

Humans Rising with Isaac Morehouse founder of Praxis and Crash Transcript.

00:00:02 - 00:05:14

Caprice: Welcome to Humans Rising, a podcast to help you raise your freedom, your consciousness, and your well-being. And today I am here with Isaac Morehouse who is the founder of Praxis and also Crash.co. Welcome Isaac. Thank you so much for joining me today.

Isaac: Absolutely. It's great to be here.

Caprice: So, I have been following your excellent work in the world for several years and I am so inspired by what you say your mission in life is; your purpose, which is the relentless pursuit of freedom. And so as I watched some of your videos, you talked about how you started early in your career really teaching principles of freedom to young people. But where you are today is rather than just sharing ideas, you really give people a taste of freedom so they won't settle for anything less.

Isaac: That's a good way to frame it out. Because I'm a big ideas person and obviously freedom is an idea but it's it's really a lived experience. It's a feeling you have and I spent a lot of years trying through just argumentation and education, trying to expand the scope of freedom for myself and for others. You know trying to argue for freer government policy as in, you know people that look to make choices to make themselves more free in their lives. I found that it's really hard to envision. What you have to know is what could be. You have to have a bit of a taste of it in order to be motivated enough to make a change.

So there's my favorite economist, Ludwig von Mises says, there's three preconditions to human action. One is dissatisfaction with the status quo. Two is a vision of something better. And three is a belief in the ability to get there. And I find that whether you're talking about education, which is a space I've been in a lot or just any other career, government, any area of life, it's not that hard for people to feel dissatisfaction or discomfort with where they are. A vision of something better is a little harder. It's a little harder to see. I know that there is a superior version of my life over here and then I think the hardest is a belief in the ability to get there even if you have that vision of something that might be better.

And so I thought, I've been basically trying to convince people that the status quo sucks, and to a lesser degree that there is a superior vision of life over here. But if they don't have that belief in their ability to get there, nothing's going to happen. So, if you just tell somebody you know, for example, the public school system has got all these terrible incentives and here's reasons that it's bad, they'll shake their head and you can convince them pretty quickly. And then if you say, "You know, homeschooling and unschooling, the Sudbury model school or some other alternative is this better vision.", they might come along with you on that as well. And then they'll kind of walk away and say, "so what?" Because they don't know how to get from here to there.

And so I just I had this realization that, if you start with “hey, here’s something for you to give it a try” and if it makes your life better and it makes you more free, you’ll want more of it. You don’t even need to be intellectually convinced at all. You just choose to live that way without any argument required. And that’s kind of to me entrepreneurship, it’s creating the alternatives, creating the kind of world you wanna live in instead of just complaining about what’s wrong with the world today.

So that it took me a lot longer than I wish it did not to go to that place where I realized all of his energy I had was better spent creating new experiences for people. It doesn’t mean I don’t want to talk about ideas, but then merely talking about the ideas.

Caprice: That makes such good sense to me. You know I unschooled and allowed my daughters to self direct their education. So many people said, “Wow, you’re so brave to do that.” and it looked so risky and untenable to them, and then I would hear all these moms in August saying “Oh, I hope my kid gets a good teacher and I hope they’re not bullied because they were last year.” To me they were spinning the roulette wheel on that one. And you have been able to give hundreds of young people the experience of freedom. That’s one thing I’m so excited to talk about today because Praxis and Crash are such amazing.. I’m not going to say a valid alternative because I think it’s really the most risk-free path into adulthood that I see. You know rather than getting tens of thousands of dollars of debt and hope you can get a job on the end of that. So could you tell us a little bit about your path in creating practice and then how out of that you spun crash?

00:05:14 - 00:10:07

Isaac: Yes. Absolutely. It’s funny. I just want to quickly comment on what you said. It’s risk-free. It’s really funny I think about this because, in the kind of financial sense or sort of pragmatic sense, pragmatic in particular, it’s very, very low risk. I mean, if you get into the program, and you do it like pretty much everybody gets a job after the program and the program pays for itself. So the net cost is zero. So it’s like a very low risk, but it’s not risk free at all. In the terms of the price that you pay socially. The risk is that people will think of you as different or you’ll have to answer them when they say “so where are you going to college?” And if you say “I’m not.”, you will endure some backlash. Sometimes your parents or people that love you very much, they will shame you. They will give you a hard time about that. So, the risk is like that. You won’t be seen as normal and I like to say that it’s radically practical right? It’s like it’s radical because it’s not normal. But it’s the most practical thing you can do when you step back and think about the approach of getting a career by going to college. That’s absurd. It’s so impractical. It’s like unbelievable that this has become normal but so I think it’s just really interesting. There’s different kinds of risk. Being smart in terms of your financial success, about the the best path to your goals, it’s the lowest risk I can think of for young people. But in terms of you know social costs so to speak from people’s expectations in you know the belief that you have to do what

everybody else does, you will definitely pay a bit of a price there are at least. And that's changing though it's getting easier. Okay. Sorry. About that. That rabbit trail, you can stop me if I start to ramble too long because I, definitely do that.

Caprice: I mean I think that that's a really excellent point to make up front because there is so much pressure on these young people to conform. And yet, when people have been interviewed. on their death bed, what is their biggest regret? That they lived somebody else's life.

Isaac: That's exactly that. That's what motivates me. That's that concept of freedom that motivates me so much. It's living life on your own terms. Whatever struggles and hardships you endure because freedom isn't easy. It's not the freedom from difficulty, but it's the ability to choose the challenges and difficulties you want to go through. And that when you're struggling, when you're suffering, it's with a purpose that you chose. It's not just suffering over some arbitrary life or set of activities that were imposed upon you where you feel like you have no choice.

So that's where my story begins. You know I've had this drive towards freedom in my own life and to expand the scope of human freedom as much as possible for others. And never never through the use of force or politics to me. That's antithetical to the idea of expanding freedom by forcing it on people through some sort of you know policy or police or military action. So it's always been how can we reduce the barriers to freedom? And I started out kind of pursuing that early in a political sense. I actually thought politics was the way to do this. I learned pretty quickly that it wasn't. And I pursued the realm of ideas and sort of activism and education on policy topics, and then moving more and more towards helping people become influencers in the world kind of ideas of freedom and liberty. And as I'm moving through this career trajectory, and this is over a decade, at the state legislature and then in several different educational non-profits, I just kept realizing more and more that freedom is the closer you get to the individual lived experience. The more I could just learn to live free myself, the more effective I was versus trying to argue for freedom in an abstract. So anyway, I go through this path. I spent a decade a little bit over a decade working mostly with a lot of college students and high school students helping them get their careers started in various ways through some fellowships and programs I was running. And then I started meeting all these entrepreneurs because I was doing fundraising for a nonprofit.

00:10:08 - 00:15:01

In meeting with all these very wealthy sort of self made business people, I would ask them about their companies and what's your biggest constraint to growth. They would always say "people I can't find enough good talent". And this was right at the time not long after the 2008 crisis where all these college students I was working with were all graduating. They're all smart smart people and they were like "there's no jobs, no one's hiring". So I guess I can't afford to pay back my student loans and the only way I can defer payments is if I go to Grad school so I guess I'll just,

as a way to defer paying student loans, take on more debt to defer paying their debt. Because they couldn't get a job or at least they felt.

So I just kept thinking. I've thought about this all the way back from my own experience in College. I was home schooled, and then I went to community college for my last couple years of high school transfer to the State University. I hammered my way through, paid my way by working three days a week, cramming twenty credit hours of classes two days a week. And I got my bachelors when I was 19. And I was like, this is so weird. This is such a strange experience. Because nobody wants to be here. Everybody pays money for this class or these classes but they're excited when the classes are canceled. Nobody's particularly enthusiastic in classes. Almost without exception, professors and students alike, both seem like they don't want to be there. It's just pretty low quality. Everyone just kind of going along and doing it, but they're doing it at a tremendous opportunity cost.

So I just kept thinking like, why am I here? Why does everyone tell me can't succeed in the workforce if I don't do this? No one tells me why. No one gives me a causal explanation of how this will lead to this because of this. They just say, "If you don't do it, you'll be a loser, unemployable". And they don't give me any reason. What's the connection here? And so I really was thinking about this over this whole period. I had all these ideas for different ways to do education. Finally I kind of understood what was happening here was not really about learning or adding to human capital. But it was about purchasing a signal, a piece of paper that signals something on the job market. I remember I had the realization -- this is all it really signals. I looked around my classroom. I saw mine is a piece of paper that says I'm, on average likely to be no worse than anybody else here. And it's like -- oh, that's a pretty low signal as everyone is hungover.

So anyway, all this experience working with students and business people saying they can't find talent and my own experiences in college. I thought, all right, companies need to know pretty quickly that you are worth their time to talk to and to give a chance at least an interview, and then after the interview, to give a chance of working. And they look at degrees among many other things because it just helps them go from two hundred applicants to seventy five applicants, and then they can make another cut based on some other thing and it gets them down. They just want to get down to ten or twenty people as quick as possible. So they're looking for quick signals.

I thought what could we do to both improve the signal that people can send so that it's more effective and gets them into that -- hey, I'll give you an interview. I'll give you the time of day. And to improve the actual skills people have so that when they get that first chance, they get that shot at the interview for the job. And I thought, let's just strip it down to bare minimum. So I just started talking to tons of employers asking them. "Okay, what would you need to see in order to give somebody a chance to work for you? Let's say as an intern and then what would you need to see in the first six months on the job for you to offer them a job?" And I started compiling all the feedback I was getting and none of it was degrees or you know GPA or an extracurricular activity. None of it was any like that it was like. Hey if I saw somebody who ran a

marathon, I would probably hire them for a sales role over any degree I can think of because that signals something to me. Or somebody who is really into a competitive sport like for sales roles. For example, those are really good indicators for the role that I'm looking at here. For like somebody to come do entry level marketing for me they need to be able to write really well, and if I can't go and see thirty or forty articles that they've written that are decent, there's nothing. There's no point. And I don't care about your English degree or anything like that. And so I just started compiling all this and I thought okay, let's put together a one-year zero-cost experience that makes you infinitely more employable than four or five years and \$50,000 dollars in debt in school where you come out and you're just like lost on the job market, have no idea where to start, and you aren't very valuable. And so I put together like a boot camp. I got some very smart people to come along and help me.

00:15:02 - 00:20:07

Isaac: This was in 2013 when we started Praxis. I just put together a curriculum for this six-month boot camp. Where you're just kind of learning the skills that are necessary. And some of these, by the way, are like really basic skills. Like how do use email. How to use Google calendar to schedule. Things that seem so simple but nobody learns in school. I mean professors and teachers are absolutely terrible at using these things. And when you get to a job. if you are costing the employer because you're already not very super high skilled when you start out, if you're costing the employer time and attention because you don't know how to do basic things like that, then it just makes it so much harder for you. You become a burden to them rather than a value creator. So we just said let's take the low hanging fruit with all the basic stuff. You know writing skills. Everybody does a thirty day blog and blogs every day for thirty days. Not only to improve their writing, but to get disciplined and to realize that they can create on command.

We just kind of put together this whole boot camp and then paired it with a six month apprenticeship and place you at a company. The company is paying a relatively low wage. \$10 to \$15 I think. When we started it was \$10. It's up to \$15 an hour for the six month apprenticeship and you're doing a real job. But Praxis is supporting you throughout. And so you basically get to prove yourself for six months. And if at the end of that year you're earning money that pays for tuition. So the net cost at the end of that year is zero and you've got a portfolio of projects. You've built six months of real work experience. You know a whole network. One on one coaching and advising sessions and workshops for net cost of zero. And 96% of our grads get a job offer immediately out of the program.

And so the idea was, can we do something that's in the shortest amount of time possible? How can you go from zero to totally employable on an actual career trajectory? And that was the idea. And that's what we built in 2013. We started with 5 students in the first class and you know now we're doing 100, 120 every year.

Caprice: One thing is you went into the start up ecosystem. And I was reading recently an interview of college students where they want to work when they graduate. A very small percent want to go work for the big companies. Most of them want to work for companies with less than one hundred people. So you really targeted that strategically I'm guessing.

Isaac: Yeah you know it's funny. When we started, students had almost no awareness of startups as an option, and this is, I, mean, again, only seven years ago. But a lot has changed. Most of the young people were just assuming big corporations that's where they're gonna have to get a job. And so we had to kind of offer some explanation. It'd be like, "Hey, you know startups are where people grow. They're like, oh, like a kid in their garage. It's not stable. It's not really a career job. Not realizing what that means, how expansive that is. Like Spotify is kind of considered a startup right. Now maybe they're called tech companies. But fast growing companies that go from five to ten to two hundred to two thousand employees over the span of five, five, ten years. And so. The reason we chose that is because we found that's like the ideal first job experience. You're exposed to so much. You don't get pigeon holed in some specialty or stuck in some cubicle farm where you just do the same thing all the time. Like startups, smaller ones, they can't afford to have you that. You do a little bit everything. You're exposed to all the different types of work you can find out. Just it's so fast moving. There's so much upward potential. It's exciting. They tend to have really good cultures that are laid back and not like uptight old school type staff. And so we just found that those are a great experience. But for the people coming to Praxis at first, working at a startup was not really like a huge draw and over time that has definitely become the case. More and more people are aware of the startup ecosystem. What a great place it is to start a career. So in some ways, you know, maybe we were ahead of the times or maybe we were lucky.

Caprice: One benefit that I would also think for these young job seekers is that it's really hard to know if a company culture is healthy until you're on the inside. But I would assume that Praxis is doing that vetting of these corporate cultures for them. That you're not going to place your people in toxic cultures, which you know startups kind of have that reputation.

Isaac; We've definitely worked very hard to do that. And you know we don't always get a perfect fit. We have companies that we think of our experience and maybe we even had one participant that had a great experience and then somebody else goes there and three months in there like this is terrible. The boss quit and the new boss is terrible and the beauty of doing it through a program like Praxis is for that six months we can, if we see that, we can say, okay, we're switching you to a new business partner.

00:20:07 - 00:25:05

And we've had many participants who have said, "Hey I loved my experience at this company. I learned a ton, but I also learned that I don't want to do this long term. So now I'm going to go and do something else." Like that to me is so valuable. One of the goals I had early on was --

there's a lot of people that are thinking maybe they want to be an entrepreneur and I'm all about that. I love entrepreneurship but I also think you need to know if it's not for you as soon as possible. Because a lot of people have this like mystical I want to be an entrepreneur and because I think it's all cool and whatever. And they really wouldn't want to be if they knew it was like. And I kinda think about people who go become lawyers. Many of them, if they actually knew what it was like being a lawyer, wouldn't want to. But they kind of have this idea and they find out too late that they actually hate it. So I was like, get you exposed to it as soon as possible. Get in that startup environment. Work alongside entrepreneurs and see if you're like, oh my gosh, this is not for me. The quicker you learn that, the better. And you can't learn that thinking about it or sitting in a classroom. You gotta go out there and try it. Like okay, I think I want to try it. You know everybody says they want to do marketing. All young people think marketing sounds cool. I don't really know what that means. See if we can get you in and try it and maybe it'll turn out that you don't actually like it. And I think that's really valuable.

So it's not like... oh, I've got to know what I'm going to do for the rest of my life and I have to get it right or be screwed. It's more like. get out there and figure out where you can create value. Start experimenting. And every time you find something that's not a fit, take it off your list. And then you start to whittle down and whatever's leftover is worth pursuing. And I think that's just great. The sooner you can get real world experience, the better.

Caprice: Well isn't that one of the basic principles of design thinking failing fast? Your iterating your way to figure out what really works for you and what you love to do.

Isaac: Yeah. I've always started with this with my own life. Now, I've kind of tried to build it into the way that both Praxis and Crash approach helping people in their careers. This mantra don't do stuff you hate. And for me, I adopted that because I found "follow your passion" to be too difficult. Because I don't know exactly what my passion is. I'm a very passionate guy about a lot of things, many of them are very abstract like freedom or what does that mean? Does that translate into a career? So I did the reverse. Instead it's like a subtractive process rather than an additive process where chiseling away to see what remains. Okay. Let me just list all the things I know for sure I don't want to do. Some I know because I tried them and realized I hated them. You know I'm not a super technical person. I don't want to be a coder. That's not really exciting to me. I don't want to be an accountant. That seems boring to me. And I've tried you know played around with that kind of stuff. I know I'm not going to be working in the trades with my hands all day. I'm not super handy. I don't really want to do like engine repair right? You kinda just add to your list of things you know you don't want to do. And everything else you treat as fair game. And you don't stress about whether it's correct. You just try it. If you get a good opportunity, and it's not on the list of things you hate, go for it and then you'll find out. Okay. Over time you realize I want to do less and less of this, and you work towards removing those things that you don't like, doing it over time. You do what you love. But you get there through a process that doesn't require you to know ahead of time what that's going to be.

Caprice: So as I'm thinking of these people entering Praxis, I'm thinking that there's probably a

good deal of shifting their mindset that needs to occur. Especially, if they weren't self directed in their younger education. You know they've really been taught to sit down, sit still, be quiet, obey and don't make any mistakes. They are going to be rewarded for all of the right answers.

Isaac: You're right. We joke. Often there's a phase that needs to happen. For a lot of people that come into Praxis are actually home schooled It's much easier for them honestly to make that transition into the program. But for those, especially if they were really good students, honor roll students. We do have people that do Praxis after college. Most people do it instead of college. Some people do it after graduation and they tend to struggle a little more with this. They come in and they're like, okay what do I do? How do I get a good grade? It's like. Well, that's not what this is for. The whole point is to get you into your first job and get you on your career path, and so we start by -- you tell us what interests you, what are you doing? What are you good at? What are your goals for this program? What do you want by the end of it? What will seem like success to you? And then we are going to help.

00:25:06 - 00:30:03

We keep you accountable, keep you and us accountable to achieving those outcomes. So it starts with your goals you get to pick the goals. And that's really hard for a lot of people like, no just tell me the target and then tell me when I'm hitting it. And it's like Oh, what are you on a monthly module? They're kind of framed as these kind of challenges where there's choice in all of them. So like Okay 30 Day writing module. "Oh I think that's stupid. I think it's a waste of time." Great. We're not going to let you off the hook just by saying, "Oh, I didn't do it because I thought it was stupid". or Yeah kinda just you know doing half effort because I didn't think it was valuable. It's on you to say "I don't think this is valuable, but instead I want to do make a YouTube video every day for thirty days." or "I want to propose this." Because what do you want at the end of this month? Our goal for you is to have the ability to demonstrate XYZ by the end of the month because it seems like that will help you get the job that you want. But you tell us what's your goal? You want something different and so there's a lot of it's all very project based. And there's a lot of support. There is like a sort of curriculum template to work from. But all of that they all start with what your goal would want to accomplish from this module.

What you want to accomplish from this program and then go off and do it. Here are the tools. Here are the resources. You get a weekly call with your adviser. They're there to keep you accountable. They're there to say, okay, what are you going to do next week? Right and then the following week they say, all right you said you were going do these four things. Did you do them? I didn't get two of them done. Why didn't you get it done? Well, I kept sleeping in. Okay why are you sleeping? Well, I'm staying up till midnight right? Why are you staying up till midnight? Well, because I'm doing this. Okay, is that what you want to be doing with your time? Not really. Okay, let's think about what else you might want to be doing with your time. Right and it's really like a process of trying to partner with you to make your life and your Praxis experience what you want it to be. And that's so different from the school experience, which is

just 100% on other people's schedules, other people's goals, other people's subjects that they say you need to learn. So it can be a challenge. It can be a challenging transition.

But once that mindset, once the switch flips, so to speak, in the first couple of months, it's like people just get on fire and they just take off and they're just crushing it. And it changes them forever. And that's kind of the big secret. From a marketing standpoint, it's like, Hey, you know this program will help you get your first job. But the real secret to me what we're really offering is -- we want you to never worry about getting a job again for the rest of your life. Because you will become the kind of person who knows you're capable of creating your own opportunity at any time. And that's the real secret and I think that's what Praxis graduates kind of embody.

Caprice: That really is beautiful. You have spoken about a college degree as you're buying the credential but Praxis is really helping people realize that they are the credential and they demonstrate it through their work that they make very public and visible.

Isaac: Yes. We love that phrase -- be your own credential. And I think it starts with: If you're someone who knows how to create value and you know how to learn things on your own, you know how to chase down your curiosity, and you know how to gain skills that are interesting to you, goals, etc. That's step one right. There's two things needed to succeed in the professional marketplace. One is the ability to create value and two is the ability to prove it. So that's number one, the ability to create value. But number two is something that a lot of people miss when they look for-- how do I prove my ability to create value? They're like, okay I gotta go by my certification or throw a point on my resume or add some new, you know, accolade from some third party. Hey, this person wanted an award. Hey, they gotta here's their great, you know, here's a degree and that will prove my value. But that's putting his trust in these third party institutions which frankly are losing value very fast. Like there's not a lot of weight carried by you know like my degree. For example, in political science BA from Western Michigan University. Nobody sees that and says, oh my gosh I've got to hire this guy. Doesn't prove that much. And so realizing, if you've got all these skills and abilities and you're starting to. When I say all these skills, I don't mean like some super genius, I literally mean just like the ability to show up every day and publish a blog post for thirty days straight. That is incredibly rare. That puts you in like 5% of the population who has ever done something like that. And try to. It's not that hard to do right. But it signals some very interesting things of discipline, fearlessness, not being worried if people aren't going to like your stuff, and experimentation, playfulness, whatever.

00:30:03 - 00:35:00

So if you've got those skills, the next step is the ability to prove it, and that's where we always say "learn out loud", "work out loud", "show your work". If you're reading books, write book reviews of them on Amazon and share them. If you're thinking about ideas and talking about them with your friends, flip on a microphone, record it and put it up as a podcast. If you taught yourself how to do pivot tables on Microsoft Excel and are using your some complicated

spreadsheet for something you're working on, flip on the recorder. Make a zoom video showing what you're doing and post it on Youtube. Hey, here's how I taught myself to do a pivot tables and explain it. And now you have this tangible proof.

And really it was that insight, that second component. Praxis is all about helping you build your human capital, build the ability to create value, and then place you in a job where you can go in and take that and leverage it.

Crash we really spun out of Praxis because that second component, the ability to prove your skills, we were finding. We were helping young people do it in really creative ways, and so when they were coming to companies in a you want you to hire me way, they were getting hired for roles that said on the job posting degree required plus two to three years experience. And like 17, 18, 19 year olds with no degree and no experience were getting those jobs because they were taking the skills that they had and they were packaging them up in a really unique way. They were making personal pitch decks in tailored videos that they were sending these companies that were doing projects for them. "Hey, I saw you have a sales role. I went ahead and created a list of one hundred leads that I went out and got for you that I think would be valuable. I would love to talk about coming on in this role." Somebody sees that and they don't ask about education 'cause they don't care anymore. It's irrelevant. They've forgotten all about it. They would hire these people and find out later -- Wait you're only 19, you never went to college. Oh my gosh, as they were looking at the things that they demonstrate. And so having done that with Praxis in a very sort of hands on way and having people kind of create these customized approaches instead of just hitting apply, because if they attached a resume it wasn't going to stand out. It's like it's Just, like everybody else's except for with the degree component. But if you send something better, "Hey, I want to be this marketing intern. I created a landing page for you with an email opt in and set up a three email drip sequence on male champion. Here's a video walk through of what I did and would love to come and do stuff like this for you." -- like that's crazy. You email that to a hiring manager they never see stuff like that. And so we realized that we could take that component -- standing out in showcasing your skills and you know the "your own credential" component and Spin that into a platform that could reach orders of magnitude more people.

Praxis is a very intense. I mean it's a year long program. You know it takes a really dedicated person and it takes the right mindset. You have to be at the right place in life to be able to do that. To be able to go in at the entry level and work at that initial apprenticeship. But there's a ton of people, millions, on the job hunt all the time who have skills and value that are absolutely valued by companies, but they don't get looked at because the only way that they're showing those skills is by listening bullets on a piece of paper or sending it with thousand other applicants, and then waiting for some keywords scanner to pick them out. And let them get to the interview face. It's always been of Crash to help people out, burn their resume and go start creating tailored pitches that show tangible value. You can create for people. Projects demonstrate what you can do. You know send them something you made just for them, send them a video that is personalized to them. And we found tremendous success with job seekers.

Caprice: And so Crash is really built for any level of job seeker not just the entry level.

Isaac: Absolutely. Yeah. I would say the earlier you are, probably the value is higher. The further you go in your career, like by the time you're senior level, you're normally not getting a job by sort of cold pitching someone. It's usually through your network. And so it tends to be used the last further you go. But I would say Crash users right now are anywhere from zero to ten years of career experience. That's kind of the vast majority of users. There are some who have fifteen plus but for the most part on, that's it yet it's really a way for anybody who's tired of sending applications and resumes. I'm not hearing anything back. To just focus on a couple of companies you really love and make something special for them and then send out those pitches and manage the whole process from a dashboard.

Caprice: When I think about the value creation mindset. As someone comes to Praxis and they go, I saw your program. It looks interesting. Do they have to have that to join your program? Because if you've got 96% of Praxis graduates get a job offer, you're doing a pretty good job of screening them, not for what they what they need at the end, but what you think would they would need to have to succeed in the program.

00:35:01 - 00:40:02

Isaac: Yes. It's a little bit of both. So that's always a challenge, right. So as a for-profit company that gets paid entirely by the number of students who get into the program, we're incentivized to get as many people in as possible. On the other hand, we are accountable to those customers for delivering a quality experience. And if we are not confident, we can do that. Then, we don't want to let that person into the program. Because it will only turn out badly for both of us. Right like they'll be like all this waste. And we've had. We have I think a 87% graduation rate. So there are some people that get into program and sometimes you know have to move to a different country or whatever they quit. But often almost all the time it's they're not putting in the work and they kinda just fall off. That it's maybe a little too challenging for them and you know that's not going to work out for us. We're not. We don't feel comfortable sending them to a company if they're not, you know in putting in the work, demonstrating what we call forward tilt. So there is some screening but I'll tell you this. It's not screening for any level of genius or anything that I think is unattainable for really anybody. It's really just attitude is the main. It's like hustle, work ethic. Do you really want it? That's really what we want to know. Do you really want it? Do you want this bad enough? We call it the sleep in your car test. We don't actually make you sleep in your car, but the kind of person who would sleep in their car in order to achieve their goals. That's what we want because Praxis is going to be difficult. It's going to test you. It's going to challenge you because it's going to make you take responsibility and ownership and that's scary sometimes. It's going to make you put yourself out there, share things publicly sometimes right. Like be willing to fail, to experiment. So, it's really just that mindset we're looking for, and if there's somebody who you know, it's like. We can't convince somebody to spend a year in the program if they can go just crush and get what they need on the on the workforce and we don't

even try say, Hey, you're already ready. Occasionally we've had people we've hired them or they've come they're interested in Praxis, but it's like you already got it. Come work at Praxis. The sweet spot is someone who just has the mindset. They don't have any skills or experience. They don't know what's out there in the job. They don't know what's valued on the job market. They don't know how to build it or where to look. They don't know where to start, but they're hungry and they're a hard worker and they're excited and they want to succeed. That's it. I mean give me those attributes. Unfortunately, those are rare right? Like there's a 15% acceptance rate and that's not because we don't want to accept more people because there's just so many people that apply and they're like, "Hey, my mom wants me to like get a job or something so. Can you guys help me with that you know? Virtually No. That's really that's really the thing that we've screened for, and we've developed I think some pretty effective ways of doing that over the years through our application process.

Caprice: And are these people? Are they hungry for freedom? Crafting their career on their own terms? What are they hungry for?

Isaac: Yeah. That's a good question. It almost I don't want to say it doesn't matter, but it almost doesn't matter as long as they're hungry. So if there's one exception. We've had a few people like this that you know it hasn't turned out on that well. If you're hungry for status in the eyes of others and approval. The kind of person who would like to go to the Ivy League just so they could say they went to the Ivy League or whatever. There are people like that. They if they see in Praxis Oh, this is a chance to look cool, look different. Gain status that kind of hunger I tend to think becomes destructive. Pretty quickly. But other than that, young people often don't quite know they just know like I want something different like I'm restless. In the classroom. I think I can do better than or I want to start my own business or hungry to make a bunch of money or hungry to go see a new city and get out having to experience or I'm hungry to get started on my career faster. I don't want to wait five years in college before I started doing this. Or I'm hungry for personal freedom and autonomy. I want control over my life and I want to be able to or I'm hungry to learn new things and meet new people. Like as long as they have that forward tilt literally, like physically leaning over the table when you're interviewing them, or talking to them because they're just. They want something they want to go after it. That's really what you need. I mean it's a lot like if somebody showed up at your gym. We use a fitness analogy a lot.

00:40:02 - 00:45:01

It's like a fitness trainer for your career. If somebody showed up at a gym and you're a fitness trainer and they're like "So I don't know, can you get me in shape?" and you say, "Well, what do you want? You want to get thin? Run a marathon? You want to be able to lift a lot of weight? You want to look really good? What's your goal?" "I don't really know. Just kind of like help me out." You know he'd be like -- get out of here. I can't do that or if you're like. "Help me out but will you actually lift the weights for you?" No. I can tell you what to do. I can help keep you coming. You gotta put in the work. And so that willingness to put in the work, that's kind of what

it is, and it's often not super well defined. Sometimes it is, but it often isn't.

Caprice: That's very helpful and I've seen a lot of testimonials on Praxis and one thing that I think is universal is how grateful they are for the community that you've created. \

Isaac: Yeah, that's been. That's been one of the best elements and kind of secret weapon. That's one that I did not bank on when we started. I kind of assumed everybody's going to be like these sort of self driven types and they'll, I'm sure they'll talk and stuff, but they'll probably just kinda like focus on doing their thing. And I thought we might have to kinda like try to get them to form some sort of connections and talk with each other and whatever. And it turns out not at all. Because people who are interested in this, they often feel a little bit alone where they are like just even questioning going to college. If you're a high school student senior and everybody's telling you where they're going to school and you're like, "I don't think I wanna go" right like you feel like the weird one and to find other people who are like -- "Oh. Yeah. Of course not. Why would I? It seems like a waste. Of course I'm not going to go." You're just like, Oh, I'm not alone. I'm not crazy right? So there's that element. And then there's just -- any time you get a bunch of people together who are all very dedicated to their own improvement. Like magic happens. It's just really cool. It's really fun because the majority of people you interact with in life are kinda. half asleep and I know. I don't mean to say that as like some elitist thing. But it feels that way when you're going about your daily business, most of the time that most people are just kind of going through the motions. And when you're around people who aren't, who are like dedicated on something, focused on something, and you add to it sort of the brotherhood or the you know the the bond of going through an intensive year long experience together with people where you're doing these monthly challenges and things together -- you kind of get a great recipe for community. And people learning to not be afraid to ask questions, not feeling like they need to look cool all the time, and not being afraid to look stupid and sharing their work. You know ask each other hey, here's the blog post. I wrote today. I'd love your feedback. Or Hey, what do you guys think of as hey, somebody help teach me how to do this and it's amazing. How much support they offer each other and that persists throughout once they graduate.

The alumni are incredibly active in the Praxis community on various platforms. You know they talked to all the current participants. It's incredible and many of them have started companies now and they come back and they hire from Praxis or they're they're moved up in their company and they're at a VP position and they need to hire five people they come to Praxis. I want some Praxies. It's like I want to get some of my people in here. So you get like a really cool network effect, the further it goes, the more value gets added to that network. And the thing that might surprise people is when you're giving people the freedom to create, to create from who they are, what they want rather than the competitive model that were brought up -- in they become very altruistic and cooperative.

Caprice: Then when it's not this fear based model of competing for scarce resources.

Isaac: Yes, and that's really part of that. Show your work kinda like be your own credential is being open and being generous. So Hey, you know I just learned how to do X., and now I'm going to share it with you. I just taught myself whatever basic Java script or I just learned how to use web flow to design a website. Here's my video walkthrough or here's a blog post breaking down when I did. And that kind of like generous openness ensuring it permeates who you are and you start to see the world that way, and you start to not see it as a zero sum game where you gotta like hide everything yourself. Where you just you start sharing openly, giving away, being generous. When you use a product that you like, you go and tweet at the company and say, Hey, I, love your product. Right something that small. It's like openness and creativity and curiosity and playfulness.

00:45:02 - 00:50:20

It gives you this feeling of like I can benefit from people and they can benefit for me. And I'm not threatened by them and I'm excited to tell them when they've done a good job. All of a sudden you have this massive network everywhere of people that are like ready to come to your aid and opportunities that come your way and all kinds of stuff you couldn't imagine because your mindset is not -- Okay, there's one Valedictorian, and if it's not me, it's someone else. Now we all like to beat each other to win that. You know.

Caprice: Well, and when I see you as the founder of Praxis and Crash, I mean you are modeling all of these characteristics to people because I've seen how generous you are with what you offer on both the Praxis and Crash websites. You've got free guides, free ebooks. You've got a ton of articles and videos. So you are really modeling that generosity and openness and altruism and showing them, look how much value I am creating in the world.

Isaac: Well thank you. I definitely try to and that's for a couple of reasons. I mean first and foremost, going along with my not if you hate mantra. I enjoy it. I mean I love to write I. Love to. I like to talk on podcast like this. I make videos. I like to get my ideas out there into the world, and so I do it because it's enjoyable and fulfilling. I don't try to overthink it strategically and over you know optimize for content marketing, just get the things that I want to say, and I just try to turn it into a habit to write them to share them every day. Then you know the other reason is that I find when you basically just give away the whole like, Hey, here's the whole thing. Here's what we're doing. Here's the mindset. Here's the tools. You don't devalue the product. You add value to it. People are like, oh my gosh. This stuff is so cool. I want to be a part of this right because like I've seen all the value that you've given, I've seen what you can do and it's way harder than people think to put things into action.

So you know if Warren Buffett, you know starts blogging all about everything that he does to make his investment decisions. And then you hear that there's an opportunity to go spend six months with Warren Buffett as he does his trades. You would still be willing to pay probably a lot of money for that even though he already told you in his blog posts, exactly what he does

because it's different.

There's something different about having the experience in real time, and this is what I think is so key about your approach and mine to education. Is that just learning by doing is so infinitely superior to learning by thinking about. And once you've done stuff then contemplation and theorizing is a lot more valuable. You can reflect on what you've done and then go do it again. But any amount of you know, hey, here's a book. Here's a podcast. Here's a guide that tells you all the things you can do to succeed is not going to compete with, hey, why don't you jump in and we'll actually do the activity together. And you can actually build it. So it doesn't take away from like I, I'm never afraid -- Oh my gosh, we're giving away too much stuff like sharing everything.

Let's be as open as possible because the kind of person that's excited by that is going to be even more excited to be a part of the program.

Caprice: That makes good sense. I really do think we humans are wired to learn by doing and by playing when we're relaxed, when we're open, not when we're shut down by fear and just you know expected to just process information. I don't think anybody learns that way. And I know from my own experience, I have learned more on every job, every freelance opportunity than by studying it. So as you say, you learn by doing and if you can do it in a supportive community all the better.

Isaac: Yeah. Yeah it's funny. There's some interesting research on this and it comports with common sense as well. As your mastery increases, your desire for and benefit from risk and competition starts to increase. So, if you take people that are brand new to you know sport let's say. Putting them in an environment where it's competitive, where they're being watched or graded or judged, makes them perform much worse. They learn it much slower. They tense up, they don't have as much fun. They don't do as well. If you take people who are really good at a sport and put them in a competitive environment where they're being watched for their being judged they play better and they tend to get in the zone and enjoy it more. Because you, once you have that confidence, like to approach something new, you need a playful environment. It's not all about failure, okay about whose failing. Failure is not punished. As you become a master, you'll get bored if there's nothing on the line. You'll get bored if failure has no cost. You want to raise your game and then it becomes fun and competition becomes a choice that you're doing to elevate your game. Like -- Hey, I, want to go play against the best. I've gotten good at tennis. I want to play against somebody who's really good and let's see what happens right.

00:50:21 - 00:55:13

Isaac: I think that's where it's not like competition, all of its forms is bad because I love to compete. I'm a very competitive person. I think it's a lot of fun. I think it's that choosing when competition is going to excite you and motivate you. Go after it but imposing it on people and putting these artificial environments where exploration and play are punished because you just

have to get everything right all the time -- that will just shut down the learning part of your brain and you'll never get the mastery or if you do, you'll be a very emotionally wounded person.

Caprice: Right absolutely. Well, the truth is you know it's not a game if they're if nobody loses.

Isaac: Exactly. And and you can create you know whatever type of winning and losing you want.

In fact, one of my favorite books is a very small not very well known book called *Finite and Infinite Games* by James Carse. It's a very interesting little work of philosophy. The whole concept is that there are finite games which have a definite end. A winner or loser etc. There are Infinite Games which you play them just to keep playing them for the sake of playing them.

They're not structured in the same way and it's almost like the more things you can turn into infinite games to see that way the more fun you have and and then if you can sort of nest finite games within a broader infinite game. I am emotionally buying into the Detroit Lions football team and getting upset and stressed intensely while I watch them play because I'm choosing to opt into this sort of finite game that ends with a winner and a loser at the end of the time.

Because it's part of the broader infinite game of life that I find more enriching, kind of like having a sports team to root for in something emotionally invested every Sunday or whatever, and it kind of I think it's fun. I don't want to get out there but it's a fun mental model that I found to play around with.

Caprice: I'm going to circle back to how we started this conversation which was talking about how most people going to college is a losing game with a negative ROI for many. But as I speak with you, as I read lots of your books and blog posts, you are very pro education though. You're an autodidactic, self-educated because your breadth of knowledge is quite impressive. So you're not saying, Hey, education's not important.

Isaac: No, in fact. I'm saying -- it's too important to go to school. I think that the particular -- let's take a tiny slice of subjects and put them in fifty minute segments inside these walled cells with an instructor whose main qualification is that they endured all of the bureaucratic hoop jumping long enough to get here and become unfirable. Here you go this is learning. It's like antithetical to learning. It's so contrary to the creative human capacity. I mean you think about little kids are just like when they watch what you do, they mimic it, They try stuff dangerous stuff that scares them sometimes because they're curious. They want to experiment. They want to know why about everything. They're relentless to the point where they're tiring. And it's easier and more convenient as adults to like just, put them away somewhere, where they'll just like be quiet and learn to not embarrass me. I know that sounds like there's some of that that happens and I think that carries on throughout life and we impose it on ourselves. Force myself to go in here and just like learn whatever subjects most people know so that I'm not embarrassed. It's this kind of fear of failure that's I think very embedded in the schooling structure. From all the way down to all the way through college and Graduate School. With exceptions in there, but it's a big part of it and that to me is antithetical to learning. So learning is too important to be attached to schooling. I think a lot of kids hate and reject or find boring what they think is learning because like, oh you're going to buy me an educational gift for Christmas. Because we have this -- play is a thing, you're not supposed to be doing. It's bad for you. You're having fun. You should feel a

little bit guilty about it because you should be doing something like your homework. And learning is that thing that you're forced to do that has no particular attachment to your own goals and you dislike it. And so we everybody constantly gets propaganda to stay in school, stay in school, stay in school or go to school because people don't like it and to me that's like really creepy and so when I say forget school people think I mean "Oh don't learn" and I don't. I mean the opposite.

00:55:13 - 00:58:09

Isaac: Start learning, get excited. Follow the things that are interesting to you and you almost had to deschool yourself. So you can rediscover that you actually enjoy learning. That it's actually fun and fulfilling. I think most people go through that process at some point later in life. Like, if you find people you know middle aged or above they have some hobby or interest that they know a lot about that. They learned a lot about and it's almost never something that they did in school. It's usually something later that they discovered or that they were doing instead of school. And so I'm a huge ideas person. I love the Liberal Arts. This sort of idea of being you know immersed all kinds of ideas from different fields. I love that stuff. That's super exciting to me. I'm not at all saying, just you know go get a job and don't do any thinking. I'm saying the opposite. I've actually found that sort of the most thoroughly schooled people are like professor types and stuff. They are often less broad in their thinking. Less capable of critical thinking than let's say a Tinkerer, an entrepreneur who started multiple businesses and who's always playing around with something that they're just voraciously reading and and absorbing new ideas and trying to put them into practice. Field test them. That kind of you know the the sort of I don't know like the Ben Franklin archetype or something like that right. But that's the reason that we think of people like that because they're tinkering, they're testing, they're exploring all over the place. It's like this voracious knowledge that's kind of the opposite of trying to get published in a journal that's peer reviewed so you can get tenure.

Caprice: The unfortunate truth is that our society right now is overschooled in undereducated.

Isaac: You just said in three words what I spent about five minutes rambling on.

Caprice: It has been such a pleasure Isaac. If people want to find you, where can they go and connect with you?

Isaac: Probably, the simplest place is just IsaacMorehouse.com. You can find links to Crash. If you're on the job hunt or know someone who is, it's 20 bucks a month. You can cancel as soon as you get a job. Awesome tools you can use there if you or someone you know is really interested in college. For an intensive year long program where you're going to get a job at a start up go to Praxis. That's also linked from my site. All my books and podcasts all that stuff. You can find it at IsaacMorehouse.com you can you can reach out to me anytime. I'm just IsaacMorehouse@gmail.com

Caprice: Perfect and I will put all of that in our show notes. So thank you so much Isaac for joining me today and thank you everyone that listened. If you do like this podcast, please subscribe and let me know and I always appreciate reviews because in Itunes it helps other people find this podcast. So thank you have a wonderful day.