MOSTLY VIP CONNECTION DINNER – UN-LEARNING SUCCESS

by Joe Che

THE CONNECTION MAP

I hosted a VIP networking group at Mostly Restaurant in May 2025, and one of the questions from our breakout session was, "What was one thing you had to un-learn about what it means to be successful?' Here are the responses from our attendees:

Joe Che
Joe described his old success model as rooted in money, image, and external validation. But over time, he began prioritizing deep relationships, freedom, and alignment with his soul's purpose. He found that when he stopped chasing, the right people and opportunities came to him. Success now means flow, resonance, and authenticity—not grinding to prove something.

Shane
Shane once believed that working extremely hard was the surefire path to success. His first business validated that belief. But with his second venture, despite doubling his effort, results worsened. This forced him to unlearn the idea that grinding harder always works. Instead, he turned inward—toward intuition, alignment, and flow. He discovered that his most effective and fulfilling work happened when it didn't feel like work at all. For him, chasing "hard work' was actually a signal that he was off-track.

Eri
Eri shared that her early model of success was based on competing with men, especially to please her father. She pursued titles and roles, including joining the Air Force ROTC, but did so by ignoring her body's signals and suppressing her natural style of leadership. It wasn't until she began honoring her feminine rhythms—especially through tuning into her cycle and body wisdom—that she began to unlock a more sustainable and powerful leadership. Success for her is now rooted in authenticity, balance, and reclaiming her power as a woman.

Marion
As a designer, Marion thought success meant working with elite, wealthy clients. She eventually reached that level, only to feel deeply unhappy, disrespected, and disconnected from her work. The experience pushed her to take a two-year break to reassess everything. Today, she defines success as doing work she loves, with clients who respect her, and always keeping creativity alive through reinvention. It's not about chasing status—it's about staying true to joy and dignity.

Angel
Angel grew up with the belief that being beautiful was the most important thing—that external appearance was the main currency for success. But as she matured, she realized that true power and fulfillment come from within. Inner qualities—kindness, confidence, presence—are what truly shine. She unlearned the idea that beauty is a destination and embraced the truth that it is a reflection of inner authenticity and alignment.

Jess
Jess always believed the formula for success was simple: set goals and achieve them. But after checking all the boxes and still feeling unfulfilled, he realized he was missing something deeper. He began to let go of rigid planning and instead opened himself to be surprised by life—welcoming a more intuitive, co-creative approach. His greatest success began unfolding not from control, but from trust in what the universe might bring when he let go of certainty.

Jane
Jane's insight was refreshingly grounded: success doesn't matter if you're exhausted. As a mom of young children, she noticed that even when she accomplished impressive things, the lack of sleep made it feel meaningless. She had to unlearn the idea that pushing through at all costs is noble. Now, she sees rest, energy, and presence not as luxuries, but as vital metrics of real success.

Austin
Austin used to dive headfirst into exciting opportunities and relationships, assuming early chemistry meant long-term alignment. But after experiencing repeated disappointments, he began to realize that true success in connection comes from discernment—learning to slow down and observe how people show up over time. He now sees success as choosing relationships that nourish his heart and values, not just ones that start with fireworks.

Asia
Asia came from the medical world, where success was a well-defined, linear journey: study hard, get certified, rise through ranks. But she realized life doesn't work in straight lines. She had to unlearn the rigidity of that model and embrace a more unpredictable, intuitive, and multidimensional path. Her new version of success allows room for evolution, surprise, and deeper joy.

Dean
Dean used to define success through external metrics: followers, social media reach, public accolades. But over time, he noticed those didn't fuel his soul. He began to unlearn the desire for validation and started measuring success by how aligned he felt in the pursuit of his goals. He discovered that the pursuit itself—not just the outcome—was where true satisfaction lived.

Ronnie
Ronnie never fit well into academic systems and was made to feel like a failure because of it. But his journey showed him that traditional education isn't the only—or even best—path to success. With support from mentors and alternative learning routes, he found his own rhythm. He unlearned the idea that success is linear and institutional. Now, he defines it by growth, wisdom, and the courage to learn on his own terms.

Janel
Janel pursued security through achievements—becoming a nurse, earning two Ivy League master's degrees, taking global leadership roles. But even after checking every box, she still didn't feel safe. Her body still held fear. She unlearned the belief that achievement equals self-worth. For her now, success is emotional flexibility, resilience, the ability to adapt—and feeling safe within herself regardless of titles.



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Ava
Ava was taught that following your passion—especially as an artist—meant you'd struggle financially. But once she transitioned into teaching Tantra, she found a way to combine deep purpose with profit. She unlearned the limiting belief that money and mission don't mix. Now she embodies the idea that alignment, pleasure, and prosperity can—and should—coexist.

Meg
Meg's family equated success with climbing the ladder in large corporations. So when she left that path to join a startup, they worried. But she discovered a vibrant, values-driven community that brought her alive. She unlearned the equation of scale with success. Her new model prioritizes meaningful work, creative culture, and passion over prestige.

Oliwia
Oliwia believed success meant doing what you were best at. But that mindset boxed her in. She realized she didn't want to only do what she was good at—she wanted to follow what lit her up. She unlearned the idea that passion follows skill and embraced the opposite: when you follow excitement, skills will catch up. Her new compass is what energizes her, not just what comes easily.

Vica
Vika thought she had to wait until she had it all figured out before taking action. But she came to see that waiting for certainty was keeping her stuck. She unlearned the need for full clarity and began moving forward with curiosity instead. Success now means trusting herself enough to begin without having the whole map.

Rayvan
Raven had the classic "successful' life: Ivy League education, high-powered NYC job, stable income. But she was deeply unhappy. When she walked away—disappointing her family—she found joy, adventure, and love on her own terms. She unlearned the belief that pleasing others and being "impressive' was worth it. For her now, success is freedom, connection, and daily delight.



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Adam
Adam's initial definition of success came from the outside—acquiring titles, labels, and recognition early in his career. But those external badges didn't bring him true satisfaction. Over time, he began to realize that success didn't have to match anyone else's standards. It was something he could define for himself, on his own terms, based on internal values rather than societal validation. He found drive and ambition still had a place—but now they served his vision, not someone else's.

Narley
Narlie once believed that looking a certain way—straight hair, polished appearance—was necessary for being taken seriously and succeeding. But those expectations erased parts of her identity. She had to unlearn the pressure to conform and instead embrace her natural self. Her new version of success is grounded in self-worth, cultural pride, and unapologetic expression.

Anthony
Anthony pursued wealth and women as signs of success, believing they would bring happiness. But that path led to emptiness and depression. He eventually re-centered his life around health, love, presence, and helping others. He unlearned the fantasy that external rewards equal joy. Now, his definition of success is how much peace he feels—and how much good he brings to the world.



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