2011, what you want to do is turn your life around, you didn't necessarily care it was going to be real estate. You could have gone this direction, that direction and I don't care what your goal is, but let's talk about how to get there. Right? I mean, I-- there's ways and paths to it. So, does it-- do I have a real estate crowd behind me? Yeah. Sure, but it's personal, is personal achievement. Do I think I can write the best personal achievement book out there? I have to. It's my duty to believe that. If I don't believe that, then I'm doing a disservice to you, as my reader. Hell, yeah, I'm going to try to write the best personal achievement book of all time. That's my goal. And then after that, I have an idea of something called The Wealthy Book heads. Everybody wants to know, everybody wants to wear. I just reviewed and shine the light on superstars this in the day and age, the ones that I love the authors who I actually find fascinating The Wealthy Book heads will be a kind of more of a long-term thing where people who follow me, well then have access to short little references to the best books out there. Everybody's always asking a question, what book should I read? What should I read? Here's this one, and I can get that. We're going to go and direction like that, but not until I get on. Not until I finish the 5-year Crusade. Yeah, one thing at a time, one day at

a time.

Dan: I like it. So I have a similar intention on the wealthy book heads. If people go to REI Diamonds.com/reading-list, I put their books that have been impactful for me, and then I put the reason why I write. I want to give you the context because one thing with book recommendation, John, if they're blind and on the podcast, the recipient doesn't have the benefit of you making the recommendation, understanding the context of the recipient. And so, book recommendations are going to be different based on people's contact sometimes. So I really try to -- And again, this small reading list has not the kind of attention I wanted to get on it so far, and I intend to kind of continue to grow and develop that list there. But I want to tell you why I read it, and why I think it's applicable, and you can decide, "Oh, yeah. This is applicable to me." I need to read this also, or maybe they're not, right? Because my book recommendation may not be at the right point in time for where you are, but I think this gives us a great transition to actually ask you, do you happen to have two or three book recommendations for the listeners hear of our real estate, investor, buyer, agent, audience, John?

John: So, technique. If you're talking technique of real estate, you ask that specifically. The ins and outs of that sort of thing. I do like Brandon Turner. I like Brandon, his books, I think are good as far as the craft. I like his books a lot.

That said there's so much of success that you can know all the crafts in the world. But if you don't, if you don't execute day in and day out, the question is, how do you get yourself to not watch TV and choose goal-achieving things as opposed to entertainment and tension-relieving relieving things? How do you sell to stop drinking and start doing? How do you do all that kind of something? That's the game of it to me. I believe so much of it can be learned otherwise, but if you don't have those things down, I-- the book that I had the greatest influence of my life. It was, probably, Earl Nightingale. He wrote Earl Nightingale was The Strangest Secret, and there's no question that book influenced me more than any. I would say that at the time I read Think and Grow Rich, I brought that up earlier, it was a huge impactor of me coming from my small bluecollar town. At the same time, giving context of it. It really comes down to six steps in the book. Somewhere on page 30, something like that. Read the 6 steps. It's all about influence your subconscious mind through autosuggestion or repetition. It's about mind setting, you know, getting your mindset right by repeated affirmation. It's about that. So, you know, in context. So those are the kind of books, you know, you fucked you mentioned Rich Dad, Poor Dad as a similar book to mine and I get that non-stop. I never read Rich Dad Poor Dad before I walk which is the number one book, you know out there, but I never read that book. I never got past the first part of it, you know, in my life. Richest man in Babylon, love it. Love that book. So those are my books. I would say, I was like it.

Dan: That's the first Earl Nightingale was probably the first inspirational speaker. We had a meeting on Monday with my team in Atlanta, and they said, who's your favorite inspirational speaker? And Earl Nightingale was mine. I don't think the team in Atlanta's younger. They're like mostly a sub 30 crowd so that, you know, Earl's passed away, probably 20 years now, but Earl Nightingale, what a great recommendation and blast from the past, for me.

John: Passed away in the back in the 1970s. I believe we're looking at 50 years ago. I mean, and

that's how you have a book. You know, you talk about a book of why I wrote a book and why it's meaningful to me to every single word that I write. Because the people who helped me most were dead, by the time I was born, and I read their soul was left in that book. And they helped me, and they have been in the ground, a long, long time already. That's the power of a book.

Dan: Nice. So, the crown jewel of wisdom, John, if you could go back and share the crown, jewel of wisdom with your 29-year-old self right before you started to, kind of take a turn here, to build the current life that you're in now, what would that be?

John: Dan, I think of that 24-year-old guy that graduated from college. And I would say that I would, I would tell him that it's going to get hard, but you'll get there by 50. It's going to be hard, but just don't lose hope in those hardest times, man. I believe in the power of hope. When the chips are down. I believe in the power of impossible. You have to believe in impossible. And what I mean by that is you at 2011, you have to believe that it's possible where you are 2021. That's impossible to you that time. And I'm sure there's people out there that might be listening to this for their down and there, he knows, bed space or they're trapped in a sense. You know, I hate to use the term because if you do have a lot of family responsibilities, you don't have that wiggle room that have a single guy does. And so to you, it feels impossible. I've got to believe in impossible can be earned. And you could if you just grow that little garden bigger and bigger. Just like the wealthy Gardener message was. You've got to believe in the impossible and have hope. I would tell them for 24-year-old guy that.

Dan: Good stuff. So, where can listeners get more John's to fork?

John: Wealthygardener.com is the site for the book, occasionally there. I would say that's where we start.

Dan: All right, sounds good. Hey, I was looking forward to this episode. I really appreciate you taking the time. I had a blast. Thank you for coming on the show, John.

John: It's an honor, man. And you've impressed me, Dan. So we have so many things in common. I love it.

Dan: Nice.

Dan Voice Over: Low cost of capital is the fuel of any volume real estate investment business as a real estate investor. I am sure you're well aware these two packs. First, your business is driven by access to capital or starved from a lack thereof. And 2, you make more money. When you reduce the cost of said capital. Whether you're looking for hard money loans to fix and flip houses, rental, portfolio loans, or even a line of credit. Lending home offers the most competitive rates in the market. Currently, as low as 6.49%, which is good for fixing flip single-family loans.

I pay 10% myself at fund rehab deals.com to my private investors. So at 6.49%, if you like that interest rate, go to REI line of credit.com, even if you're not currently in the market, for a loan at this very minute, I encourage you to still go through that one minute sign up process.

Right now. So you can get on the email list that way once you're ready, and you have a deal or a few, their name is top of mind. Plus, as a bonus for signing up through REI Line of Credit.com, you'll receive a free iPad when you close your first loan. That's REI Line of Credit.com.

And thank you for tuning in to the REI Diamond Show. Remember to review and subscribe on your podcasting app. Just search REI diamonds, and click subscribe. Are you interested in receiving my weekly big idea email? Where I provide the most valuable jewel of wisdom that I discovered during the recording of the most recent episode. Sign up at REI Diamonds.com. At that site, you can also access the 200 episode archive. Again, that's REI Diamonds.com.

In 2020, my house flipping business, Diamond Equity Investments, bought and sold 283 houses. And we've done 272 close deals so far, this year. Most of our houses are fewer apartment buildings, and we currently have another 147 more in our inventory. Either under construction or awaiting close. So here are three ways that you and I can do business, number one, if you are interested in having access to real estate deals that you can buy, fix and flip for a profit, go to access real estate deals.com.

Number two, if you are an accredited investor who is seeking double-digit returns, you can sign up to receive my private mortgage investment opportunity emails at fundrehabdeals.com. That is how you join my network of private lenders to potentially fund my projects.

And number three, last but not least. I am always buying houses that I can flip and occupied apartment buildings with below-market rents. If you have a deal that fits that description in either Atlanta, Chicago, or the Philadelphia region, please send me an email with the details.

Next up. We are joined by Chad Keller to discuss digital marketing for Real Estate Investors to find off-market deals. I'll catch you and Chad on the next one.

Thank you for listening to this episode of the REI Diamonds Show with Dan Breslin. To receive email notifications of new weekly episodes, sign up at www.reidiamonds.com

[END]