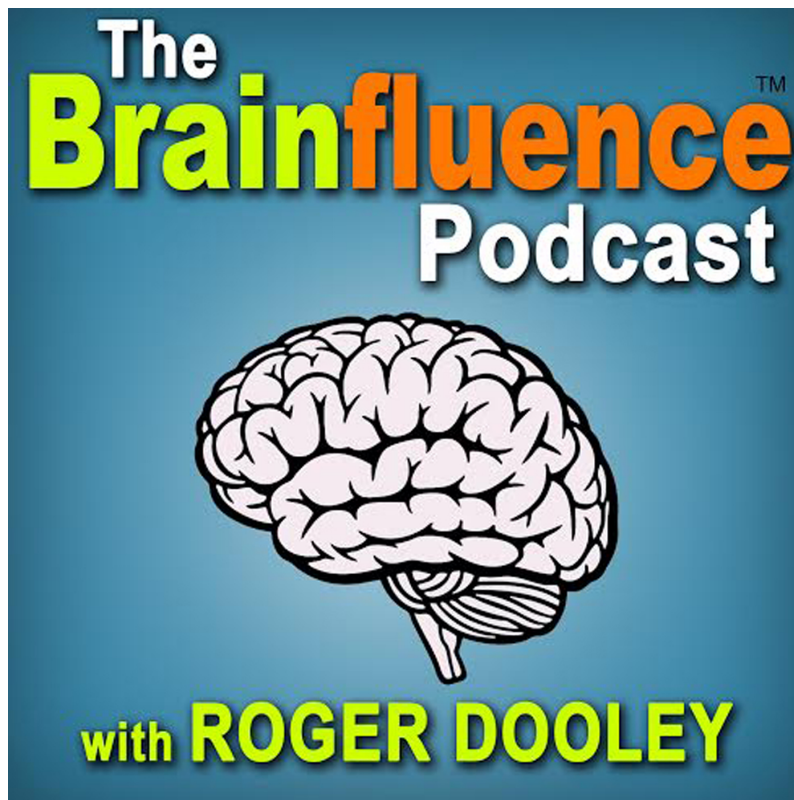


**The Self-Reliant Entrepreneur with John Jantsch**

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**Roger Dooley**

**The Brainfluence Podcast with Roger Dooley**

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# The Self-Reliant Entrepreneur with John Jantsch

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Welcome to Brainfluence, where author and international keynote speaker Roger Dooley has weekly conversations with thought leaders and world class experts. Every episode shows you how to improve your business with advice based on science or data.

Roger's new book, *Friction*, is published by McGraw Hill and is now available at Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and bookstores everywhere. Dr Robert Cialdini described the book as, "Blinding insight," and Nobel winner Dr. Richard Claimer said, "Reading Friction will arm any manager with a mental can of WD40."

To learn more, go to [RogerDooley.com/Friction](https://www.RogerDooley.com/Friction), or just visit the book seller of your choice.

Now, here's Roger.

Roger Dooley: Welcome to Brainfluence. I'm Roger Dooley.

Joining me today for the second time is the closest thing to an entrepreneurial guru as you'll find anywhere. John Jantsch is a marketing consultant and speaker and he's the bestselling author of Duct Tape Marketing, The Referral Engine, Duct Tape Selling, Commitment Engine, and even SEO For Growth. And you know, I did not use the term guru by accident. John's new book is, *The Self-Reliant Entrepreneur, 366 Daily Meditations to Feed Your Soul and Grow Your Business*. Welcome to the show, John.

John Jantsch: Thanks Roger. I'm over here levitating a little bit.

Roger Dooley: Yeah, I visualize you with your legs crossed, maybe, you know, six inches off the floor. What's up with a book on meditation, John? I've always associated your work with really sort of practical, hardheaded advice. Even Duct Tape Branding

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implies simple mechanical jury rig fixes for business problems. Kind of the opposite of elegant thought and design. So have you gone new age on us?

John Jantsch: No. So the book's actually not about meditation. There's certainly some ideas about meditation as a good practice. What I like to describe the book, it's really a guide. You know, I've written a lot of books. This is my sixth. My five previous books have been very much on marketing how to. I like to think about this book as being more of a book about entrepreneurial why to, why we're doing what we're doing.

It's almost like it's been 30 years in the writing. It kind of taps my experience with, now literally tens of thousands of small business owners that really have to go out there. Sure they do marketing, but they have to go out there and put up with all the stress and the doubt and the fear and the what's going to happen next week, that goes into running a business as well. And I wanted to write a book that was really focused on you the person as much, and really with the idea that if you work on building a better you, I think that's actually one of the fastest ways to build a better business.

Roger Dooley: So did the idea for the book come about through your own practices or did you see other people or even one person who was really successfully following this kind of regimen?

John Jantsch: You know, it's come from me, probably. I joke and kind of say when I turned 35 I finally decided what I wanted to do in life. And you know, that was 25 years ago and it feels like it's been a journey for the last couple of decades myself of self-examination. You know, running a business is one of the, I think best, most freeing things that you can do. But it's also probably one of the hardest ways to make a living in some cases. And

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so, you know, I think that this idea of daily reflection, daily working on, understanding that, you know, our life is a work in progress is something that I've been working on for a long time.

The format of the book, however, is something that's been a pretty proven format. Tolstoy even wrote a book like this that is a daily calendar kind of a book that has one thought per day, one thought per page, and then you'd come back the next day and read another. I, I don't know how many years ago, 10 or 12 years ago, picked up a book called the Daily Drucker, which was essentially somebody taking Peter Drucker's thoughts and writings and putting them into kind of a daily reflection book. So the format is something that's actually very proven, lots of great examples for. But nobody had really written one, I think that was strictly kind of focused on the entrepreneur.

Roger Dooley: And I think you make a good point. People, particularly those who aren't entrepreneurs, think in kind of a wistful fashion, like, oh wow, it must be great to have no boss, that you're on schedule and so on, but don't necessarily see all the other stuff that goes with it. I think probably the scariest day in my business life was when I quit a really good job at a Fortune 1000 company to start an unproven business. I just had a sort of a few early clues that it might work. But that was really kind of a terrifying moment.

And then of course, once you are an entrepreneur, you realize that there is no safety net. You know, there's nobody to bail you out from your mistakes, and you do everything. If the toilet backs up, you're probably going to be the one in there with the plunger to get it cleared out. And so, having a time to reflect a little bit and sort of put both the good and the bad. There's obviously a lot of good too and being an entrepreneur, being able to help people, being able to see your employees

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accomplish their goals and so on. And once you get to the point where you have employees, all that's great stuff. But being able to put that in perspective on a daily basis I think is pretty important.

John Jantsch: And I think, you know, a great deal of, and this sometimes just comes off as well, like, yeah, what if I'm not making any money? But I mean there's so few things that we can control, and I think that listening to outside voices and people that want to say, oh, why are you doing that? And I'm sure there were some people that questioned when you left that great job to do something unproven.

But you kind of followed your own voice. And so having the trust in yourself and in your idea. But then also being able to let go of the things we can't control, like the weather and will this person buy from me? You know, those kinds of things. I think it's just once you come to that point or that level of trust in your business, one of the things that I think owning your own business has the ability to be is the most joyful and happy thing. Mainly because I do think that you end up being able to have impact that is far greater than really any other kind of job or position that you might have.

Roger Dooley: Yeah, definitely. Unless you're the CEO of a big company, but you're absolutely right. And I don't know too many entrepreneurs who really long for their days of working in the corporate world. In fact, most of them, if you ask them, they consider themselves unemployable simply because of their entrepreneurial experience.

John Jantsch: Yeah, that's right. That's right. Absolutely.

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Roger Dooley: So to give our listeners an idea of what the book is like, as you already alluded to, there is a meditation for each day of the calendar. Each one takes up a page. There's a quote from a philosopher or some other smart person, and then a few paragraphs describing how that quote might be applied to business today. And then the last part of the reflection is a challenge question, which is supposed to make you reflect a little bit. So I wonder if you could work through one of these John, and give our listeners a flavor of what it's like.

John Jantsch: Sure. And one other, I think important detail is that I curated literature from the mid 19th century, which to me, people are familiar with Thoreau and Emerson's self-reliance. You see those on quotes on Pinterest boards and things like that. So I think a lot of people are familiar with some literature from that timeframe. I'm particularly interested in those writers, but when I dug into that time frame, I found that there was a consistent theme through a great deal of the literature. Even the fiction, books that we were all asked to read, The Scarlet Letter and Moby Dick and Little Women, they all have a thread of this idea of self-reliance.

If you think about what was going on in that time period, it was really the first counterculture period in America. We were on the cusp of the Civil War. Women were rising up and demanding the right to vote. We were trying to abolish slavery. And so a lot of the writings, some of it very overt suggested that you needed to think for yourself. You needed to take your own path. You shouldn't listen now to even what your preacher or your politician or maybe even your parents say. That you have to trust yourself enough to really follow your own path.

And that was the first time that American literature at least suggested that idea. It was very revolutionary, as you might

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imagine at the time. I think for today it's some still some of the best writing and advice to apply to an entrepreneurial journey. And so that's why I chose that literature to really anchor the thinking in this book.

Roger Dooley: Right. At the risk of scaring people off, you talk about the transcendentalists and when I hear that term, I think of, you know, maybe Indian yogis in some kind of deep trance. But in the context of your book, who are the transcendentalists?

John Jantsch: Yeah, so it was actually a label. It's a little misleading because you're right, there is transcendental meditation that became a practice that was brought to us from India. But it was really a label that was applied to some of these radical thinkers at the time. It was not a religion or a sector or anything. It was really just people that were suggesting different and what kind of seen as radical ideas about how you need to think for yourself, how we're all connected, how nature gives us a perfect example of how to live our lives.

And so like a lot of ideas that are seen as different, they were kind of labeled as something and they were called the transcendentalists. And it started really as a bit of a social, or I'm sorry, as a bit of a religious upheaval or reform, and really then ended up going throughout literature and politics and art as well. And so it was a period that had a brief heyday from about 1840 to 1880 probably. But the writers of that period also then influenced Mark Twain and Willa Cather, and certainly folks that came after.

So the term, I use it a lot in the book because it is a well known term in history and literature, but it's not meant to be as scary as maybe it sounds at times.

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Roger Dooley: Well that's good. I would imagine at that time religion was rather doctrinaire and even probably many people previously had felt that they weren't in control of themselves or their lives, and that God or some other force was actually making the choices and making things happen for them and they were sort of participating in life. So the point of being self-reliant is a bit of a change.

John Jantsch: Yeah. And I'll give you a perfect example because you're absolutely right. I mean, a lot of times people refer to their religion, especially in the Northeast where a lot of this was really born. You know, you had the Puritan and then the next was the Calvinist European church kind of thinking that very much was God is in control and you work hard to serve, you know, what you're told to do. That was how everything was depicted in literature, certainly in the church itself.

I'll give you an example that I cite in the book. Mark Twain's work in Huckleberry Finn and Tom Sawyer, when Tom and Becky get trapped in the cave. Previously, and I don't know if people know how that works out, but you know, they use their thoughts and their ingenuity, figured out how to get out of the cave, and really saw it as take your own initiative, do your own thing.

Previously, a lot of literature would have seen that as God delivered them too. And again I don't want to sink us into a religious discussion here because that's not the point at all. It's just that in that time period you saw this change in American literature, even in the fiction, to where the protagonist then became also very self-reliant and figure out, follow your truth and do your own thing.

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Roger Dooley: I think any entrepreneur today has to have self-reliance as a pretty key aspect of their psyche. If not, if you're waiting for other people or anybody to do it for you, it's not going to happen. So I think your title and theme is well suited for the audience. Why don't we go through an example of a day and give folks a flavor of what it's like.

John Jantsch: All right. So I'm going to read today's. You and I are recording this on October 15th I think. Isn't that what today is? So I will just choose October 15th just for grins. Everyday starts with a title and then the reading from the literature and then 150 words or so from me and then I leave you with a question.

Limiting stories. When a resolute young person steps up to the great bully, the world, and takes it boldly by the beard, they're often surprised to find it come off in their hand and that it was only tied on to scare away timid adventurers. That was Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr. and Elsie Venner, which was a book by him written in 1861.

When is the last time you told yourself a story that just wasn't true? And the imagined outcome of that fable controlled not only your emotions but your actions or inactions as well. The stories we tell ourselves about money or success or failure, or even our own happiness dictate and foreshadow our eventual consequences. They color how we see the world and the abundant opportunity all around us. They force us to see people and things not as they are, but as we tell ourselves they are.

But then one day something clicks and forces us to approach a limiting story and experience it in a totally new manner, to take it boldly by the beard. And we are surprised, relieved and maybe a little frustrated that it exercised such control over us.

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But limiting assumptions are kind of like dandelions. If you don't get to the root, you'll never get control. Think of a story you tell yourself that's holding you back. Ask yourself why you have that story. Go unearth the evidence all around you that helps you undermine your current thinking. Write it down. You've grown so much since you first developed your old story. Just because you believe it, that doesn't make it true. Go take it boldly by the beard and yank hard. Your challenge question, what's one thing you've done in your life that you once thought was not possible?

Roger Dooley: Well I think it gives a really good flavor and you know, the concept of limiting stories, this isn't the first time you've heard it, but it's so cool, John, that you're able to go back to quotes from 150 years ago that are maybe slightly different in language, but just totally relevant today. And I would guess just to throw out a limiting story that entrepreneurs might feel is like, gee, I'm terrible at sales. You know, I can't do that. I need to hire a salesperson because I suck at sales or any number of other things like that. Would I be on the right track there?

John Jantsch: Yeah, I think that's absolutely right. And there are some things that we're more gifted at doing. I think part of the point of this too is that we tell ... Think about how we develop those stories. I mean, half of them, first, second grade we made that decision that we were terrible at something or that we didn't like something. And that stuck with us, you know, because we were afraid to change that story because change scares us. I use this example all the time. These terribly accomplished, successful entrepreneurs go back to a family reunion and the next they know they're like six year old little Johnny, because that's who they are there. That's the story they tell themselves about the family dynamic or whatever it is.

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I think that again was just one example, but I think that that's something that people face every single day in their entrepreneurial journey. Because there are so many people outside of us telling us that we're no good at something or that we shouldn't do something. But the real battle sometimes is inside, our own limiting beliefs that are telling us we can't do something. And I think when you're able to blow some of those things up, I think you start to look at what's possible in a whole new way.

Roger Dooley: That reminds me of a story. I was listening to a podcast done by our mutual friend Mitch Joel, and I'm trying to remember who he was talking to. It might've been the author of Ranger, or not. But it told a great story about a person who as a rather young student was told that he was bad at math and he got a bad math grade and was told he was never going to be very good at math. And acted on that, pursued another career. And then he was a journalist and he was covering some science topics, ended up visiting an eminent mathematician and found that he could understand the content of what the guy was talking about better than his students. His students couldn't get it, but he was able to grasp it.

He ended up changing careers, going into math, and became one of the world's top five mathematicians. And that's exactly the sort of thing, perhaps on a smaller scale, I think that we're all subject to. Somebody tells you something and we just take that for granted that well, hey, they know what they're talking about. In this case it was a teacher. Hey, teachers know what we're good at or know what we're not good at. And we just act on that forever without questioning it.

John Jantsch: And I think a lot of that has to do with, and the real damage in that and challenge in that is that when we come to a

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situation in the present moment, that past not only colors it, but it creates our future. And so, because we don't act on something or we don't experiment with something or experience some new thing, and that actually ultimately holds us back from our future success. And so, you know, I think if we could get to the point where in that particular case where we're basically looking at everything in the present moment lens, then we can create our future. If we're letting the past color our present lens, it's going to actually then color our future.

Roger Dooley: Do you have a preferred environment that you think would be good for conducting these little sessions? And how long do you think a session might take a busy entrepreneur?

John Jantsch: Yeah, I mean you heard me read that page, it takes like 90 seconds to read that page. But what I think many entrepreneurs are doing these days, at least I see lots of evidence of it, is this idea of a daily morning routine has become really popular. And it might include reading something, journaling, meditating, doing exercise. I think a lot of people have really come to realize that that hour or whatever it is that they put in in the morning, you know, pays huge dividends throughout the day. And let's face it, doing this entrepreneurial thing can be physically and mentally taxing. And so, having a routine where you're conditioning your mind and your body at some point during the day, I think, people have adopted that idea.

So to answer your question, I really think that this book obviously could fit into a daily kind of morning routine. One of the things that my publisher allowed me to do is at the bottom, under the challenge question every day there's a couple of lines for you to do kind of a mini journaling activity if that's something you do. And I think that if you expanded it beyond that, to really

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write your thoughts down around the question as they come to you.

But I think that the format of a book like this really does lend itself to a practice. You don't read this book and learn, oh, okay, now I'm self-reliant. You read this book, you read the question, maybe you give some thought to the question, journal a little bit, and then hopefully you take it into the day with you, and you start witnessing how things are showing up, or witnessing the idea and how it actually does play a role in what you're doing in your business. And I think that type of practice is how you actually start making strides.

Roger Dooley: Yeah, I like the idea of doing it early in the day and even if you only devote say a few minutes to thinking about the question, then with any luck, maybe sometime later in the day you'll be able to reflect on it again or it'll come up, you'll be reminded of it while you're doing something. Although, I know how the best laid plans like that go in the life of busy entrepreneurs. They realize that the day is over and you did not think about the thing you want to. But is there going to be an audio book, John? Because I'm visualizing this would be really kind of a fun thing to listen to the little meditation prompt and the question while you're going for morning walk or walking the dog or whatever.

John Jantsch: Yeah. And I've actually for years listened to ... I'm a big fan of Deepak Chopra, and I have listened to his guided meditations for many years actually, in the mornings. And so yeah, this kind of fits into that idea I think. And the short answer is yes, of course there's going to be an audio book, Roger.

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Roger Dooley: Okay, well good. I assume so, but it hasn't released yet and when I looked on Amazon, it wasn't listed there. But yeah, it would certainly, I think be invaluable that way.

John Jantsch: It's probably going to be about a month behind the actual release of the book. And that was just a timing of getting it done. And you've probably recorded. Have you recorded an audio for your books, Roger?

Roger Dooley: Oh, I did not record them, but a professional narrator did. And actually it turned out better than had I done it, I think, because the beginning of Friction starts with a little fable as you know, a little made up story to set the tone for the book. And the narrator actually did a few little voices in it. So the CEO had kind of a gruff voice and, stereotypical perhaps, but way better job than I would have done with that. I would have been just read it straight through. I was initially a little bit surprised that hey, they never even asked me to do it. But then when I listened I said, okay, hey, this is pretty good. And I'm sure he got it done in a fraction of the time that would have taken a non-professional reader like me to do.

John Jantsch: Yeah, that was really my point in asking the question is it's hard to do. So you know, it takes four or five afternoons actually to read through, the many, many takes to get it right.

Roger Dooley: Yeah I don't doubt that. And from the writers group that we're a part of, every now and then somebody posts about their experience like, oh God, that was exhausting. Four days and I'm beat. But anyway, we will look for that too. So the way the book is organized overall is each quarter has a theme and each month then has its own theme within that quarter. So the first three months of the year are called planning and January is

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trust, February is creativity and March is freedom. How do you come up with that structure?

John Jantsch: Well, about three years ago, and this was maybe the seed of the idea for this book, but about three years ago I wrote a blog post that was really just me reflecting on what I see as the stages and the seasons of being an entrepreneur. And it's not necessarily like startup to death season. But really kind of how you have to evolve as-

Roger Dooley: Excitement, despair.

John Jantsch: Right. And then I gave each month a theme that I thought fit into what was going on in that stage or what was the most prominent. As it turns out, it was also sort of a device for me to organize the book. Because I first started just like, yeah, I'm going to write 366 of these. I need to go out and find 366 good quotes to put in the book. And I realized pretty quickly that that was just going to be a mess.

And so, you know, I was just reading and reading and going, oh yeah, this one's good. And so when I organized the book around this format and gave the months, it actually allowed me to go out and hunt for what I was looking for and find books and works and letters and things that contained something around the themes.

And so it does give the book a little bit of a narrative arc. It's not overt. I mean you don't read it and go, okay, that one was just about trust. That's all this chapter is about. But it does give it a little bit of a narrative arc and again allowed me to really organize it as well.

Roger Dooley: You know John, one of the problems fans of business books have is keeping up with the flow of new books, and I've

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got so many unread books that I'd really like to get to, but I don't have that free block of time where, yeah, I like to sit down for half an hour or an hour and do some thoughtful reading.

One thing that's great about your book is every one of our listeners could spare those 90 seconds. It's sometime in the day to read that and maybe another minute or two to reflect and hopefully maybe more than that. But there's really no excuse for saying, well you know I got to wait til I can set aside an hour to read that book. In your case people can start right away, which actually brings me to another question. Each page or each day actually has a date assigned to it. Can people jump in anywhere? So if they get the book on November 17th, just start on November 17th? Or should they wait until January?

John Jantsch: No, that's great question. I don't know why you wouldn't jump in. It's not like if you read December, you're going to know the end of the story. I mean it's good daily. You know, why not get two months of November and December in, so you hit the ground running in January. Don't put it away and wait until January.

And actually having said that, I enjoy just picking it up in like random. I'm here for a minute. I've got about five minutes, I'm going to read a page. It doesn't matter what date it was, it hopefully we'll still have something useful for you for that day. And then I've talked to other people that said that they've read five, six pages, almost like a week at a time and think about going into their week to plan it.

So there's really no right or wrong way. I am starting a community because I've had a lot of feedback from people saying, hey this would be great if we could have a way to discuss these ideas as well as read the book, and theoretically

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this is one of those books where most everybody will be on the same page on the same day, and so it really does lend itself to the ability to maybe just discuss an idea or even the actual question.

Roger Dooley: Such a great concept. Will that be an open community? Will people be able to find that? And we can certainly link to that in the show notes if it is an open community,

John Jantsch: Yes, it definitely will be open. I mean we want people to initially enroll, but it's not going to be something you have to be invited to. If you go to [selfreliantentrepreneur.com](http://selfreliantentrepreneur.com), which is also where, depending upon when you're listening to this, you can find out a lot of information about it. All the links to the various booksellers will be there so you can purchase the book. But you'll also find a form there where you can say, yeah, I'm interested in being a part of the community.

Roger Dooley: Great. Well I can assure our listeners that if they want a companion on their entrepreneurial journey that there is no one better than you, John and this book will be really useful. Let me remind everyone that we are speaking with John Jantsch, founder of Duct Tape Marketing and author of the new book, *The Self-Reliant Entrepreneur, 366 Daily Meditations to Feed Your Soul and Grow Your Business*. And one thing, the word meditation might be a little scary for some people because if they have used an app like Headspace, meditation is about emptying your head and chasing your thoughts away or noticing your thoughts, to use their terminology, whereas these meditations are designed to make you think. So John, how can people find you? We heard about Self-Reliant Entrepreneur link any place else to look for you?

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John Jantsch: Well sure. The rest of my life is available at ducttapemarketing.com. So that's D-U-C-T-T-A-P-E marketing.com.

Roger Dooley: Great. Well, we will link there and to any other resources we spoke about on the show notes page at rogerdooley.com/podcast. And we'll have a text version of our conversation there too. John, thanks for being on the show. Great to have you back and you have definitely given me some food for thought.

John Jantsch: Awesome. My pleasure, Roger. Thank you.

Thank you for tuning into this episode of Brainfluence. To find more episodes like this one, and to access all of Roger's online writing and resources, the best starting point is RogerDooley.com.

And remember, Roger's new book, *Friction*, is now available at Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and book sellers everywhere. Bestselling author Dan Pink calls it, "An important read," and Wharton Professor Dr. Joana Berger said, "You'll understand Friction's power and how to harness it."

For more information or for links to Amazon and other sellers, go to [RogerDooley.com/Friction](http://www.RogerDooley.com/Friction).

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