

## Justin Breen of BrEpic and BrEpic Network Book Review

**Speaker1:** [00:00:04] This is the Investor Connect podcast program. I'm Hall Martin. I'm the host of the show in which we interview Angel Investors, venture capital, family offices, private equity, many other investors for early stage and growth companies. I hope you enjoy this episode. The Investor Connect is a 501 C three nonprofit dedicated to the education of investors and startups for fund raising. Please consider donating \$100 to the program to help others in their investor and entrepreneur journey. You can find the donate button on the Investor Connect org website. Hello, this is Hall Martin with Investor Connect. Today we're here with Justin Breen, founder, CEO of BrEpic and BrEpic Network and author of the number one international best selling book, Epic Business. Justin, thank you for joining us.

**Speaker2:** [00:00:50] Yeah, I'm excited to be. I'm excited to be here. You have a really interesting and talented way of asking questions, so I'm excited to be interviewed by you.

**Speaker1:** [00:01:01] Great. Well, thanks. So, where are you calling from today?

**Speaker2:** [00:01:05] I am in the Chicagoland area.

**Speaker1:** [00:01:08] Great. Must be colder there than it is here in Austin. But we're all warming up, I guess, as we get into the spring.

**Speaker2:** [00:01:15] Indeed. Yeah, I've run. I've lived in and had companies and worked here, I guess, my whole life. And I've run outside, no matter the weather conditions, six days a week for about the last 20 years. So I actually I would much rather run. It was about 20 degrees today. I'd much rather run in 20 degrees than than 80 for sure.

**Speaker1:** [00:01:37] Oh, yes, it is much better. Well, tell us more about your background. How did you what did you do before you wrote the book?

**Speaker2:** [00:01:43] Yeah, I'm 100% sympathizer, so I take all this complexity out in the world and turn it into patterns. That's how my brain works. So my first company, which I started five years ago with zero business background, I was a journalist for 20 years and created my entire

business model based on how PR firms annoyed me for 20 years. So saw a problem created solution, problem solved, successful global company and then new company annoyed by platforms that let everyone in because at the highest level people don't have time for that. So just created a high price point invite only connectivity platform.

**Speaker1:** [00:02:17] Great. And then so what inspired you to write the book?

**Speaker2:** [00:02:21] Yeah, that's a good question because most books are meaningless because they have no meaning behind them. To simplify it, like most people can't even fathom being someone like Bill Gates or Bezos or someone like that, but they can they can visualize being someone like me, or I just spend as much time with my family as I want to. I do what I like to do when I'm good at. I make as much money as I want to, only collaborate with the top folks on the planet or the ones who will make the investment. So for my first company's 30 month anniversary, at the time, I posted 30 things I had learned in the first 30 months from top entrepreneurs on the planet, and everyone's like, Oh, you have to write a book. So I'm like, Okay. So I'm signed with a micro top micro publisher in the US, Chris Voss, who wrote Never Split the Difference, did the foreword. I'm very grateful for that. And then each one of those 30 things is a chapter in the book. So it's just boom, boom, boom, informant entertain.

**Speaker1:** [00:03:17] All right. Well, tell us more about the book. What what are some of the key focus points you have on it?

**Speaker2:** [00:03:24] Yeah. You know, I was listening to a couple of your podcasts. One that stood out was with Raymond Lucke, and he was talking with hockey stick, his company's hockey stick, and he was talking about the power of storytelling and and the power of platforms. So, again, I was a journalist for 20 years and created my entire business model based on how PR firms annoyed me for 20 years and certainly why both companies. But definitely the first one had been has been very successful because I only do what I like to do and what I'm good at. So anything that I'm not good at and I don't like to do, I just I just farm it out or I don't do it and just completely focused on my zone of genius, unique ability.

**Speaker1:** [00:04:04] And so you simplify complex content. How do you do that? Is that you said it's a natural pattern that you do, but what process do you use to achieve that?

**Speaker2:** [00:04:15] Yeah. You know, so that's a good question. And, you know, I was listening to Craig Martin on your show. That was a good one, too. You know, talking about it's a ten year commitment, you know, an angel investing, a ten year long term commitment. So I spent 20 years as a journalist becoming a master of hearing blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, and immediately simplify into a 400 word story that media cares about, media cares about, and then the general public hears about. So for me, it's actually very easy. It my my second book, which will be out in a couple months, Peter Diamandis wrote the foreword. I'm very thankful for that. But I wrote the manuscript in 16 days. So for me it's very easy, but like tying my shoes, not very easy, putting on my kids bike helmets, not very easy, but that's what I mean. I just stay in my you know, as a journalist, I wrote 2 to 3 stories on deadline every day for 20 years. So you just you know, you see the patterns and you hear the same kind of thing. And then you're like, oh, that's good. That's newsworthy. That's newsworthy. That's interesting. And then it's just a it's just connecting all those things into an easy to read, understand story.

**Speaker1:** [00:05:22] What do you think? People don't talk in more concise, precise manner, in just more rambling fashion. Is it just stream of consciousness thinking or they're just giving you all the data and let you pick out what you like when what you really want is a synthesized answer? Or is it something else?

**Speaker2:** [00:05:40] Yeah. So that's a very high fact finder question and I'm a high fact finder as well. The reason why is because they don't know how to do it. So it's the same reason why I'm not an angel investor. It's the same reason why I don't run a giant financial company, because I don't. That's what I mean. I just stay in my zone of genius. But everyone has a good story. They just don't know how to synthesize it. They don't know how to simplify it. So my firm's my company's only partner with people with visionary abundance investment mindset. So visionary abundance investment. So there's no overthinking, there's no what do you cost or charge? There's no nickel and diming. There's just what is an investment with you look like? And then people like that, they know they don't know how to do it. They just they just want it simplified and then they just want the right interest to the right media that's they're tired of being the best secrets. So they want to be in more news, more media, usually at a global level to create more validity and credibility for their brand. And I certainly hear that from the startup phase. The company as big as Allstate, it doesn't matter. You just still want more validity and credibility.

**Speaker1:** [00:06:42] I find sometimes people are geared toward the story. When I ask a startup, sometimes I'll ask them, what's your revenue? And that the answer to that question is basically a number. But what they're giving me is their story and how they got to the revenue, which wasn't exactly the question I asked. And I sometimes think people confuse story with synthesized answers. If somebody asks you for a quantity answer, well, then it's numerical, right? What do you think about that?

**Speaker2:** [00:07:12] Yeah. So that's a really good question. And so I am not a business owner, I am pure entrepreneur. And so business owners, they care about revenue office space employee count. Bottom line, I don't care about any of that stuff. I care about spending time with my family and building network on a global level. The byproduct of that is I haven't done up on sales or anything like that in years. I just create value for highest performing people on the planet and then they create value for me. And then some of them want to hire my PR firm to get validity and credibility. More of that. And then some of them want to join a high price point invite only connectivity platform. But really all this technology gets faster and faster microchips and smaller and smaller that that I'm glad. I'm very thankful for that. I mean, we're talking on Zoom right now. I'm very thankful you're in you're in Texas. I'm in Chicago. But there's two constants that will never change, ever. So one one is the power of real relationships. So even though we've never met in person, this is a real relationship. You know, we're a globe of real relationships. And then two is the power of storytelling. So smoke signals, Bible, hieroglyphics, whatever that I mean, whatever that is. We're a world of storytellers because nobody really cares about what you do. They don't care about your revenue. They don't they don't care. They care about who you are. But if they do care about who you are, they will care about what you do. So maybe that's to go a long way of answering your question. Maybe that's why they start with that, where they where the revenue question is answered with how they got to the revenue. Because that's more interesting than what revenue is.

**Speaker1:** [00:08:46] Great. So so who did you write this book for? Who was in mind when you wrote these down?

**Speaker2:** [00:08:53] That's a that's a really good question. So that's what I mean. Like you're you're also a simple fighter, like I am the really good entrepreneurs. Most of them are simple

fires. There's some multipliers, but most of them are simple fires. But I wrote it for people that are like, How did you build a global company that only partners with top people on planet or ones who will make investment to become those people in a few years with zero business background. So most people, you know, they can't they don't they don't know how to do it. So those were the steps for that. And again, most of my day, not all, most of my day is talking to world's top entrepreneurs or the ones that will make the investment to become world's top entrepreneur. So I hear the same what I hear now is really interesting. It's you know, I've been an entrepreneur for five years. What how it is evolved, the conversations I hear now, this is why I'm glad you ask this question is because a lot of these folks started out as entrepreneurs, just pure creators, and then they got trapped as business owners. They got trapped into the people that Craig Martin were talking about, where they have 12 to 15 hour days and their early part of the day is trying to find fundraising, fundraising. They're angel investors. And then after 5 p.m., when they can't talk to angel investors anymore, they work on their company. So it's really interesting. These folks started out as pure entrepreneurs like me and then they they morphed into business owners, which they're not, but they thought that would make them happy. And so the first book is certainly about how to just stay a pure entrepreneur. And that's definitely what the second book is about to.

**Speaker1:** [00:10:28] Great. And can anybody else benefit from reading it?

**Speaker2:** [00:10:33] You know, that's another good question. What has happened with the first book? And I'm guessing what will happen with the second is bigger companies have bought it for their for their the entrepreneurs, the entrepreneurs within their companies, the entrepreneurial minded employees. You know.

**Speaker1:** [00:10:49] So when you wrote the book, what surprised you the most in analyzing what you had written down? Anything jump out at you?

**Speaker2:** [00:10:56] Yes. So that's like your brain is very collaborative with mine. So it's it's really fascinating because Chris Voss wrote the foreword for my first book. So for those who don't know, he wrote Never Split the difference. I'm very confident, saying that's one of the top 20 business books. You know, top business books over the last 20 years or so. Former FBI terrorist negotiator. Lead. Lead. Fbi. Terrorist negotiator. So in the foreword, which this was

written in 2019, he talked about how my first company, Bret book, is just really a giant network, a giant network of geniuses who were constantly introducing each other for mutual gain. My new company is called Bret Quick Network. It's just technology from my brain. So that was written before I even had the second company. So literally my second company was in the first book. It was really fascinating to see how that has evolved into that. Like it was there and now it's actually happening.

**Speaker1:** [00:11:59] So what was the most important takeaway you found after writing the book?

**Speaker2:** [00:12:04] So what I learned about what a book actually is is that it's a key that opens up endless doors. It's a key that opens up endless doors. So it came out in May of 2020. I still do 2 to 3 media interviews for it every week. The new book, I mean again with Peter Diamandis writing the foreword, it's Me evolved over since the first book came out, so there'll be even more media interviews for that. But that's really what a book is. Again, I don't I have no idea how many books have sold. I don't care about any of that stuff, but I know that what it has led to is endless opportunities like this, which is great for me. I'm very thankful for that. But then certainly with the PR, with the PR firm, it's great for my partners as well because I only partner with people like me. Otherwise I get bored. And so the host want to interview my partners as well. And so it just creates this endless abundance and endless collaboration.

**Speaker1:** [00:12:58] Great. Then how did the book change the way you think about it?

**Speaker2:** [00:13:03] My whole life is taking action. You know, in your world and your space. A lot of folks are really good at what they do because they spend endless time doing due diligence and compliance and really thinking about stuff. I am not like that. I take full action and then learn from action. I take full action and learn from that. And so I wrote the first book. I learned that it was a key that opens up endless doors, wrote the second book, can't wait for it to come out already doing media for that, and it'll just create more and more collaborations. But like, I don't understand, it's very hard for me to understand people that talk about doing something but never do it. I'm the opposite of that unless someone's interviewing me. I don't actually like to talk at all. I just like to take action. And then regardless of what happens, I learn from it. So if

it's the greatest thing ever, I learn from that. And if it's not the greatest thing ever, then I just adjust, pivot, and come up with something new.

**Speaker1:** [00:14:03] We've written two books so far. Is there a third coming up that we can look forward to?

**Speaker2:** [00:14:08] The second one is out. The second one is out later this summer. But again, man, the future is too. So what happens is on the Clifton Gallop string finders, I'm almost almost there's 34 of them on 32 out of 34 on ideation. So almost dead last. So that's actually a strength because if I do hear a good idea, my top three are activate, maximize, achieve. So here usually I talk to these amazing entrepreneurs and they're like, Oh, this is a good idea. And I'm like, Oh, that's a good idea. I'll just do that. Activate, maximize, achieve. So I've already started working on that third list, the third list. So when it gets to like 30 or 35, I hear maybe one truly great idea a month. And in five years as an entrepreneur, I've had five great ideas. So one a year, only one a year. But when that list gets to another a good it gets to a good point then. Yeah, I'll write another one.

**Speaker1:** [00:15:04] When you consider those mental models that people can follow or more prescriptive tools on how to actually progress your business or build your startup wherever you want.

**Speaker2:** [00:15:15] That's an incredibly amazing question there, because that's the answer in both ways, because if you have the right mindset, it attracts the right networking, which creates the right opportunities. So again, what I've learned in this whole process is my greatest skill set. You know, world class apps are great at connecting people, but really what what is above that? A higher level of thinking is I can simply simplify all these complexities into patterns. And the number one the number one is if you have the right mindset, it attracts the right network, which creates the right opportunities. So I just constantly am working on my mindset as part of that pattern, number one, which attracts the right people. Top entrepreneurs in the world are the ones who will make the investment to become those people, and then they create the right opportunities for me and I create the right opportunities for them. And there's no competition at this level. Everybody wins. It's all collaboration.

**Speaker1:** [00:16:06] Right? So what online information source do you find most helpful in your work?

**Speaker2:** [00:16:11] I am constantly reading as I imagine you are too. I mean, just constantly reading. And two favorite books. Two favorite books. One is Man's Search for Meaning. That's the ultimate. I never used the old word, but if you haven't read Man's Search for Meaning by Viktor Frankl. He survived the Holocaust and then wrote about that and then what he learned from that. I can't recommend that enough. The number number two book is Mastery by Robert GREENE. How all the Masters, whether they were living or dead, Became Masters. That's a that's an incredible book. And then again, I run outside six days a week, no matter the weather conditions. And when I'm running between three and five miles, I listen to podcasts like these. And then most of my days talking to the world's top entrepreneurs and and they give me almost all the great ideas and then I'll activate, maximize, achieve.

**Speaker1:** [00:17:08] Great. Well, if you could start a business tomorrow, what would that business be?

**Speaker2:** [00:17:12] Well, I think certainly, you know, you know, my new company, you know, my partner is in San Francisco. He's in the he's in the finance. He's at Baird, technically, but he's an entrepreneur who happens to be in financial services. There's a fundamental difference between financial advisor and the entrepreneur who happens to be a financial advisor. So Mark Fujiwara is my partner. He's in San Francisco and I'm in I'm in Chicago. But that's I mean, the new company. That's literally what I would start and I have started it. It's just technology for my brain. It's 1000 acts of what I've already been doing with PR firm. It's just a global connectivity platform. And, and I'll dovetail that with neither of the companies I own are businesses. They're just the purpose of my life in full entrepreneurship. And I would never sell either of them because it would be selling the purpose of my life. So all it is is just technology to create more and more collaborations. And then that feeds into the, the PR aspect because more people want validity and credibility through storytelling to share their stories with the world.

**Speaker1:** [00:18:19] Very well the last few minutes that we have here. What else should we cover that we haven't?

**Speaker2:** [00:18:24] That's amazing that you ask that because, you know, I've interviewed thousands and thousands of people and I always ask the only there are only two questions I ever asked them. One. Who were your parents or where did your family come from? Because if people know where they come from. The really high level ones, then they know where they are and then more most importantly, know where they're going. But it really starts with where you come from and then it really thinks about your story and your life. And then the second one I always end every interview with Is there something else you'd like to add? Something else that I should have asked, something else you'd like to talk about. Because many times the lead of the story, the first couple of sentences of the stories comes from that last question, because it was presented in a way they were the question or the answer was never allowed to come out because the question was never asked. So that general question you ask, that's literally how I end every interview. But, you know, no, I'm I'm just very thankful. You know, I'm very thankful because, you know, I see my wife and two young sons whenever I want to. Covid is provided the greatest opportunity for folks with the right mindset of all time. Certainly top entrepreneurs on the planet, even if they lost 100% of their of their previous businesses, they're like, right mindset start something new. But I'm just very grateful and it really it really all starts with that in the right mindset.

**Speaker1:** [00:19:51] That's great. So how best for listeners to get back in touch with you?

**Speaker2:** [00:19:55] Sure. Yeah. And again, I really appreciate your and I really like how you ask questions because they're very simple, but it leads to good answers. But Justin Brennan, LinkedIn is great and then company's website is welcome.

**Speaker1:** [00:20:10] Great include those in the show notes. Want to thank you for joining us today and hope to have you back for a follow up soon.

**Speaker2:** [00:20:16] Thank you very much all. I really appreciate your time.

**Speaker1:** [00:20:22] Investor Connect helps investors interested in startup funding. In this podcast series Experience, investors share their experience and advice. You can learn more at Investor Connect dot org. Hal Team Martin.

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