JUSTIN BELL GUARINI

Notes from conversation

ACTORS’ THINK TANK – Friday, January 29, 2021

Basic info on Justin:

* Introduced by Mike Provenzano. Justin was a judge in the Star Festival and the host of the Awards Ceremony
* Runner up to Kelly Clarkson, First American Idol
* Appears as “Lil Sweet” in Diet Dr. Pepper ads
* Also, has appeared in numerous Broadway shows, including Wicked and Romeo and Juliet
* Lives in Doylestown, PA
* Author of “Audition Secrets” which is available on Amazon.com
* His dad was first African American police chief in Atlanta
* His mom was a CNN journalist

Justin thinks of himself as an “art-trapreneur.” We are all making out own way this year. So, what are the mindsets and skills to set you apart?

When he put 3.5 months into a Hamilton audition, he ended up with a ‘NO’ – full stop. That set him on a path and ended up dealing with one element – Confidence. He developed his company, “Profit Under Pressure LLC.”

Hi Core Confidence course deals in four key areas of self:

* Clarity
* Commitment
* Creativity
* Certainty

The course is free and starts at noon on Feb 1. It runs for 5 days. Sign up at CoreConfidenceChallenge.com.

In his book, “Audition Secrets,” he talks about going into auditions as an equal. It is key to be able to collaborate together. At the end of an audition, he literally rips up the script after he walks out of the room. That’s confidence.

His upbringing was filled with “Exposure.” He was exposed to the backstage of CNN. As a result, it is probably one reason why he embraced the camera. He also learned that there are no small cogs in this machine. Every well-known person is built on the shoulders of a massive team. A pyramid of people.

Patti LuPone, who he worked with early on, said learn everyone on the crew’s name.

Embrace the little AND the big failures. The failures will be the norm! This business is cyclical. If you stay in it long enough, the business will come around to you. Your version could be in a local market. The business is not happening to me, but it is happening FOR me. Failures will be your greatest learning.

Justin told the story of auditioning for the Diet Dr. Pepper ad. He did not want to go. He was in Wicked at the time, had some time off and was really looking forward to just being with his family. He kept saying, “not interested”, but is manager insisted. So, he went (5 hour round trip into the city), but did not care about the outcome. So, he just let go. He even started singing like an idiot at the audition (there was not any singing in the script). He took the train back. Mind you he had babies at the time and his wife was really looking to have him home, too! That night, he got the call. We want you back again tomorrow. Oy. Again, somewhat begrudgingly he went. Was this a real call-back for him or did they just want to compare and contrast him next to someone else? All the right people were there in person or on zoom from around the world. The person before him looked exactly like the character…pencil mustache and all. Again, he just did not care. He had to wait about 10 min while they all talked about him. At the end, they said, we want you on a plane tomorrow. We’re doing fittings over the weekend and we shoot on Monday. And, for 6 years, he has shot this commercial for a week every year (except during Covid). Lesson: Bring the energy!! And don’t worry!!

The waiting is where we always make the mistake. Don’t read into what they are doing. So many things are out of our control as actors. Be comfortable with being confident and not knowing. Let’s collaborate. Here’s what I got. I can take something from this.

Confidence!! They want you to succeed! The casting team is on your side. They are saying, “Please, be it. Be the one!”

Recognize that confidence when you walk into a battlefield that you have no control over. When you are in a room be aware of all the energies that are pulling at others. Be grounded in yourself. Almost have a shield around that energy. Don’t be subjected to their stuff.

Get a life and you’ll get a life. Plan a date after an audition to make your mind off it!

Justin was on Oprah 3 times which was “Insane.” (His word!) He said you are never quite as good or never quite as bad. He doesn’t rely on what others say about him. “If I’m doing good work, I’m good.”

Per Justin: Stay in the game. Be kind. Do good work.

During Covid, he asked “how do I make my way?” He’s doubled down on teaching and mentoring. Like the lead character in “Catch Me If You Can” who was teaching a class at Harvard, “I was just a chapter ahead of the students.”

You have the power to pivot. With technology, it’s possible to do what you love. Everything you want is waiting for you on the other side.

He’d like to do more TV and film. He’s just way more comfortable in theatre and where he’s found the most success.