

EPISODE 1250

[INTRODUCTION]

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Whitney Sewell (WS): This is your daily Real Estate Syndication Show. I'm your host, Whitney Sewell. Today, our guest is Calvin Chin. Calvin is the CEO of Zen Coast University, an online community and learning platform for real estate investors. He got into real estate to find a path to buy back his time and energy. Over a five-year period, he was able to go from grinding in a 9 to 5 corporate job to having the financial freedom to choose to be a full-time real estate investor. He has a portfolio of over 80 plus units in just five years. He has scaled from owning single-family homes to flipping to AirBnB to moving money through BRRR method as many of us know to small multi-family homes and now apartment and commercial projects. He believes in helping people create wealth and getting time and energy back so they can give that knowledge back to their community. Just a very interesting conversation with Calvin here at Gobundance. You'll feel that just in the interview. Just a lot of people around obviously, but it was just incredible to meet Calvin. You're gonna hear about a massive mistake that he made when he first got into real estate, and I just think this one mistake would have set most people back and made him quit. They would have been so sick at real estate. They just never would have done it again. He did not quit there. And I'm so thankful that he did not, and that he's willing to share this story with you about this massive mistake that he made.

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WS: Oh man, did he lose a lot. You're gonna hear it. You're gonna hear about this, but I hope that again, it's encouraging to you and that, hey, you can do this, you will make mistakes. It doesn't have to be the end-all. But he learned a lot and he's pushed forward in a massive way and done very big things. I know you're gonna learn a lot from Calvin today.

I know many of you have heard me talk about the importance of your why and having a mission that's gonna keep you driven, something bigger than just that financial gain. And today with us is a guest that's going to help you understand this probably better than you've ever heard me talk about it. I'm looking forward to hearing personally more about his story. Even the way he is connecting other entrepreneurs now and helping them think about this as well. And again, we're gonna get into it. But I want to remind you, we are recording remotely from Gobundance, don't get to record remotely or in person too often. So, this is very enjoyable for me as well.

[INTERVIEW]

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WS: So Calvin, welcome to the show. I'm honored to have you as a guest.

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Calvin Chin (CC): Yeah, I'm honored to be here. I appreciate you having me.

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WS: Yeah, I've heard nothing but great things. I've done a little bit of reading about you and the things you have accomplished over the last few years. It's incredible. I wanna get into it, and I know a big thing about you is also your mission and your "why" and helping others to see that. And we get so focused on other things, whether it's the real estate business or whether it's the financial goal or whatever. Those things are typically not gonna keep you as motivated if there's not something else behind you.

Tell listeners a little more about who Calvin is, and let's jump into your entrepreneurial journey a little bit.

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CC: Yeah, I can absolutely share my story. Just great, great being here, man. Thank you for having the time for us. For the most part, I grew up, my parents are first-generation (immigrants) from China, kinda have this mindset, this kind of scary mindset around money. I think for a lot of us, we're always taught from a young age that you have to get good grades so we can go to a good school, and then we'll go to a good school, we can get a good job, and then we can climb the corporate ladder until we're 65 and we have a white picket fence, a two and a half kid and a golden retriever. And so, that's what I always thought, that was always embedded into me that that was my mission, my path in life was to just do that quote-unquote "American Dream". That's what I did. I had decent enough grades to get into a decent school and got a good job in tech after that. But when I got there, when I arrived there and found that this isn't what it's all cracked up to be. This can't be what my life is gonna be all about. I worked at a company called Oracle, which is a big tech company back in the day. And when I got in there, I was like, is my life gonna be defined by...

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CC: On my tombstone, "I worked 25 years at Oracle", and that's what defined me as my identity, my legacy, and that scared the crap out of me. So, you start to think about, what are the ways that you could buy back your time and your energy? To me, those are the two biggest important assets in life, time and your energy, the ability to be present with people. I looked at stocks, looked at cryptocurrency, looked at real estate. Stocks? I didn't sit at the board room of Apple, I had no control. I didn't like that. Cryptocurrency? I still don't know what the heck a Dogecoin is or a Shiba coin is and I still don't want to know. So, that was out. And then real estate? I said, you know what, this actually makes sense. This has been around since there were lords and knights where lords are landlords for the king. It's tangible, it's physical and actually makes sense and people always need housing. So, let's go for that. It actually makes sense to me.

Going from there, I was kind of thinking like, alright, well, I'll surround myself with the right people, reading the books, listen to the podcast, things everyone does. And I think at that point we're vulnerable here, we're still struggling a lot with confidence issues.

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CC: I had fear. Do I actually know what I'm doing here? And so, me and my wife, we started to think about, oh, how can we do the easy way out? Okay, so why don't we just give an investor money, be investors that way? So, we took a hundred grand of our own money and gave it to a flipper in San Francisco. She was doing a flip project. The project worked fine and we're gonna pick up a measly \$3,000 profit from that project. Once at the closing table she was like, you know what, I actually moved that money to a development project in Reno. And it's been six years and we haven't seen that hundred thousand dollars and we have not talked to her since. That money just disappeared.

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WS: Ouch. A hard lesson right there. I pray you get that money back, man, but a lesson learned. Expensive lesson but you learned a lot. So I wanna jump back a little bit, you mentioned numerous great things there, even thinking about your tombstone, and your thinking about what am I gonna be defined by - is it this corporate position, sitting in this cubicle? Is that what's going to, what I'm gonna be remembered by? And I think as so many people are so fearful taking that leap, leaving this security or the secure position and those benefits. It's hard to do that, it is hard to come to grips with that. But if you think, man, I only live one time, I only get one shot to do this, is sitting behind this desk really gonna do that for me? And what do I really have to lose?

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CC: Yeah, absolutely, and I think you said a great word there that we all have is fear. We fear if you leave, we're gonna lose our golden handcuffs. We're gonna lose our security, we're gonna all lose something about having a W-2 be there for us. And I think we all go through fear here, every deal that we ever do. I remember my very first deal, I had a massive fear. What if I lose all my money? I'll look like an idiot.

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WS: You did lose all your money!

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CC: Exactly, that's what happened. I'm still standing, right?

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WS: What a great testimony right there. You did lose a lot but you didn't quit there.

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CC: And I think from that learning lesson, it was like a lot of it was, what was the lesson? You said it was a really expensive lesson. We really could've taken it two ways, we could have, one, real estate sucks, there's a lot of schmucks here, I'm never gonna do it again, I'll just work my 9-5 for the rest of my life. Or two, which is what I'm really glad we did, we say, you know what, this experience, this situation sucks, but what do we learn here? And I'm sitting here now six years later, saying "That was the best experience that ever happened to me". Because if that didn't happen to me, I wouldn't have grown the toughness or learned the lesson that we'll never make the same mistake again. And you just kinda continue to do that, you continue to not do the same mistakes again and over and over again until you've learned. You learn and you get more confidence. Yeah, and I think the last I'll say there is like the fear has changed my perspective of, I'm just gonna jump into, I'm more fearful if I'm on my death bed and I didn't take action.

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WS: That silence there is on purpose. I hope you are there right there. That is incredible! The fear of not taking action. Oh man, that's incredible. I loved what you said a minute ago, you losing the \$100,000 was the best thing that ever happened to you. That's hard to grip. And I wanna dive in there just a moment. Because many people lose on the first project or two in real estate, and many people quit there. And I remember on our first deal, we bought two triplexes, made a ton of mistakes, self-managed. You try to treat these tenants like they are children as opposed to a business, just got walked all over, all those problems. But man, we didn't quit there, and many people do quit there. And I think about the conversations, my wife and I had for years after that. We would say, we said, quote, the apartments, quote, we just both cringed - oh, do we really wanna get back into that? Is that really what we're gonna spend our time on there after this horrible experience?

Tell us a little bit about that as far as your family, you lost this money. Were they on board with you moving forward into real estate or continuing?

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CC: Well, it wasn't my family's choice, it was my choice. And my choice was, I sought to find a way to get out of this. And I said, I think real estate is the way and the mistakes I made there were I just trusted someone that shouldn't have been trusted and I gave away all controls. So, we started learning lessons there. Our next deal that we actually did, we actually bought a deal for ourselves and manage ourselves, and then all that stuff. It was a single family house in Dallas. Did we make a bunch of mistakes? Absolutely. I didn't project out for cap expenses, AC broke out the next year, guess what? Cash flow is gone.

But guess what? The second deal that we did, didn't make that same mistake. The third deal, didn't make that same mistake. Fourth deal, different mistakes didn't seem (inaudible). Just keep on scaling it up to gain more confidence. You can never fail if you don't quit. Yeah, I started when I was 24 years old, so I always have the time on my side. So, if I have the time on my side, I'd say, alright, well, I just have to constantly do this 'cause I know this is possible. I've seen people do it. How do I do it? We just keep on doing and scaling and scaling until we get more confidence to do apartment complexes. And that's what we do now. But it took a long time to feel that confidence to say, I can do this and be able to raise money and be able to say, confidently say that our systems are tied not to say, I can take your money and double it.

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WS: So, you're doing apartments now?

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CC: We're doing apartments now. Yeah.

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WS: Okay, see, I didn't even know that. I'm glad you mentioned that. I knew you were doing real estate and I didn't know that you were doing apartment stuff. But I want to back up. You

were at Oracle, tell us when you took the leap to start on real estate, actually your own business, and maybe you were still working full-time. How did you manage some of that?

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CC: Yeah. So, I moved over to a tech job, and I think the big thing there was that was scary, the fear of losing the golden handcuffs. I was in tech and I was earning a good amount of money. Society will tell you, especially my parents, why would you ever leave that? You made it. You have the comfy job that if you just did that over and over again, you would make a good amount of money. I'm making 400K to 500K a year. It's like, oh my God, that's a good amount of money for a lot of people. And people thought me to be crazy, "What? You wanna get out of this?" But I knew that I wasn't fulfilled. I wasn't happy there. I thought it was a vehicle that would help me buy more real estate. Sure, but it wasn't the same. That wasn't like, "This is what I'm passionate. I can't wait to sell database and cloud storage". No one says that, right? But I knew that if I could help, if I can create passive income, get my time and energy back, then eventually I could give back as well. And actually, that was, it wasn't automatic.

So kinda back these up there, we'd scale, we'd start the BRRR's and the AirBnB's, an apartment complex eventually, I think right now we're at 167 doors that we own. And in a way that's to say, hey cool, look at me, maybe I need to do a lot more than that. But I think in 2019, one of the big things that learning lessons I learned was the passive income core. Anyone in real estate investing says 8-10K passive income, that'd be great. So that was the first barrier, right? And I was like, back in the day, I was so focused on that. I just wanted to hit that number. Oh that day of passive income, I'll be set, I'll be happy. And in 2019, we hit that and I thought my expectations, which were false, the sky will part, the angels will come down and harps would be playing and "Calvin, you did it, you succeed and you made it right, you'd be happy."

When you get to the end, that didn't happen. Nothing happened. The day after, nothing's changed. The day after, nothing's changed. And what happened to me was actually, I went to this kind of complacent, comfortable depression where I was just on the couch, eating Cheetos, watching Netflix. I think it was Pirate King at the time or some show like that. I was

just comfortable. I didn't have a north star and I was super depressed 'cause I didn't really know what to do with my life. I thought that 10K a month, that was it. And what I figured out was a real good book called "The Second Mountain". The first mountain peak is mostly about how I get my financial future, my life. How do I get my fitness, my family, my faith, my philanthropy. You must have never had a mountain peak. But if you do, you can see a second mountain peak. In that second peak, it's all about legacy. It's a lot about impact. How can I make this a better place? And what I found out was that I was missing that piece of it, the impact, the second mountain. What me and my wife talked about was how can we give back?

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CC: And we're like, this real estate thing has been okay to us. What if we could teach other people the same path and they can create passive income so that, they can go out and teach their kids and their family, and their church community. And then they're there or community teaches their family and their friends and their cousins. And then there's a compound effect of impact that we're making. That got me really excited. You know, I can get behind that. That she gets me energized draws energy to me. That's when we created our mastermind Zen Coast University that does that. We teach people how to create passive income but not just because they wanna buy a Lamborghini (garbled) Not 'cause they wanna buy a boat. But more so that how can they give back. How can they get their time and energy to give back? A lot of our students, our members, they talk about, I wanna open a non-profit. We have one son that his purpose was his mom's village in Jamaica got washed away and his purpose is 'I wanna go back to Jamaica and rebuild that village'. And he's crushed it because he has that purpose. And I think that is so magical and so special that really differentiates a lot of people that wanna be real estate investors but people that are really wealthy in life, like full-rounded wealth. Not just rich, but wealthy.

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WS: Not just the dollars, right? So much more than just that. A couple of things I wanted to point out. You mentioned you had an amazing income, \$400 to \$500,000 a year. Most people would dream of that. And we'd definitely call you crazy for leaving that. So, it's just interesting, that wasn't fulfilling you. You didn't wanna say there. You didn't see that as the end-all and

what you were gonna do wasn't fulfilling your mission, even getting into real estate and moving forward in that. And you met that \$10,000 a month. That didn't do it either. There was something else. How did you find that? How did you figure that out for you? That's what this mission was...remind me, married?

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CC: Yeah, just got married last year.

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WS: Oh, congratulations. I love hearing how even the spouse is involved in the mission, if she is, what that looks like. I couldn't do it without mine or couldn't have. And so, I wonder how she's involved? Then also how you found this mission? How did you say - you know what, that's something I can get behind? I'm excited about helping these people also do this.

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CC: Yeah, I think I'm a big, big fan of "you are the five you surround yourself with". And even being a part of Gobundance, you're having that level of conversations you have with people. I think a lot of us seek that, that community aspect of being able to talk about things vulnerably, things authentically. It's funny, one of my students I talk to, since I do like my old fiance, with appointments in meeting you guys, felt like she knew you more and some of her best friends. Isn't that crazy? 'Cause, you can have a deeper level of conversation. It's not like, hey, what's my fancy football team looking like? Or did you see that game the other day? It's more like, hey, what are your goals and aspirations? What is your vision in your family life? How can we help you get there?

And I think to me, that's me in terms of purpose, if you find your purpose. Purposes are the foundation. You have your purpose, then you can kind of map out your priorities. Then you can see, then people see the productivity and profitability of the top of the iceberg. But also see the bottom piece. I've seen people that have the purpose, like for you. Your purpose is, I wanna do commercials, and not just to make money but to be able to give back and help people adopt kids that financial may not be able to afford it. That's an awesome mission. If you have purpose

and mission, it's gonna be way better than chief (garbled) 'cause we've been there, man. You probably have to get to the point where you've made the money and you think that that's supposed to buy you happiness, it doesn't.

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CC: That was one of my limiting beliefs. I thought money would buy happiness, but it doesn't. You have a nice car. You have a nice house, great. Now, what did it really do? For me, relationships and human beings. Human connections are way more... In our last session, we kind of sit in a circle, we give gratitude. We say, hey, I'm grateful for this person because of x, y, z. I was bawling in tears because of how much people care about each other. And to me, just being able to bring people together like that, I think that's so important. I think that a lot of people miss that. Sure, the vehicle that we're trying to use is real estate. But really what happened was that real estate was a vehicle to bring everyone together to become life-long friends, to become deeper connections.

It's just a way for me, I mean, my little sister, we were close growing up, we're only two years apart. She went to school in New York, I'm in California. And so we kind of lost touch a little bit. She moved back and she lived with us a little bit so we're starting to get back in touch. One of the things that we did last year was, she's been so inspired. She saw (garbled) in real estate, kind of got out of his job. I would love to do that to get my time and energy back. So, I was going to Texas and we have a short-term rental or a long-term rental that we were converting into a short-term rental, and I was like, hey, why don't you come with me? Let's go do a trip out there. It was the first time that we ever had a one-on-one trip. Yeah, we were working on - put in air quotes about working - but really, we were hanging out and real estate was a vehicle for us just to be able to hang out and talk through stuff like that, business stuff like that. And now, my little sister and I are closer than ever. So, it's a vehicle to be able to use it whatever you want with, who you want to spend time with, who you want, doing whatever you want.

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WS: Love that. Tell us a little bit about the value of time freedom that's changed your day-to-day life. Right now that you have built this freedom, you can't just put a value on that, right? Even that time with your sister. That wouldn't have happened if you hadn't taken those risks and stepped out there and made some of these things happen. How did that time freedom change your life? And now you're watching it happen for numerous other people as well.

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CC: You gotta focus on things that actually bring you energy. I think that's the biggest part. In my corporate job, I assumed so many things that were just draining me - "corporate call for Casco, here we go again". It's like, why am I in on this call? And like you said, there's only one life that we have, and I'm saying five hours a month on calls like this are draining me. They're not bringing me energy, they're not really valuable. It's just some kind of corporate jargon if you will. And so the difference is more like you can spend time with the things, doing what you wanna do, right? And that gives you energy. That gives you fulfillment. I wake up whenever I want to. I take calls when I want to. I go to conferences when I want to. I go skiing when I want to.

You're making an impact when you want to. You can choose to talk what you want, you can choose to partner with who you want to. And I think that's even a big part as well as you get in apartment complexes. As you go on commercial deals, one of the big things is, finding your own superpower. I love finding deals. I love structuring deals. I love raising money and doing all that stuff and using creative financing but I hate operating. What I've done this last year, I found partners that are really love doing that. It's the "Who Not How" kinda outsource the things that they love, and that brings them energy then you're doing things that you love.

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CC: And now you're running a business or you're only doing things that give you energy. And I think the life in real estate and apartment complexes, that same principle applies. Try to do things that you love doing and bring you energy and you never have to work a day in your life.

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WS: I love that. "Who Not How", I've read that book, Dan Sullivan. And I can't remember the guy, I actually read it. I think Dan co-authored it. But great book. It's going to help you think about what Calvin just said. It's so important. What gives you energy? What do you wanna be doing? How can you focus on that? But oftentimes, the mentality is the opposite of that because you gotta give some of that away. You gotta bring these people on. You gotta give something away and it must be wrong - No, I wanna keep as much to myself as I can. What did that look like for you?

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CC: Well, that's an abundance mindset, right? I used to have a serious mindset where my limiting belief was 'I could do everything myself', and to a point, you should try to do everything yourself first just to figure out what you do like and what you don't like. Once you figure that out your life's gonna be so much easier 'cause what are we doing this for? What do you do in real estate for? It's to get your time back. You don't wanna be drained by doing something you hate doing. So again, if you're doing it 'Who Not How' strategy, then you're able to just focus on the things that you like. And I promise you life's gonna be a lot easier, you're gonna be a lot happier and you're gonna have a lot more fun doing it. My wife told me one time, is there a time I feel down? And you know, every real estate deal's got some kind of challenge. It was something that comes up, it's a fire that you have to put out. Why don't you just enjoy the journey, right? I'm like, you're right, I love my partners 'cause they're fun to hang out with. We joke around all the time, and we're making money along the way, and we're making our investors money too.

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CC: And the investors, we love hanging out with them too because it's fun. We talk shop. We joke around but you gotta keep it loose and we gotta keep it fun because at the end of day, this is what life is all about. It's too much to be serious all the time but obviously you wanna be here to do it right. So do it right but also make it fun as well.

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WS: Tell us about finding that partner or maybe even what you look for in these partnerships. When you figured out what you didn't wanna do, and you found people that are really good or passionate at those things, that energizes them to do those things. I get this question so often about my business partner - how did you find them? How did you determine that it's worth taking that risk to partner with them as well?

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CC: I think it's all about going to events like this. And we're in Gobundance right now but it's like you just talk to a lot, a lot of people. For me it's talking to a lot people and again, I think internally, what you gotta figure out yourself is, okay, what do I like, what do I not like? So doing it yourself. So, our first couple of deals, we did our own deals, we did soup to nuts the whole thing. And I quickly found out, I didn't like part of my vision for the year, my immediate decision was I gotta find a partner that loves to do X, Y, Z, and then subconsciously you kinda do it and you start talking to people naturally. In my experience, you will just find someone 'cause you're subconsciously you're just working to find that person. And naturally, it just happened organically. It's not like I'm posting on Facebook or use Craigslist, hey, I can use a partner that love doing operations and blah blah blah.

Maybe that works for some people. But for me, it's like I try to put myself in the right room and I just ask questions with people and I just have conversations, genuine conversations, and I'm curious about. That just leads to partnership. I'll give you an example. I got good friends that I'm partners with right now. I've known him for years and we've always talked. And I was in San Diego with a couple of my friends and hey man, when you come down here and you live here, when you come down here, meet us for breakfast. And we just started talking, joking around, and then I forget exactly how it happened, but we just started talking more seriously. More seriously and he's like, I have a property management business, an operations business ready but I just can't, I hate structuring deals. I was, I love that. That's exactly what I love. You know, hey, maybe there's something here, right. And you just gotta have a natural conversation and now, we're partners. And I just love to hang out with him 'cause we just joke and have fun and we're serious when we need to be serious. We punch numbers when we need to but hey, it's just fun doing it too.

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WS: Yeah, just fun doing it too. That's awesome. I love how you even highlight how you all just have fun together, doing it and joking around, just spending that time together. But I think it's more fun too, because you're not doing those things that are dragging you down.

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CC: And vice versa, right? So, it's like, hey cool, I don't have to deal with that bullshit. You don't have to deal with that bullshit. It's like, I'm glad 'cause for me, I'll do the deal, I'll find it, we'll structure it, raise the money, close. Obviously, I'll run the numbers and underwriting a lot of stuff, and then I'm like, alright cool, on you now, man. And then now, he's like, alright, here we go, I get all this stuff, construction, blah, blah, blah, operations, I only wanna hear it. We'll talk about it but you just give me updates, I'm not gonna micromanage, you do your thing, I trust you. Do your thing.

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WS: That's awesome. That is so crucial. My business partner and I met at a conference. Actually, somebody just earlier today, was asking me about how we met 'cause they were looking at a partnership. And it's like we met at a conference, I heard things that it was obvious he was skilled at some things, that I was not as skilled about or that it was just hard for me to want to do those things. And so, I approached him on the last night of the conference, and I was just very open and said, hey, you know, we've been praying for a business partner and you seem to fit the bill. However, it doesn't mean we're going to partner, but I'd like to get to know you, and so we did. We got to know each other. I even went and spent time at his house, with him and his family just to purposely get to know him 'cause it's a big decision. I'd said no to many people who had asked to partner. But we just aligned in so many ways and we have very complementary skill sets.

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CC: It's just like dating. It's like you kind of date them, you kinda get to know them better. And you kind of see how they work. You ask around, hey, what do you think about this guy? And

that's also why I think that the brand piece is so important because you don't wanna say, hey, you know what, Calvin, he sucks. I don't want to work with him. Then it's like, man, you'll never find a partner. I'm always in the mindset of anyone that you ever talked to or partner with. You should find a way to make it positive no matter what because you never know if that person is gonna come down the road and be that next partner for you again. In any relationship and even in conferences like this, I'm always in the mindset of I just wanna provide value. If I can just give without any expectations in return, you never know what's gonna happen down the road.

I just got in today but already got into component today, and I got some like five people that were just like, hey man, like friends I met at the conference before or like I've seen them in other meet-ups and stuff, and just picking my brain about stuff. It's like hey, we should go partner a deal. I'm like, yeah, we can talk about it and start that conversation more. And it's just cool that that just happens naturally. By just being a good human being and being someone that has the morals. I'm not trying to screw anyone over. That person that took 100K, that person was intentionally trying to go out and basically find people they can strike on. I never want that for anyone. And so that was kind of the learning lesson that is certainly, well, from then on is just like, just be a good person. Be a good person and you'll attract people and you'll have good business that way, too.

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WS: That's awesome. And I would highlight you were taking action. You were putting yourself out there. You're going to conferences, you are purposely going up and meeting strangers to have those conversations. That's a very fearful thing for most people or a lot of people, putting yourself out there. But you took action. So tell us, Calvin, what's been one of the biggest challenges for you over the last 12 months?

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CC: I think the biggest challenge for me has been the identity piece. You're always constantly growing and you always change your identity so much. I mean, like last year, obviously December and it's January right now, me and my wife always take December off to kinda reflect back on the year. And oh my God, you're just thinking about six months ago or 12

months ago, who you were as a person, not what you accomplished, but who you are as a person, it changes drastically. The challenge for me always is what I'm trying to step into this year? And just knowing what that path looks like, because who I was year ago, wrote that as one of my vision, is totally different. Now, something different, what's new? And to me, just being able to step into that and just have a clear path of what that looks like is one of my biggest challenges right now. We get a lot of (all of me) syndrome. I think we all do. I can do that, I can do that. And we overestimate the time that we have.

I think I have so many great ideas that I'm like, oh, I wanna execute that, I wanna execute that. But you don't have time. We work with that, so it's like, alright, let's just focus on the one thing I kinda reeling that back of. There's like five different things I'm really big on this year and I wanna do. I'm actually having a conversation with one of the guys out there. I'm like, that's something I could add as well. But it's just focusing on what's the one thing right now that just you can get done 'cause what I struggle with a lot is you just put so much on your plate that you don't get anything finished. Because you're so excited, a lot of high-functioning people are like I can do anything, right? And so not just building the systems to automate stuff and make it more seamless, you can't focus on more of the stuff.

0:27:08

WS: Yeah, I love this, even that you and your wife take the month of December off and you reflect. You look back, you think about, who was I six months ago. But tell us how that changes January? How do you use that? 'cause I love that, and I'm gonna tell you why. I call it thinking time. I recommend this book all the time on the podcast and other podcasts, but it's "The Road Less Stupid".

0:27:30

CC: I was just talking about that in another podcast. I know that book. Is it Keith Cunningham?

0:27:32

WS: Yeah, yeah. Keith Cunningham. He talks about thinking time. And that was just been crucial for my wife and I. It's like thinking time. You know, do you just have time to think? And I

feel like, especially at first, I feel so unproductive, I'm just gonna sit somewhere and do nothing. It's hard to sit myself down and just not do anything. But just let's think and reflect, it's so important. I think even I go back to the fall that my wife and I, I was practically doing two full-time jobs, and my wife, not in real estate, but my wife and I were walking on the beach and we were just like, is this getting us where we're going? where we wanna go? Three years from now, five years from now. It was obvious once we asked that question that it just wasn't. And within two and a half months, we sold our house, our farm, and we're just making a massive decision. It changed everything for us because of that downtime on the beach, just like, no agenda.

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CC: This is the tale as old as time - we sold the farm and get into real estate. I love that. But yeah, to your point, Whitney. I think a lot of the mistakes entrepreneurs make is they don't take time for themselves, to just unwind and just not do anything. Because that's one of the best ideas are. I took that time to really just focus on one of my visions, what I really wanted this year versus you're gonna get so bogged down of the tactical stuff on the day-to-day basis. If you don't take that time, you'll always be bogged down by some tactical stuff.
Yeah, I agree with you. I just came back. We went on this trip, went to Hawaii, and I got to just hike around, surf, all that stuff, and just play on the beach. And I came back from that trip way more energized. I was kinda losing energy at the end of the year. I was like, maybe I would just take a year off, kind of thing. And I came up, I'm like, no, I'm not gonna screw that, I'm about to hit the ground running. I got all these great ideas and I can't believe it's just been two and a half weeks in January. It's like, oh my God, even into our two weeks in January, it's been like, go, go, go, go, go. But all the stuff that I'm excited about and I get energy from.

0:29:19

WS: That's awesome. You've done single-family homes, you've done flipping, Airbnb, the BRRR method, multi-family apartments. You have this gradual transition or growth, I think, or maybe you're still doing a little bit of all that, I'm not sure. But tell us, looking back and doing all those things, would you have done it differently? Would you have started with apartments? Are

you thankful for that? That how you progressed? What would that look like if you could talk to yourself five years ago, what would you say?

0:29:48

CC: I think most people would say, hey, you wanna go bigger faster. I would agree with that too but I'm thankful for the journey that we had. Because without losing 100K, without doing all the single-families, without doing the first BRRR, the first small multi to first apartment complex, we wouldn't be where we're at. So, I can say that there's always one that you can change. If I ever fight back on the mistakes we made, the turning point for me, I remember, we were doing a BRRR, a single-family BRRR, I think it was. Bought it 70K, put 25K to rehab, it was worth 155K. Pull the money out, and then cash in 100 bucks after a month. And I was like, holy crap, I just spent six months on this deal, I'm cashing in 100 bucks. And I was like, I'm sitting there counting like, alright, how many of these deals I have to do to get there? And I was like, it's not gonna take forever. Fast forward, we basically do apartment complex BRRR. And I was like, if I do one of these deals, I'm cashing in four or five grand after a regional capital back out. Why would I do that?

So getting over the fear, it was tough doing that, and even though this is self-worth, I might worry to be someone that am I even the person that can do one of those deals? And once you break that barrier, you did it. It wasn't hard. I spend less time actually doing apartment complex deals versus that single-family BRRR. That was eye-opening to me. Wow. Takes the same amount of effort, actually probably less, the numbers are more logical, I like the systems there that are better. The only thing is you're just getting over the fear, maybe there's an extra comma in there, and we get over that, then it's magical.

0:31:13

WS: We could even go back to where you were talking about, you struggled with confidence issues. Do I really know what I'm doing? And I think we've all done that. Doing a single-family home or flips sometimes, I think, there's less risk in that. I'll get my feet wet. We'll gradually do this growth. Now, talk about this guy often I was gonna meet up. And I got to know a lot of people in this meet-up too. So before we started in commercial real estate, and I just had a few

very few small multi-family properties at the time, and I told this guy, we're gonna start doing commercial real estate and apartment buildings. And he owned lots of commercial real estate in the local town there, a very successful entrepreneur. But he pulled me aside out of care for me, he did.

0:31:47.8

WS: He pulled me aside and I'll never forget what he said. Now, Whitney, most people start with a single-family home and a duplex, and he was kinda doing this motion wherein they grow. It takes some time, and I would say there's nothing wrong with that. Nothing wrong with that. And he approached me out of care, and I really appreciate that. But I'm so thankful that, had we pursued apartment buildings quickly after I learned about the syndication business, and not only that, I learned that not only had one or two people built wealth in real estate, but I mean, hundreds of thousands of people in apartment building, so I'm like, okay, I can do this too. I can figure this out, but what gave you the confidence eventually to step out there like that?

0:32:20.8

CC: It was just - surround yourself with the right people. you start to see in my network at the time when I was doing residential. Normally if you do apartments, it's like, this is something that it was like a fairy tale. Eventually, you can get to apartment complexes or commercial deals. And then, put myself in the room where I was the dumbest person in the room. Being the dumbest person in the room is awesome because you're gonna see what everyone's doing and be inspired by them and say, well, actually, this is possible. With my first try in apartment complexes, first co-sponsor I ever did was in Oakland, California. And I went to my buddy's place, and walk in the room. I'm scared 'cause I'm intimidated all that stuff, walk in the room, David Greene and David Larson, good friend of mine. Now, that's also a badass, right? And there's a one-sheet. So the one sheet, you show the numbers, basically an open kimono and hey, here's all my numbers, right? I'm sitting there like, oh my God, these were huge numbers, and I just feel intimidated. But it was great to be in that room 'cause you're like, this is possible. And then fast forward, I'm gonna go on for two and a half, three years now, so fast for three years, and we went back to that same house to do our goals and do a cold plunge and stuff. And, I said, man, I'm at those numbers or passes now. And it's like, whoa, that's crazy. What a

couple of years will do to you if you're around the right people that say this is possible. And it's formidable how it's impossible until it's...until someone sees someone then it's very possible. Everyone does it.

0:33:45.4

WS: Incredible. I hope the listeners are encouraged by that right there. It's surrounding yourself with the right people, getting the naysayers out of your - maybe not, I hate to say out of your life - it may be good friends of yours, however, you gotta know how to approach those do what they're saying.

0:34:00

CC: It's a different relationship. I'm sure you've gone through the same thing when it's like, I had a lot of friends that were like, "What are you doing? That's crazy". And yeah, I wouldn't say I've lost such friends. I just know that an advice that one of my mentors gave me was that there are different types of friends now. There are your lunch friends there, your 10-minute friends. These are your vacation friends, these are your growth friends. There's different buckets that you put your friends in now. You don't lose them but you know that if you're gonna hang with those lunch friends, you talk about fancy football. But if you have one of your growth friends, you can talk about what's your net worth, what's your vision for the year, how are you doing these creative financing deal, how will you make that even bigger. It's different conversation and just being prepared for those in conversations with proper expectations.

0:34:42

WS: No doubt about it. It's such an important point. When I also changed my morning routine, I started educating myself, I also started going to conferences and meeting people who are doing it right. We were called crazy by more than one person for selling our farm, selling our house. It looked like the house and farm that most people would always dream of. And we dreamed about it as well, we loved that place. So, our family is like, what a minute, you've got the best job that anybody in your family has ever had, and you're gonna quit. That was so hard for my network, my people that were around me to understand at that time. And so anyway,

such a great point. A couple of final questions. What's the number one thing that contributed to your success?

0:35:23.2

CC: Yeah, so my theme that I have for my life, it's a phrase really that I would contribute the most success to is - being comfortable, being uncomfortable. Put yourself in uncomfortable situations, you're gonna grow. Am I uncomfortable buying my first apartment complex? Hell yeah, I am, but made me grow the most. Actually, even my first real state deal, was I uncomfortable? Absolutely. You get better and better. So, just putting yourself out there, going to a conference, going into that house in Oakland, even though you're the smallest person in that room. Just be uncomfortable with that because the more uncomfortable you are, the more growth you'll have.

0:35:52

WS: Incredible. No doubt about it. I remember that same meet-up. I'll never forget when the leader of the group asked me to speak, and I mean, I'd had like 60 units at the time. I'm not the person, that's crazy. But I remember, I remember what I read, but I was exposing myself to other people who are doing big things. And I knew that I needed to commit to that. I knew that I needed to quickly say yes. And that was difficult, even right then I had to like, oh, that nervousness comes up inside of me. And I said, sure, I'll do it. That was so intimidating to me at the time. Speaking in front of that group. They asked some hard questions at me, I didn't have all the answers to that. I grew so much because of that. You gotta put yourself out there, you gotta just be able to be fearless and not worry about it really. But to move forward, how do you like to give back? And maybe you can speak more about the mastermind at Zen Coast University, anyway you wanna highlight, how do you like to give back?

0:36:43

CC: Yeah, so I think when we got to the point, I think I told the story, 10 months passed and that didn't happen. And that's why we've created a Mastermind, but for us, it was all about that second mountain. What can we do to give back to people? And if we can teach people how to invest in real estate, then they're gonna be able to live a more fulfilled life, more abundant life,

and they can give back to more people. So, for us giving back now, we absolutely just want people...our slogan is, "How can we help people create passive income so that they can create passive impact" and that's where our commitment is all about. We created a network that wants to help each other out, that they understand. It's not like a YouTube course like, hey, yeah, we're gonna help you become so rich that you can buy the Lamborghini of your dreams right now. Maybe you're happy three months. But that's not fulfilling. We want people that are like, hey, I wanna do this so that I can go back to Jamaica and rebuild that village to go start this nonprofit. To do these kinds of things, right? And that to me empowers people to go take action, that gets people out of bed, that gets people to say, yeah, I need to become a real estate investor because of my mission.

0:37:48

WS: I love that. And even what you say, that's what gets you out of bed, get others out of bed. Once you've made that money, it's like, you mentioned it, it's not getting you out of bed anymore.

Calvin, it's been incredible to meet you and to have you on the show. Your story is so encouraging. I get questions every week from listeners who have...you're gonna answer their questions, right? All these limiting beliefs from the job of the amazing income and it still wasn't enough and you still left, that you still pursued something else. You even still struggled with confidence, just like we all do. But you surrounded yourself with the right people. And you've gained time freedom, and now, even the passive impact. Is that what you called it?

0:38:31

CC: Passive impact. You got it.

0:38:33

WS: Love that. Passive impact, I love that. And so I just appreciate how you're giving back in your heart towards that. Tell the listeners how they can get in touch with you and learn more about you.

0:38:41

CC: Yeah, easy. You can get in touch with me, just go to our website, Zen Coast University dot com, or you find me on Facebook and Instagram. Instagram CalvinChinREI and Facebook Calvin Chin.

0:38:52.7

WS: Awesome. Calvin, honored again to have you on the show. A pleasure to meet you. I look forward to seeing your success and maybe having you back in another year or two and just talking about it again. I hope you have a blessed day.

0:39:02

CC: I'll come back. Thank you for having me.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[OUTRO]

0:39:03

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