

Introduction: Welcome to the Enchanting Lawyer Podcast, the show that walks you step by step to improving strategies you can use today to grow your business. We show you how being kind, useful, and, of course, enchanting will bring you more clients and build a thriving community.

Now here's your host from sunny San Diego, Jacob Sapochnick.

Jacob: Hello everybody and welcome to the Enchanting Lawyer podcast. This is a show where we interview the most inspiring entrepreneurs from all over the world who share with us their ideas and we learn from them so much. Today I have a very exciting and special guest and I'm honored to have Ryan Michler here today.

Ryan is an Iraqi combat veteran and financial adviser. He's the founder of Order of Man. Order of Man is a blog and a podcast dedicated to helping men develop in eight key areas of their lives: relationship, intellect, leadership, manly know-how, wealth, fitness, self-mastery, and style. We can learn more about Order of Man at www.orderofman.com. We'll make sure to share the website in the show notes.

Before I reach out to Ryan, I just want to say this particular episode is not just dedicated to men but I feel that in our business -- and me being a man myself -- I feel that there's a lot of challenges that we face just because life is not easy. We try to provide, we try to be the best at what we do, and there's so many things around it that makes us feel frustrated but we always keep it to ourselves because we feel that we have to be strong and we're very scared to share that.

Learning about what Ryan is doing, I was really excited to learn that there's other ways of how we can deal with it. Ryan, first of all, welcome to the show. I'm very excited to have you here.

Ryan: Thanks, Jacob. I'm excited too. I appreciate you have me on today.

Jacob: How are you doing today?

Ryan: I'm really good; really good. Calling it quits for the weekend but we're doing well.

Jacob: Exactly. If you're listening, this is a Friday for us so it's exciting.

Ryan: That's right.

Jacob: Ryan, I gave a little bit of an intro. Why don't you tell me a little bit about yourself and also about Order of Man and why did you start this thing.

Ryan: Yeah, sure.

So I've been actually a financial advisor which is obviously in the financial industry that makes sense on this show and talk a little bit about that as well. But I've been an advisor for almost nine years now and I still have my financial planning practice -- I do a lot of that. But I also do Order of Man which, like, you said, is dedicated to helping men really achieve more in their life. Step up in their lives, take responsibility for their lives, and be all that they want to be.

So we focus on those eight key areas that you went through and we've got the blog and we've got our own podcast as well.

I actually did a podcast for my financial planning practice and that didn't last very long before I shifted over to Order of Man. But I think what really separates -- And you brought up a good point, Jacob. You said this is not only towards men and that's absolutely true. The principles and the skill sets and all of that that we talk about is applicable to both genders. It's not that it's exclusive to men although I know more about being a man, obviously, than being a woman. So that's why we focus that way. But, yeah, that's what we do.

But I really think the men and women out there that has success in their lives are the ones that are able to take action. And that's what really sets apart a financial adviser, a lawyer; anybody who's having any level of success is willing to take action at some point.

So I've always had this idea and I've always been on the self-development journey. I grew up without a permanent father-figure in my life. My dad left when I was three years old. I had a couple other stepfathers come in my life. One was unfortunately an alcoholic so he wasn't real present. The other one was verbally and emotionally abusive. And so I never really had this male influence, this male role model, this male presence in my life.

And so as I start having children, I've got three kids and one on the way, and so we'll have three boys and a little girl.

Jacob: Congratulations!

Ryan: Yeah, thank you. We're excited about it. I realize that I have a long ways to go in how do I be the best father that I can be? How do I be a good husband? How do I be a good business owner? How do I be a good community leader? And so I set out on this journey of self-development and exploration to find out how I'm going to make this work. And I decide to throw my ring in the hat because, again, I think the people that are successful take action and are willing to get involved. So that brings us up to a little bit about today, I guess.

Jacob: Right. Some things you just mentioned are so important because for us, whether we have kids or not, this is some of the things that become a grounding point for us as to why we do what we do.

In fact, I'll tell you. The last podcast of the year that I've done last year was actually an interview that I've done with my own son. He's 11 years old.

Ryan: Oh, is that right?

Jacob: Yeah. You can listen to it. This one's received very, very well by many listeners that never even -- new listening to my show. It was a 15-minute interview where I was talking to him. I didn't tell him the questions. We talked about just general things about bad and good in the world and just listening to him from [his world 00:05:07].

For me, it was important and I in fact said it was the most important show of the year for me because I wanted him to know, and also for other people to know, is that our kids, if we have kids, they become us in a way if we act properly. Like you said, you know, unfortunately you didn't have a father but all these people, they came to replace your father, they didn't serve as a role model for you. In fact, they were there on the contrary.

Ryan: Right. Right.

Jacob: So I wanted to ask you. What did you learn about being a man? I mean what are some of the earlier lessons as you're trying to become a man? It's kind of a big question but --

Ryan: Yeah, sure.

You know, a lot of what I gained about being a man actually happened on the football field and the baseball diamond. I played a lot of sports as I was growing up and so I was able to surround myself with friends who were great influences on me. Their fathers were involved, my coaches were involved.

And so I take a lot of the lessons in my life now and the things that I'm good at come from learning what it's like to participate as a team. Learning what it's like to lose and then wanting to get better. Learning what it's like to win and trying to win [unclear 00:06:16] and with class. Just being a class act.

Jacob: Right.

Ryan: There is a lot of discipline and commitment and integrity. All of those things can be learned through sports which is fortunately I had a great experience there.

And then I also joined the military. I spent eight years in the National Guard and then a year-and-a-half as an active duty in the army. Went to Iraq in 2005 and spent a year-and-a-half there. A year in Iraq but a year-and-a-half total gun. And, of course, there's a lot of lessons there as well: commitment, honor, dedication, sacrifice, and we can get into more of those things as you want.

Jacob: Right.

Ryan: These are all areas that I gained a lot of what I feel like I'm good at now and some of those core skills that I think is important every single person on the planet learns.

Jacob: Right. And I think, like I said, the experiences you went through are so important. But let me ask you. You mentioned you're now a father; you have your kids of your own.

Ryan: Yeah.

Jacob: I'm curious to know now that you're a dad yourself, how did it change your idea of actually what it means to be a man as oppose to taking it from sports or the military. What are some of the differences that now you implement being a dad yourself?

Ryan: I think the biggest thing that a father can do is to be present, to be engaged, to be active. And so I think a lot of the times we, as men in general, tend to believe that my responsibility and my role is to go out there and earn the bacon, bring home the box, and we're going to let my wife take care of this, or a sitter, and hopefully all that stuff gets taken cared of. And, you know, I tuck my kids in or whatever it may be and hopefully all is well.

But what I'm finding is that the more that I can be involved. My son, he is turning eight years old this year and the next couple of months he's going to be starting cub scouts. That's something that I want to be actively involved in with him. He needs that from me.

As hard as it is for me and just like everybody else out there, turning electronics off, trying to clear your mind when you get home, and leave work where it is, and then just being present, and available, and doing activities whether it's jumping on the trampoline, or talking about life, or being involved in coaching. That has been probably the number one thing that has helped build my relationship with my children.

Jacob: And I totally agree with that. Even for myself, in my journey, they don't care about the toys and the next iPad.

Ryan: No.

Jacob: The more I spend time -- and especially in the last few years I realize that sitting there and maybe even just listening to music together for hours without doing anything, they need that presence because it's too easy just to buy something and throw it out there and leave. Everybody can do that, right?

Ryan: Right.

Jacob: Even a stepfather can do it. But you generally interested at somebody, just spending the time and listening, and maybe even give them some sort of an advice is -- And you know what, the more you do it with your own kids, it is in my in case, I feel that I became more sensitive to other people. My employees, my colleagues, people I meet.

Ryan: Your clients.

Jacob: Right. It's crazy how it affects everything.

Ryan: Of course.

Jacob: And the more you are distant with your own family, it affects your business as well in the same way.

Ryan: Yes. You know what's really interesting is we sit down at the dinner table every night and I realize that can't work in every family dynamic because there's a lot of moving parts. But about 90% of the evenings we're able to sit down as a family.

One of the things that we do when we sit down at that dinner table is we ask all of our children, "What was your favorite part of the day?" and I have yet to have heard them say a toy, or a video game, or watching that movie. Every time I ask those kids what their favorite part of the day was, it has to do with an activity they had with mom during the day or maybe just me coming home was their favorite part of the day and so they know. They want you involved in their life.

But this is applicable to everything like you said. I mean think about your clients. I'm sure a lot of attorneys are listening to this now. You've got to have the same type of attentiveness and commitment and dedication to your clients and I think that's going to really set you apart; especially in the financial industry in general not just for lawyers but financial advisors and accountants and everybody else.

Jacob: Right. It's the same set of skills. You have to listen first. And if they feel that you're not interested in what they have to say, all you want is their money, then they're not going to hire you or they won't trust you anymore. And trust is something you have to earn. You can't buy it.

Ryan: Right. Yup. I agree.

Jacob: So Ryan, being in the army, you probably experienced war. I assume you were, during the years, when we have some sort of war over there. And I'm wondering if you can maybe share with us some of the lessons you took back when you came back from experiencing being at war.

Ryan: Yeah. I think the biggest thing is to eliminate excuses from your life because if you get into a war-like situation, it's literally a life or death situation. Now I'll be the first to tell you, I did not have it.

I was in Iraq and Ramadi in 2005 and although it seems like we got attacked every day -- our base got hit with a [rock and a mortar 00:11:10] every single day it seem like. I know that there's other soldiers out there who had it infinitely harder than I did.

But that being said, the decision they made and the decisions that I had to make, and our section had to make, and our unit had to make impact people's lives -- literally life or death scenarios. And it would be really easy for you to make a wrong decision and come up with an excuse as to why that decision was made. But at the end of the day, if you've made a poor choice or a poor decision, somebody's life was going to be negatively impacted.

Jacob: Right.

Ryan: Now we get into civilian life and because it's not life or death, I think we take it a little bit more casually. "Oh, if I mess up it's no big deal and we're willing to pawn it off a little bit better. Hey, this is going to cost us little money or a little bit of time but it's not that big a deal. We'll get over it." What I'm here to tell you is that the more that you could take accountability and ownership of your life in the mess ups, the more that you're going to begin to make great decisions that are going to propel you for to where you want to be.

Jacob: Right. I think that's exactly the problem because, you know, in regular life there's no, oh yeah, we can pay off the guy or we can do this and that.

Ryan: Right.

Jacob: And so the threshold is definitely much lower. But if everybody were thinking like that, "You know what, if I mess it up ..." I don't know what he really feels because you don't know how sensitive that person is, right?

Ryan: Yeah..

Jacob: It's always hard to -- So how do you make that balance and how do you train your mind to act like that as if you are in the military on a regular basis?

Ryan: Well, obviously, there's a huge amount of discipline that comes along with this. And what's interesting is I talk with guys all over the country and all over the world is that I'm realizing that most people know what it is they need to do.

So I get calls and emails and text and Facebook messages every day. How do I build more wealth? How do I get in better shape? How do I connect with my wife? All of these type of questions that real men are having real concerns about and I'm not very quick to answer the question.

I almost turn that back on them a little bit and say, "You know, what have you done? What has worked? What hasn't worked? What do you think will work?" And more and more I'm finding that the men have the answers already but there's a gap between what they know and what they're actually doing. So it's not the knowledge, it's not the information, it's the discipline to follow through on that.

And I think the first thing that we need to do, not just as man but as human beings in general, is get very clear about what it is that we want in life. So we go throughout this day and we let the day get a hold of us and we have notifications pop up on our phone, and we have people emailing us and demanding our time, and clients coming in and all of these distractions.

And then at the end of the day we wonder, "Why didn't I get anything done?" or "I don't feel fulfilled" or "I'm not happy with the direction of my life." And the reason you're not is because you had no influence and no insight, if you will, into how you actually wanted your day to run.

So I'm very deliberate about what I want to happen this year, what I want to happen this quarter, and what I want to happen this day. So I plan every single day. I go back at the end of the day and a military term we use as an After Action Review, an AAR. I use the same process for my day in my business.

What did I get done? What didn't I get done? What am I going to change tomorrow? I think by being a little bit more deliberate about setting up your day and a little bit more conscious about reviewing what happened throughout the day, you're going to have so much more success and be able to consistently maintain that.

Jacob: So for example, a lot of successful people they have what is called a morning routine. There's been plenty of books written about that.

Ryan: Sure.

Jacob: Do you do something like that? Do you do something similar or the same every morning?

Ryan: Yeah, I do.

Jacob: So maybe you'd like to share with us.

Ryan: I'd be happy to. I'll give a disclaimer here first.

Jacob: Yeah.

Ryan: And the disclaimer is just because I happen to share what works for me doesn't necessarily mean it's going to work for you. And the reason I bring that up is because I think, again, we need to be accountable for our own lives. I can gain information from podcast and books and all the things that I'm consuming but you've got to find something that works for you. This is what works for me, use it if you can but tweak it, adapt it, change it to work for you.

So what I do is I get up usually about 5:00, 5:30 every morning and I'll think a little bit about the day. Not a whole lot of tangible activities in that time but just thinking about the day. What do I want to get accomplished? Waking up, stretching out, because then I'm going to the gym.

I go to the gym for an hour and I think having some sort of exercise regimen is so, so valuable and it helps you get the day off on the right track. So, I go exercise for an hour. I happen to do CrossFit. You can agree with CrossFit or not, it doesn't matter. Again, find what works for you but exercise is huge.

I come back and if I can, I sit down with my family for breakfast. My boy, my eight-year old boy, and my wife a couple of days ago made breakfast for me. So I got home, we all had breakfast together which was great. Obviously just get ready and things like that. Now when I get in the office, that's where the work really starts happening.

I like the quote, and I'll probably butcher this, but Abraham Lincoln said -- is credited with the quote that if I have six hours to chop down a tree, I'm going to spend the first four sharpening the axe, right?

Jacob: Absolutely.

Ryan: I think that's the take away when it comes to setting up your business.

Don't get in the office and boom! just immediately start getting to client calls or following up on emails. But what you should do is start planning out that day. Be deliberate. How is this going to go? What is this going to work? What am I going to get accomplished? When you're clear about how your day is going to go and the flow of the day, only then should you get into the day.

That's my morning routine. Not real special or extraordinary but valuable works for me.

Jacob: Well, I think, what is important in any morning routine is the consistency because I heard different people -- some people meditate, some people they like to have visionary board. But, I think, as long as you do it every morning and you keep up with it, that's the key. Just do it. Whatever it is.

Ryan: Yeah, because it's easy to do something for a day or two and then you do it for two days you're like, "I don't know it really feel anything." Well, you didn't feel anything because you didn't give yourself a chance to internalize this process and let it work for you in your life.

Jacob: Right. Exactly. That's perfect. I mean exercise -- I agree with you. I used to exercise in the evening and I feel that if you do it in the morning, it's a whole different thing. It's just totally different because you have the boost and the energy to do it.

Ryan: I don't know how guys do it in -- because you know what, at the end of the day, I'm pretty tired. I spent a whole day. I've been running around and doing everything I can do to be successful and productive. And if I did it at the end of the day, I don't know if I'd ever go to the gym. But, hey, if it works for you, great, do it. Just get some exercise consistently.

Jacob: Just do it, exactly.

Ryan: Exactly.

Jacob: We don't want to discourage people from exercising.

Ryan: Right.

Jacob: Sometimes I consult young lawyers from law schools and they want to know about marketing, how to start a law firm. And I had a conversation with this young guy the other day and he says, "You know Jacob, how can I be successful as an attorney? How can I be successful in life? I want to know what to do from day one."

And I wanted to ask you. First of all, what do you think being successful in life means anyway for us men?

Ryan: Well, I think success is different for everybody and I think that's probably a key underlying theme or message of this show is that you've got to find what works for you.

Jacob: Right.

Ryan: For me, it's just improving each and every day and I think that's the key is that you need to focus, especially with these young attorneys.

I remember being in a financial planning practice nine years ago right as I was getting into it and I would look around. I would see these guys in my office that are having tremendous amounts of success, making great money, helping people impacting their lives and I thought, "I want that." And I was discouraged every single day because I didn't have that end result.

When it switched for me, when I started to feel fulfilled, and to your question successful, is when I focused on the actions I wanted to take on a daily basis. So success for me is doing. It's in the work. It's in the process. Finding joy in the adventure and the journey, if you will, rather than hurrying and worrying about getting to that destination.

So I would say to anybody who's getting into a business, or wants to get back on track with their health, or maybe there's some relationship issues that they're working through is to find some actions that you just know will lead to the results you want by default. It's just a given that if you do these couple of things, you're going to earn that reward. You're going to succeed in whatever area of life that it is you want. But that's not a great answer because it's not the magic bullet.

Jacob: Of course and I think there isn't.

Ryan: There's isn't. No.

Jacob: Success is so much different.

Ryan: Yeah.

Jacob: I feel that as long as you're fulfilled and you're willing to continue hustling and doing what you want without feeling, "You know what, I don't want to get up in the morning," then success is there and you did it. Because if you feel unhappy to get out of the house then you're not doing anything that makes you successful or happy, right?

Ryan: I think successful people don't necessarily have -- although they may but don't necessarily have the largest bank accounts, or aren't the wealthiest, or the best looking, or the most talented. That's not what success is. I think success is, like you said, being energized and being excited about the work that you're going to do today. And when you lose that passion, you lose that excitement, you lose that energy, I would probably debate that you're no longer successful in whatever area of life it is. You need to mix things up. You need to change things around and make a change in life.

Jacob: No matter what it looks like from the outside.

Ryan: Right.

Jacob: You know, Ryan, one of the things that I'm curious about, and you mentioned those eight key areas in life and I understand relationship and then we can talk about it forever.

Ryan: Yeah.

Jacob: I'm curious about the manly know-how. What do you mean by that? Because I think it's an interesting point because some people talk about it kind of behind closed doors but what is it exactly and how do we keep up with this?

Ryan: Manly know-how to me is about being useful. Because if men aren't useful, what point is there in having us around?

Jacob: Okay.

Ryan: When I talk about usefulness, it could be as simple as doing some basic plumbing and electrical around the house.

Jacob: Okay.

Ryan: That could be. It could be knowing survival skills. We hear a lot about active shooter situations. Are you going to be the guy that cowers in the corner or you're going to be the guy that takes charge and leads people to safety?

Jacob: Right.

Ryan: So understanding how to use a firearm, understanding survival skills. If there's an emergency, if there's a crime in action, what are those? How are you going to react and respond to those things?

And obviously there's utility in those things, it's usefully to know those things. But the other side of it is that it just helps -- In my experience, it helps me feel alive. Men in general want to be productive, we want to be moving forward, we want to be building things, we want to be using our hands. And so using our hands and working out in the shop, and building things, and picking things apart, and just being engaged in activity, for me just helps me be so, so passionate and excited about life.

Jacob: Right. So what about people, for example, that they want to do it but they may not necessarily be the most handy in the world.

Ryan: Yeah, sure.

Jacob: I see it also as you saying that, okay, maybe you can't fix the toilet or you can't renovate the house yourself but you can learn or at least be involved in trying to want to do this, right?

Ryan: Right.

Jacob: So how do we bring that state of mind to people that are not interested in doing that?

Ryan: Well, I think all of us have things that we're excited about, or things that we're passionate about, or at the very minimum things that we're intrigued about. When we get excited about something, we want to start right away. But if we don't start those activities right away then that little voice in our head says, "Hold on. Stop. You don't have time for this. You don't have money. You got other priorities." And so we start telling ourselves these scripts that keep us from exploring new ideas and new concept and new thing.

So what I would say is that if something intrigues you, whether it's photography, or a graphic design, or hey, I want to build a rocking chair, or I need to fix the plumbing in the toilet. I don't care whatever it is, take action immediately. That's number one.

Jacob: Right.

Ryan: Number two is if you see somebody who you admire a skill set, or a trait, or a characteristic that they have, reach out to that person. I think as men, we're really afraid to reach out to other guys and say, "Hey, I need help," or "I need advice," or "Can I pick your brain?" or "Will you give me some insights into how your mind works" or how your business works or how you build something out of nothing. And I think reaching out to those people is going to help you expand your mind and, of course, pursue some of those passions and those interests that you might have.

Jacob: Right. I like that. That's a great idea and advice.

So as we come to the end of our show, I wanted to ask you a question that probably you've been asked before but you'll probably be a good person to answer. What do you think our world right now -- this is a crazy world.

Ryan: Yeah.

Jacob: What do you think this world needs more than ever from men all over the world not just in the US?

Ryan: I think the biggest thing -- yeah, yeah. No, this is such a valuable question. And it's really simple to answer but it's easy to execute. The simplicity of this answer is personal accountability and responsibility.

Jacob: Right.

Ryan: Stop worrying about what everybody else is doing. Stop the excuses. Stop blaming other people for what's going on in your life. Stop being the victim and start taking responsibility for your own life and being accountable to the decisions that you make. Your level of success in whatever area of life and where you are right now is because of the choices that you've made in the past.

So if I look at my life, I'm responsible for my actions, I'm responsible of my family's actions, I'm responsible for the way that I run the business. And if more of us worried about being a good stewards over the things that we're responsible for, the world would be an amazing place.

But the problem is is that this goes all the way up to the presidency. The President of United States of America, arguably the leader of the free world, has a lack of personal accountability responsibility. And that trickles down and that shows everywhere else.

And if we just step up as men, and as women, and as business leaders, and community leaders, and spiritual leaders, I think the world is going to be a better place.

Jacob: Yeah, it's a great way to end the show and I think it's true. You just think about it, we have to be accountable. You can't do anything unless you have that state of mind.

Ryan, I will share your website again. It's orderofman.com. Is there any other website you want to share? How can somebody connect with you if they want to ask you any more questions or find your stuff in the website?

Ryan: Yeah, that's the best way is to go to the website.

The other place that I'm very active is we have a Facebook group for men which is at facebook.com/groups/orderofman. So you can request access. We'll allow you access. We have over 1800 guys in there having conversations about everything from survival skills, to how do I connect with my kids, to how do I be a better boss, to how can I get a raise. You name it. We're having conversations about it.

Jacob: Oh, perfect. So if you want to email me that link so I can have a precise link, I'll also make sure we have them in the show notes for you as well.

Ryan: You bet. I should do it.

Jacob: Perfect.

Thank you so much, Ryan, and I wish you a beautiful weekend and taking the time to come on the show.

Ryan: Thanks, Jacob. I appreciate the opportunity.

Jacob: Of course. And thank you, our listeners, who tune in every week. We love to hear from you; your emails, your questions. We'll see you at our next episode. This is Jacob signing off from San Diego.

Closing: Thanks for listening. You can find even more resources, including the show notes for this episode, at enchantinglawyer.com. That's www.enchantinglawyer.com.