



The Art of Passive Income Podcast

With Mark Podolsky, AKA The Land Geek

Today's Guest: [Jena Rodriguez](#)

Transcript

Mark: Hey, it's Mark Podolsky, The Land Geek with your favorite nichey real estate website [TheLandGeek.com](#) and I'm really excited for today's guest for a number of reasons. But before we talk about our guest I'd be remiss if I didn't properly introduce my cohost six Sigma, you know him, you love him Scott Todd from [ScottTodd.net](#), [LandModo.com](#) and most importantly automating if you're not automating your Craigslist and your Facebook postings [PostingDomination.com/TheLandGeek](#). Today's podcast is sponsored by the [LandModo.com/TheLandGeek](#) start listing properties there today. Scott Todd, do you hear that background noise? What is that?

Scott: I do. It's someone who just started printing right here next to me. I'm sorry.

Jena: That's what it is.

Mark: See. So, when the family starts printing there's nothing you can do, family first Scott.

Scott: I can't do anything about it. I mean, I could go find out who did the print job and like I don't know yell at him, but I wouldn't be very compassionate, Mark.

Mark: That wouldn't be. You've got to be more understanding, just you know. It's okay though because our compassionate guest is Jena Rodriguez from [BraveMasters.com](https://bravemasters.com). If you don't know Jena she is a wife, mother, serial entrepreneur, love-of-all-things business, a brand specialist, an artist, a numbers-gall, a coach and committed to eradicating unrealized human potential. That is quite a bio. Jena Rodriguez, what is all that about?

Jena: What is that all about? I think I'm crazy, I've gone loco. No, hi everyone. Thanks for having me here, Mark and Scott, and yeah it's a list. It is a laundry list but it is who I am, it's who I show up as every day and of course, it took years to get to all of that. It took a while.

Mark: Let's rewind the tape and let's talk about the beginning where you went from broke to brave.

Jena: Broke to brave, I love it. That was a journey as well. So, my story begins with basically corporate America first. I was one of those who went to college really early at 16 and then I was curious about entrepreneurship and I didn't have any mentor or role models. My mom and dad were not that, and that was fine they believed corporate America was a housewife or took care of the kids kind of thing.

So, point being is after college I ended up studying accounting and I got bored so, I started studying fashion design. So, I don't know what those have anything to do with each other, but that's who I figured out was running things was both the creative Jena and the numbers Jena, and the business savvy Jena and I spent quite a few years trying to figure myself out and ended up in corporate America as a controller for about eight years. Because numbers do come pretty easily to me, they are important especially when it comes to business and I really learned the ropes around that, but there was a point in 2006 where I kind of hit my ceiling, not so much corporate America ceiling. I was moving into management, I was offered these higher positions and I just didn't feel the love anymore for crunching numbers for someone else and building other people business. I was a consultant for entrepreneurs, building their profits and things like that and I decided to buy a storefront of all things.

So, when I jumped out there into entrepreneur world I took on a \$200,000 loan to buy the store that was pre-existing, and what it did was brought

together all of my skill sets: fashion designer, I also used to be a makeup artist, I had marketing experience, I had a controller experience. I had all of these things and I was like "Oh my gosh this is a perfect store, this is going to be great and I had very big visions of expanding and building locations and all of that". I started with just one and that's the business I leaked into and basically said goodbye to my corporate America and my promotion.

What occurred next was not expected and that's probably the hardest part of my story is that I was very excited and very gung ho, and a year later I found myself 700,000 in debt, with all the loans, inventory and leases and all of the things that come with it and had I not only made \$300,000 in sales yet, I was two months behind on rent and not able to keep up. So the equity was flipped and the cash flow was clearly flipped. The short story is I had to close it, I had to change my direction and I really didn't have a choice at that point other than to close it down and file bankruptcy and it was one of the most painful times. I can very clearly look back and go this was so meant to be, like it's on purpose and fast-forward here I am.

I left that and said, I'm not going back to the job, I'm just not going to do it and I made a decision to partner with my husband in a web and graphic design company. Then there's much more to that story if you'd like to hear it, but here we are about 11 years later and this is my third iteration of my business. My husband no longer works in the business he has his own. He's a musician and does studio and freelance and all of that. So, I'm now in charge of Brave Masters a hundred percent full time and truly had taken from 700,000 in debt to making over \$1.3 million in this iteration of my business. So it's been exciting, scary and brave all the way along. So, here we are.

Mark: Yeah. It's so funny because it's so easy to talk about the successes, but so few of us want to kind of go back to that dark period in our lives and nobody rides for free everyone has it. But for you coming out of it, what do you think was your biggest take away from going through that?

Jena: Yeah. There were so many lessons along the road. Number one, it's kind of like knowing what I didn't know and seeing the blind spots that I was not able to move through in the moment. So, when I look at that now there were things that I didn't know what to do, and now that I know I have obviously excelled at it better in my current businesses and one is getting mentorship and hiring a coach or hiring someone that knows more than I know. So, that didn't occur to me in that year. It wasn't as prevalent. I think we have a lot more coaching and mentorship that's for hire now and it just wasn't the thing you know to do in the moment.

The other thing I learned is I spent my entire life afraid of the BK. I made it wrong, I made it bad, I made it too traumatic because I had watched my mother file for bankruptcy when my dad and her got divorced at eight years old and because of that I spent my life afraid of it. So, what I learned in the moment I had to make a decision. I remember actually laughing. Like in my car, I was like "Of course, I have to file bankruptcy" because what I had learned at that time is that your fears are perpetuated or come real if you hold them to be true, and so I had spent my whole life so much of the time afraid of something called bankruptcy failure, falling down and not succeeding. I was so afraid of all that and of course it became my reality and within a split second I chose to see it differently, I chose to see it as a gift, I chose to see it as a blessing and I also really got clear that my two-year-old and my nine-year-old and my husband and my livelihood was way more important than what that apparently meant and my sanity was way more important than anything that was happening in the moment.

I just made a business decision and I took responsibility at a whole different level, and that's what I got out of it is that when I, or someone takes responsibility a hundred percent for how you've gotten to where you are then you have freedom to choose how you go forward, and when I did that everything started to open up differently and I made new decisions and I didn't dwell on it and I didn't stay in the sadness or the sphere or like "Oh crap, what did I just do." I just chose, and then move forward and it was on one of the best things that happened to me so that I could learn that lesson and it's sucked, but here I am.

Mark: Scott Todd, let's play a fun game.

Scott: All right, let's play a fun game.

Jena: Oh gosh, let's lighten it up, let's do this.

Mark: So, you know how the intellectual elite go into a museum and they look at a piece of art and they kind of look at it, and they cock their head back and forth and all of a sudden they start analyzing it and creating this sort of flowery story about the art that they're looking at. You know what I'm talking about? So when you hear Jena's story let's have a museum moment and let me know when you look at it what do you take away from that?

Scott: It's funny because I was thinking along. Look, I was thinking about doing the same thing right because Mark, the one thing that I hear Jena say

is "Hey, look I am a controller for corporate America", and I got tired and then I made the leap to start my own deal and so easy to think like "Oh it's easy to make that leap to entrepreneurship." The reality is without a sherpa, without somebody to help you, without kind of a coach or without someone that's there I think the success rate is so small you need someone who can see it from the outside because you're living it even like a skilled executive you are living in it and like you don't necessarily see what's coming at you. You need somebody from the outside to help you, and I think that was kind of like even a take away that Jena said was like you need some guidance and maybe if she had guidance to begin with it could have helped her, but it's such a hard leap, especially when you go and you get a retail store or something like that. That's my thoughts.

Mark: It's so funny because when I hear her story my museum moment, looking at Jena's picture is a little different because I see actually Jena as your female doppelganger, Scott because there's very few people that are really analytical on the numbers side of it but then they're also super creative from a business and marketing side. You look at those people from the outside and you say okay that person's probability of success in entrepreneurship is really, really high and that kind of shows you how difficult it is without a Sherpa even with that skill, even with that experience and arguably even with all that talent it's still super, super tough and you've got to see a variable that is going to be luck as well.

Scott: Right, I agree. I think that it's funny, I don't know about the doppelganger part but I will tell you do have a lot of skill sets in common: one we both worked for corporate America, two we both have a finance background. I was also controller. I was a controller for a fortune 300 company for a while. So essentially there is that piece. Mark the leap some people make it look easy but...

Mark: But, Scott, you made the leap?

Scott: I did.

Mark: But you did it slower. You did it more controlled.

Scott: What I did was the difference is that I made the leap after I had the bridge built. Like I had the revenue coming in, I wasn't starting from scratch. Like I made the leap and I had assistance, I had guidance along the way at the same time it's so hard to like go from like this paycheck every two weeks to like now you're the boss and you've got to put it altogether

and you still got to pay your own bills. That's a very hard leap to do if you haven't built a foundation.

Mark: Yeah, right. So, Jena now, let's give you your museum moment, right?

Jena: Yeah, look at my own photo.

Mark: Well, not necessarily for you but just for your clients. So, you've got an entrepreneur who comes to you and says, "Jena, I need to boost my brave, I want to get to the next level in my business. Maybe I am weak on branding or marketing or even just the numbers of my business." So now, you look at them and you kind of look at that what they're doing and then your big take away is typically what? Can we create sort of a museum moment on that story or is that too generous?

Jena: Yeah, for sure. I think that's where, "Thank goodness I have the creative and the numbers side of my head 50-50", only because I'm listening from a place of not only what do they have in place, what are their strengths and skills that they can pull from to step into entrepreneurship but I'm also looking for other characteristics are they in place. Some of those are: are they action oriented, are they fear driven only? It's like do they overcome fear.

One of the biggest questions I ask on one of my application forms is, do you have the means necessary to invest in yourself or will you figure it out and find the means and make it happen or I am living paycheck to paycheck I don't have any way to make it happen? You know something like that; there's this three choices and so I'm looking from a place of mindset. You may not have the money in the bank, but you better well have an attitude called I'll figure it out because there is going to be times like I've experienced where cash is tight or it's the season dropped. I mean, I was going into 2007, 2008 and I was the ninth store close in my square. I wasn't number one, I was sinking with the other ships not to say that I was the only reason it closed. I couldn't figure out possibly a way around it had I known more, but am I one to look at that and blame the circumstance, or am I the one to say this is happening and I'm going to figure it out.

So when I observe or look at a business owner and start to work with them I ask a lot of questions upfront, I get a sense of their current state of business and number one their current state of mind and how they approach the challenges because that's what you're going to get inside of entrepreneurship, no matter what you do to set it up to win there's going to

be things that you've got to make decisions about. We can look branding and we can look marketing, we can also look at what if like... do you have the means to support yourself if this works right away? If you don't the sales done are you that highly committed that you're going to make the actions happen to turn the boat around.

So, I'm looking at a lot of different aspects when I am in that conversation with them and it comes directly from what I've been through and how I did it not so smartly or whatever. It's kind of like I didn't do it so well, and so I'm looking at it from how can I circumvent this missteps that I took and help them not make the same mistakes and I can't solve it all for them. They really have to have an attitude of brave, an attitude of you know get out there and do the work because I can't do it for them, but I am there to support them in the strategy and the clarity of who they are and what they're charging, what they're selling, how they're going to market themselves and ultimately what brand are they going to show up as so that they can be in the marketplace in the right way. So, it's very multifaceted and I think that's what is kind of disillusion for people or an illusion is that it's like I'm really good at this so I'm just going to go make a business about it.

Mark: Right.

Jena: Except the business owner has about 10 hats and you may not master them all. But if you're not aware of all the hats that you have to wear and the tasks and the operations: accounting, branding, marketing, sales, the client fulfillment I'm like there is a lot to business ownership and you may not obviously tackle it all at once, but you've got to have the awareness that there's going to be more demanded on you and the leadership is going to have to be there in order to succeed. So, I do my best to kind of give them a reality check at the same time empower them to take great steps because I did and that's why I am here.

Mark: Yeah. Let's talk about your top 10 core values. Number one say yes and figure it out, number two brave daily. This is a verb the act of being decisive, committing consciously and taking action. Number three focus on attitude over experience, number four value connectedness, number five vulnerability is key to connectedness, number six know that intentions shape one's reality, number seven presume the positive first, number eight ask how can I versus to say I can't, number nine of the work it out attitude always and number 10 be transparent. Scott Todd, what do you see uncommon out of those 10 core values? I love picking on Scott, Jena.

Jena: [00:19:34] [indiscernible]. I need to learn how to pick on Scott.

Scott: I think it goes back to a personal accountability. That's what it is. It's the can-do attitude and personal accountability it's what I see.

Mark: I think it's all mindset with her, isn't it?

Jena: It's huge.

Mark: Like attitude over experience.

Scott: Right.

Mark: You know you'll figure it out, and then can you be brave enough to show up? Can you can show your authentic self and that connectedness and that vulnerability? I feel like vulnerabilities have been hijacked in the business world where Brene Brown kind of popularized it and now it's like oh I am vulnerable but it's not... I think it's more sort of an authentic showing up every day as you, not sort of puffing up, not shrinking just doing your best version of yourself. Jena, what do you think of that? What is vulnerability mean to you? What is vulnerability connectedness mean to you?

Jena: Yeah, I know it's a great question. For me, I guess where I live in vulnerability and I wasn't always. So the distinction for me is that there was a time... I mean, up until 2013, which is not long ago that is five years if I can do my math correctly and so many years past the bankruptcy and I didn't speak of it, I wouldn't talk about it; I wouldn't share that angry truth as I held it back then. So for me, when I was willing to be vulnerable it was a space of and I tie it very closely to transparency and what I mean by that is being real and being honest and open and you know it's like being willing to share what's really underneath all of the success or the good things but also the ugly truth and you know being vulnerable has catapulted my business. It is the one thing that brings the human element into business in my opinion because when we are connected with others. I think, like I should have said in my core value it is because of that vulnerability with each other. If we can support each other even in the hardest times and if we can hold each other's hands and be willing to really like stand up for people when they can't stand for themselves, and when you can believe in yourself when it's really like you're really tested those are all very vulnerable moments and it's a way of being not just a temporary choice.

So, I think vulnerability is much bigger than just like "Oh, I got on stage and told my story for the first time which is a huge part of a shift for me." It shifted the needle for me when I started being able to do that because I was so worried about what people thought of me instead of really being concerned with how do I help them meaning who's in the audience and I think that's vulnerable. I think, it's when you can be about something bigger than yourself and you don't really even know what the heck that is and you're willing to face the unknown and be brave and all of those things that kind of tie in together then that's vulnerable and it's a practice. For me it's practice; it's not always comfortable and you know sometimes a little scary and there's you know, even my brave this year and moving forward.

I built my business, I built this matching of speaking in public, which I had never done before 2013, and so I built my business being in front of people one-on-one in person. So, of course, I was scared at first and then I got used to it and I got more comfortable and this year I'm noticing what's the next level for vulnerability is me being online at much bigger space I guess I don't know what the word is. But, like to be really visible online and access to millions and you know like to really put yourself out there and being willing to be judged I think is highly vulnerable as well and that is kind of my next brave right now. It's like you know people think this is easy for me right now and it's like I've got to build my comfort level with it and just like anyone else. So, I'm on a mission to really impact a lot of people out there. I mean, if I can impact a million people and a million entrepreneurs and inspire them then I've got to get vulnerable, I've got to be willing to be like you know be uncomfortable, be judged, to be whatever it is because I've got to be committed to something bigger than that and I think that's vulnerable as well. So there's a long answer for you.

Mark: I like it. Scott Todd, do you think that the male listener is going to drop off now for us? They're like, Oh, Mark and Scott have gotten to woo, woo with all this vulnerability stuff.

Scott: No, if they were going to drop off they would have dropped off a long time ago. Mark, don't worry about that, but I think that there's something there because you know, Mark it goes back to the mindset that we've talked to other people about. Look like everybody has things about their lives, business lives, public lives or whatever that you're uncomfortable with. There are things that just you're going to feel uncomfortable. There's nobody that is not uncomfortable with something. Now some people do a better job of like playing it off but there are certain things that we all have that it's like man it's a negative energy, it's draining from us but that said, when you kind of just go into it and just do it, the more you do it the lower your

anxieties are going to come about it. It's going to get easier the more you do it. It's when you avoid it, it's when you like go and like I will do anything except for that that it never gets any better because you're not getting the exposure that you need to kind of lower that stress or that anxiety or whatever it is.

Mark: Yeah, absolutely and there's a great book by Patrick Lencioni called *Getting Naked*, and he talks all about vulnerability in the business world. So, I highly recommend that which leads us to Jena... See how I did a segue? ...our tips of the week. So, I think, your mentorship has been amazing in this podcast but now we're going to ask you for one more tip: a website, a resource, a book something actionable the Art of Passive Income listeners can go right now, improve their businesses, improve their lives. What have you got?

Jena: Yeah, so a tip of the week, one of the books I picked up, I wanted to share a book that I recently got probably a couple of months ago that really started to impact me in a big way and kind of shift where I am going in this year and in the future and it was from Brendon Burchard and it was the... I'm looking it up because I don't want to get it wrong here hold on it's got to many H's so I'm like what is that again? It's the *High Performance Habits* I believe it is the book. Let me double check that. *High Performance Habits* is the book. What I loved about it is that I was floored that he had done all this research and talked to millions of people. I don't know how many but lots over three years and it boiled down to six's habits.

Six habits of these highly successful people and you know all of that and I was like, that's interesting. You know it's like we try to make this so complicated but it's really these six habits and the cool thing is if you access the book they have like an assessment and you can kind of check out and see where you are but I would highly recommend picking that up. I gifted it to all of my private clients because they were like wow this is really big, you know, because I'm always learning. If you look at my bookshelf it's all nonfiction, it's all development, all personal development, business book, how to use things like that and this one I just had to add to my bookshelf and I would highly recommend people to grab it and consume it. It's kind of a big book but if you can just really get the synopsis or the cliff notes around those six habits. I think as an entrepreneur you can start to see where you're lacking and where you need to put your focus and it would make the most difference for you. So yeah, that's the tip for the day, tip of the week whatever it is.

Mark: I love it. I've got a new book to read now.

Jena: You've got a new book to read. Yeah, I like the *Getting Naked*. I haven't read that one so I've got to pick that one up.

Mark: Which one?

Jena: The *Getting Naked*.

Mark: Oh yeah, the *Getting Naked*. Right now, I'm listening on Audible to Angela Duckworth is it *Grit*.

Jena: *Grit*, okay. I was wondering what that one is called, yeah.

Mark: Yeah, it's great.

Jena: Awesome.

Mark: Scott Todd from Landmodo.com/TheLandGeek, what's your tip of the week?

Scott: Mark, mine is a very simple one. Check out this website Days you know like days dot T-O. Days.TO, days to.

Mark: Okay.

Scott: Days.TO, all right.

Mark: I'm checking it out.

Scott: What's cool about this is on the main screen there it gives you kind of how many days until certain events, but then you can go in there and you can say like days until and you can get to a specific date. So, let's say that I wanted to have like days until January 1, 2018 well, then it will do the countdown clock for me. What I really, really think is cool when I access it from my phone I did, like I save to so, it creates like kind of an icon on my phone. What's cool is right on my phone on home screen I have how many days until and then I click on it and it tells me how many days until that special day. So whether it's December 31 or whatever it is it's a countdown clock for a specific date and it's really, really cool if you're trying to create or have a deadline or something. Like you know there's nothing more pressure than knowing that you only have X amount of days left. Mark, you always talk about like you only have X amount of days left to walk the planet maybe you ought to plug that day in there and then it does keep counting down. I don't know, it seems a little dark for me but that's...

Jena: You know what that day is?

Mark: Yeah, yeah. You want to know how many days left I have on earth?

Scott: I don't but...

Jena: Yep, don't scare me with that okay.

Scott: There is a website you go to.

Mark: You've got to know the death clock. I've got... I'll tell you what I love this thing. It is very life affirming, life is short make the most of it. I've got 11,069 days, 8 hour, 11 minutes and 44 seconds left.

Jena: What year did you put for that?

Mark: That's assuming everything goes well. I think the average lifespan is like 78 for a man.

Jena: Wow, okay.

Mark: It's just based on actuarial tables. I don't know if they know I've got a walking treadmill desk.

Scott: So you've got like 30 years left, Mark.

Mark: Yeah. I'm excited about those 30. So that is great. So I just downloaded this. I want to plug-in how many days until next boot camp.

Scott: Yeah, there you go.

Mark: So, how do I do that?

Scott: All right. Here I will go to my phone because it's just...

Mark: I'm in there okay so events?

Scott: Let's see days dot to because I had it on my computer. Let's see days to. So what you're going to do is you're going to go to Calendar and when is the next boot camp? Next boot camp is okay I've got it yeah. So, you'd click on that day.

Jena: That's cool.

Mark: Okay.

Scott: Do you ever get these spam things on your phone. Geez, it's trying to take me to like I want an Amazon gift card. I don't believe but...

Jena: [00:32:24] [indiscernible] browser?

Scott: Yeah.

Mark: So, Sunday. How many days until Sunday and then hit the gear?

Scott: And then, no. On the bottom you know how you get... You know on the bottom down there with the arrow, the little boxes with the arrow.

Mark: Yeah.

Scott: Okay, so hit that.

Mark: Okay.

Scott: And then do shh, shh, shh. Add to home screen.

Mark: Okay, I'm on the home screen yeah.

Scott: No, no, no. Are you in the browser?

Mark: No, I already downloaded it on my phone. I just didn't want to add like an actual date using the app. So it says when is and then but how do I add my own day?

Scott: No you've got to... wait go...

Mark: Okay, we'll just do this later. Jena is like, you guys are really geeky.

Jena: Wow [00:33:17] [indiscernible].

Scott: Even our audience is going to be like, I'm lost too.

Mark: I don't know, all right. You know this is a good tool, I like this.

Jena: [00:33:26] [indiscernible].

Mark: There's 23 hours till the first quarter moon that's good to know too. Nice all right. So my tip of the week is learn more about Jena Rodriguez at...

Jena: Nice, I didn't pay for that either.

Mark: ...[BraveMasters.com](https://bravemasters.com). Don't worry, Jena, the bill is coming. [BraveMasters.com](https://bravemasters.com) learn more about her, her story, how she can help you, let her be your shaper if you are an entrepreneur and you want to get to the next level. It's a really cool site too it's just go to the blog it's awesome. I bet there are some cool resources here. So you can just go to [BraveMasters.com/Blog](https://bravemasters.com/blog) yes three digestible gold nuggets await you and she's got a podcast and she even had yours truly on it so you know it's good.

Jena: That's right.

Mark: So, there you go. Boy, you've done a lot 135 this is you're killing it.

Jena: Yeah, I'm right near my third year anniversary. We push it up weekly so... I can't believe it's been that long already it's crazy.

Mark: Wow.

Jena: It's good.

Mark: I want to thank all the listeners and I want to remind you the only way we're going to get the quality of guests like a Jena Rodriguez from [BraveMasters.com](https://bravemasters.com) is if you do us three little favors you've got to subscribe, you've got to rate, you've got to review the podcast. Send us a screenshot of your review to Support@TheLandGeek.com we're going to send you for free our \$97 Passive Income Launch Kit, so please do that. Scott, are we good? Wait, I lost your audio there. You're still on mute. You're still playing with that app, right?

Scott: No.

Mark: No, you're not. Jena, are we good?

Jena: We're good. This is great. Thanks guys for having me and I really appreciate it and the conversation was great though.

Mark: Thank you and Scott, are we going to do this? Are we going to embarrass ourselves in front of Jena?

Scott: I just say we do it really fast. Ready?

Jena: It's called vulnerability, go.

Scott: One, two, three.

Mark & Scott: Let freedom ring.

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