



# Redefining Leadership in Rural Communities

with Jo Palmer



Episode  
**.02**



Episode .02

**Redefining  
Leadership  
in Rural  
Communities.**

# Who is Jo Palmer?

Jo is the founder of Pointer Remote; a business idea that was born out of the idea that there was an untapped pool of talent living in rural areas that could be accessed and mobilised through remote work. This has since become the driver behind her company purpose; to support the growth and sustainability of rural communities.

Jo is motivated by the social and economic benefits that remote work provides for marginalised parts of the community. She believes that your location, gender, physical ability or ethnicity should not determine the work you do. She is also passionate about the environmental, social and fiscal benefits that organisations experience through hiring remotely.

## Jo's accolades include:

Being the 2019 AgriFutures Rural Women's Award National winner,

A 2018 Crow Awards Startup Superstar

A young Entrepreneur Award

2017 Soar Awards Regional Contribution winner

and 2017 Finalist in the Regional Australia Institute Lightbulb Moments and Regional Online Heroes

## Summary of this conversation

This is a very real, everyday conversation. Despite an incredible list of accolades, Jo is one of the most relatable and down to earth people you will come across.

In this conversation she shares her self-made journey and the way she chooses to approach things that works best for her, her business and her family life.

## Connect with Jo Palmer:

**Connect with Jo on LinkedIn:**  
[linkedin.com/in/jopalmerpointer](https://www.linkedin.com/in/jopalmerpointer)

**Pointer Remote website:**  
[pointerremote.com](https://pointerremote.com)

## Opportunities can come by accident

Being open to opportunities is one of the most valuable mindset shifts we can make. We don't always need to know what it is that we want to be doing; but if we are not happy with where we are, it is our responsibility to do something about it. By opening our minds to possibility and being curious, we may notice gaps that could lead to new opportunities.

## Key leadership attributes

It is vital to understand ourselves, our strengths, our privilege, our bias and where we have come from. There is also tremendous power in removing the emotion from situations, dethatching meaning and being ever curious to new ways of doing things.

## Redefining leadership

Believing that we need to be 100% together, 100% of the time to be an effective leader is a complete fallacy. We do not have to do it all and be over it all, but we do need to build a support team around us. There is huge importance in having mentors, coaches, accountants, solicitors, and trusted colleges to bounce off.

## No need to flog a dead horse

It is OK to stop doing something if it is no longer serving us. There is no honor in burning ourselves out.

## Have a strong purpose

When we are clear on the bigger picture of what we are trying to achieve, it allows us to detach from a particular method of achieving it. In Jo's case, her purpose is to support the growth and sustainability of rural communities. Right now, Pointer Remote is satisfying that purpose, but in time that may change, and she may choose to do something else. This mindset gives us freedom in the activities we spend our time doing.

# Key take- aways

# Claire Marwick

I honestly believe that I have been put here on this earth to shout from the rooftops that no one is 100% together, 100% of the time and none of us should use the false belief that we need to be, as a reason to NOT go out and do that thing, stand up for that promotion or start that dream business.

Through podcasts, coaching and custom programs, my aim is to support, energize, inspire, and empower; and you can connect with me via my website or my socials.

**Website:** [clairemarkwick.com.au](http://clairemarkwick.com.au)

**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/clairemarkwick](https://www.linkedin.com/in/clairemarkwick)

**Facebook:** [facebook.com/cmreignite](https://www.facebook.com/cmreignite)

**Instagram:** [@clairemarkwick.reignite](https://www.instagram.com/clairemarkwick.reignite)



## Claire Markwick:

Jo, thank you so much for joining me here today. Why don't we start by just learning a little bit more about you and what you do and what led you to create Pointer Remote?

## Jo Palmer:

Sure. Well, thank you for having me. I guess like with many people's sort of either small business journey or realistically just life journey. I'm always a bit like, "Ugh, the word journey even itself is a bit woo-woo." But ...

**CM** I know.

**JP** I am, like many people, it's been quite a convoluted sort of path that I've taken. I graduated with a bachelor of education in primary school teaching. And so I spent my early career in small schools. So generally, two or three teacher max sort of size schools.

**CM** Wow.

**JP** But actually spent some time teaching in the UK and in North America in my sort of early years. And then when I came back to Australia after having a couple of years overseas, I sort of more fell into the learning support space and again, was in a small high school for a while and then back into small primary schools, but was very much seeing that there was a lot of opportunity in a teaching career in that learning support space. So with students that had learning difficulties and those sorts of things.

And so that education background, I guess, has sort of been a bit of a driver sort of behind the business decisions that I've made. But it's been quite interesting because I don't come from a family of business people. That's not really something that I grew up seeing at all either. But I found that I used to do a fair bit of tutoring after school with students and I sort of would drive around to people's farms after school and do tutoring and then I thought, "Hang on, this is ridiculous. Like, how about I have the central spot and you all come to me?" And so that was my first business that I actually started in the Main Street Of Holbrook.

**CM** There you go.

**JP** And so I did tutoring there and then I had some friends that lived in Finley, so a couple of hours further west and said, "Well, look, give you open up here, we'll work for you here as well." So, okay. The Learning Tree in Finley opened, and then six months after that, this building I'd been eyeing off in Wagga came up for rent. I was like, "Ah! Why not? Let's go the whole-hog." And so we opened up in Wagga as well. So I had 30 or so teachers working for me over three towns that were doing tutoring and I then had a baby and was managing all of that and ... So look, I've got lots of experience with the what-nots to do in small business, but it was definitely my first experience managing people, managing a distributed team, managing people that I wasn't eyeballing every afternoon, learning to trust people, building communication skills, all of those things that I definitely hadn't learned in a classroom.

But that business, I ended up selling to one of the teachers that worked for me. And then not long after that picked up a remote job through a friend I'd gone to school with, and it was a Sydney company and they wanted someone to manage sponsorship for their annual event. And they said, "Oh, well actually you don't need to be in Sydney." And one of my friends was like, "Oh, I've got this friend that lives near Wagga. She could do it." And so I got this job and then that job sprung into business number two, when a friend and I were talking about the fact that what I was doing for this one event, actually, no one was doing that in the Ag industry. And so we then started a company that managed sponsorship and event management in the Ag industry.

**JP** And then a couple of years on, my business partner took that business over. But what had happened in there was a bit of a crossover there that I realized that unless you started a business, or you had a friend at a corporation in Sydney that dropped a job in your lap, there wasn't actually a really easy way to find a job that you could do remotely. So people that were qualified and experienced, especially for those living in rural areas and particularly women that if there wasn't a job that you had, like career training and skills and experience in your town, then there was quite often you either weren't working or you were working in something you were completely overqualified for, or you weren't working as much as you wanted to. And so I looked at my girlfriends and was like, "Hang on, there's a whole lot of you that have married farmers and left these corporate careers in the city and you are twiddling your thumbs or you still haven't even paid your HECS debt off. And so I thought, "This is ridiculous." So's why not-

**CM** There's another community here.

**JP** Why not start Another business?

**CM** Something that I got from listening to your story there is that when you saw an opportunity or when you caught winds that, "Oh, there's something in this." You just went for it. You just tried it. And I guess sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. Now, I personally believe that being able to see opportunities and taking action in those moments is one of the qualities of a great leader. What else do you think makes up a great leader?

## The make of a great leader.

**JP** Well, that's very nice of you to say that. I've always sort of felt that I was a bit of an accidental leader, because it definitely wasn't the sorts of things that I was actually after going out doing. It was actually more that I didn't want to teach anymore. And so I was trying to avoid teaching and starting businesses was a good way of doing that. But I think as well, something that you've touched on before I sort of like answer your question there that I really feel that I really do need to acknowledge is the fact that yes, I have been able to just sort of see an opportunity and go with that and roll with that. But that's come from an incredible place of privilege. Like, I have a husband that has been not only willing, but able to financially support me not making money for a very long time. And I think that needs to be acknowledged. But I'm also like a middle class educated white woman. And I know that, that comes with a whole lot of privilege.

So I think that that's something that I always really like to acknowledge because a lot of people think, "Oh God, it's so amazing what you've done." And I'm like, "I am already so many steps ahead than so many people that would like to do things like this."

**CM** Yeah.

**JP** Well, I suppose that's actually a really perfect segue into some other leadership qualities. I think that understanding where you've come from, where you've started from, checking your privilege and keeping that in mind,

I think that's something that I've always really tried to really make part of how I do things and the decisions that I make. And I guess that actually is something when I think about it and when you ask a question like that, I think that's an attribute that I really respect in other people in leadership positions and I really try and emulate that myself.

**CM** Yeah. Yeah. I think that awareness piece is a really big part of it, isn't it? Knowing what we bring to a situation, knowing like you say, understanding the privilege that sort of maybe given us a little bit of a step up. But at the same time, giving kudos to you, there are other people in that sphere as well that don't take action on the opportunity or the privilege or whatever it might be. So perhaps that's another really important trait, isn't it? You can have the privilege, you can have the step up, you can see the opportunity, but then you've actually got to take action. And you do that.

**JP** Yeah. Look, I agree. And lots of people say, "I would love to do that." And when you say, "Well, why don't you?" They're like, "Oh, but like, what if it doesn't work? Or what if it, like, what if it falls over?" All those things. And it's so funny because I don't ever think like that, which is like a total optimism that I sometimes think is like blatant ignorance, but has served me well. And the thing is that like, I don't actually care. Like if it falls over, like, who cares? So that again is I guess, a personality trait that I have been able to, I guess, leverage and that a lot of people don't have that.

**JP** And that's a confidence piece that I think ... Like I've always been a really confident person, confident kid. I was a confident teenager, even through the really dorky gobby age, I still was class clown and carried on like that.

But I think that ability to not really care when it's not working. And like, look, I say that like, I'm doing that constantly. So what that sort of career path that I touched on sort of has led me to is this third business, which is the connecting talented people that want to work remotely with businesses that want to fill jobs that maybe they can't fill in their physical location of their small town, or maybe there are corporate that's actually like, "Hang on, there's this talent pool that we just have not even been acknowledging in rural areas." Which is what I'm campaigning big time at the moment. But I just, I don't know. I think that ability to really have to readjust how you're thinking things.

I'm the ultimate, you know, the duck on the water that's looking very calm and chill and then the legs are going like crazy underneath. That is me daily at all times. So the cool, calm, collected on the top is badly kicking my legs underwater. But even just looking at different ways of doing things. Like at the moment, I'm looking at how we can actually restructure how the business looks, because while we have this his job matching platform for our advertising jobs on, we do a lot in the education space, which is hilarious that I try to avoid teaching and I've done a ...

**CM** And then here you are.

**JP** ... full circle back into education. But really seeing that it's not just us empowering individuals to look at working this way or businesses to accessing work this way. What we've really found is it goes far deeper than that as far as economic development and mental health outcomes and all of those things that come with when you put of people to work. And like I touched on it, even just getting rural women to pay their HECS back, that's a financial win for us as a national economy, let alone the spend in the local economy and what that drives when you're putting extra salaries into rural town. So all of those things.

**CM** Exactly. Yeah.

**JP** So we are just even look thing now at the moment of how to restructure even our company set up so that our recruitment stays in the company. But what we actually do in the education piece is actually like a social enterprise. That's actually where it sits. And we are looking at, is that actually a better option to have the business set up like that?

So I think not only going for opportunities when they come, but also doing some pretty serious navel-gazing when you're like, "Oh, hang on, like is how we are currently doing things restricting us?" Which I genuinely think how I have been doing things now in this new world, I've got to look again at how we do things differently.

**CM** Yeah. I think that story just highlights the importance of what I hear from so many leaders and business owners that I speak to in as much as we need to be constantly reevaluating, don't we?

**CM** "We need to be reflecting, we need to be looking, we need to be curious, we need to be asking questions."

Just because this is how we've done things to date, doesn't mean this is how we've got to continue to do things. When we change, when we grow, when the world around us changes, when the people around us change, when the opportunities change, we've got to have the flexibility to be able to pivot. It's another one of those buzz words, isn't it? Pivot and adapt. But essentially, like or hate the buzzword, that's what we've got to do, isn't it? We've got to be continually evaluating ourselves and our business to evolve into that next version of ourselves, I guess.

**JP** I agree completely. And I think that good managers, good leaders, good companies, these good people making decisions like this were doing that even in a pre COVID world. They were always reassessing, always re-looking. I guess that's something that I think has had a spotlight, obviously shined on it for a lot of organizations since early 2020. But I think that if you can get systems and processes in place around how you do that reflection, then it can just become business as usual. And why not evolve? Don't evolve for the sake of evolving, but ...

**CM** Exactly.

**JP** ... have your eyes up in order to evolve. I think that that's madness if you're not actually thinking about your business that way.



**CM** Yeah. Yeah. One thing I want to come back to that you said, because I think this is really, really important. You were talking about how you are the cool, calm on the surface and underneath your little legs are going crazy. I believe there's this common misconception. I hear it a lot. Especially my clients. There's this common misconception that we've got to have our shit together to go for that leadership role or to try and seize that opportunity or to start that business.

We can't possibly do that if we're all up in the air and we're all a mess. Tell me, give me some kind of belief that I'm not out there in woo-woo land crazy. Like we don't have our together all the time, do we? Like you don't have all the answers before you take action on something, do you?

**JP** A hundred percent no. I am like a hot mess at all times. No, like a hundred percent no. And I realistically am exhibit A of what probably not to do as far as the three companies that I've started, I'm like, "Oh yeah, cool." Like, "Let's just do that." And I registered a business name and build a website and I'm up. I'm like, I can start a company in two days. I'm good at that and I like that bit. That's fun at the start, but I've never ridden a business plan. I get harassed on a regular basis by people that are like, there's something you need to do and five and 10-year plans and things. And I really know that I should do them and then it just never gets done. I'm very opportunistic, but I'm also to my own detriment, like chase shiny things at all times. The fact that I've even got to where I am, I sometimes am like, "Oh my gosh, like, how did that even happen?" Because-

## Redefining Leadership

**CM** How did that happen?

**JP** Yeah, a hundred percent because I'm sort of like, "Oh, okay, cool. We can do that now, so next." I'm always like looking around for these things. But I think I'm very aware of that. And so you need the people that are not like that around you and you need them close.

**CM** A hundred percent.

**JP** You need to have established a relationship, whether it's like family or friends, but I don't actually think they're that great for that. But when you are building team around you, even if you are a sole trader and you're doing things by yourself, that team doesn't have to be paid employees. That can be a team of mentors or it could be your accountant or your solicitor, or those trusted people around you that are going to say, "Oi, rein it in, like, come back, like back to earth, Jo." And I have collected these people because I know how bad I am at this. I have a collection of people that rein me in when I'm like, "Hey." And they're like, "Whoa." So remember you rang me three weeks with this other thing. Like, "How are you going with that?" And I was like, "Oh yeah, like, I'm kind of bored with that now."

**CM** I resonate with that one hundred percent and I completely agree with you in that our brains just come up with ideas in a million miles an hour, don't we? I do that exact same thing. I've got people that I bounce off. I've got mentors, I've got advisors and I'll run an idea through them. My dad is a classic for it. He's like, "Yep, exactly." He's like, "But, but how, how, what about that thing?" I'm like, "Ah, yeah, good point." "So park this one, finish that thing, then go back to that." And I'm like, "Yes." But we don't have to be super skilled in all of that, do we? It comes back to that self-awareness piece. We are the ideas people, we're the visionaries, we're the inspirers, the motivators, the energy. And then, like you say, we build that team around us that maybe are the more diligent, detailed oriented, analytical, action takers, the ones that are going to actually make that thing happen.

I remember interviewing Naomi Simson and she said that exact same thing. She said, "I'm the ideas person." She said, "I can't action it or make any of it happen. So I come up with the ideas and then my business partner is the one that sets all the systems and processes and procedures in place to make it happen." I think to me, and it sounds like you're in agreement,

**"that's a core leadership attribute as well, knowing where our own strengths lie and then bringing other people in to compliment where we've got gaps."**

**JP** Yeah. Very much so, but I think it doesn't even have to just be at work or in a business or things as well. Like, I am the treasurer of the Uranquinty Evening Branch of the CWA and I often find myself in similar situations where I'm like, "Okay, like, I reckon we should do this, this and this." And I can see them all like, oh, eyes roll here, she goes. But then we've just got such a diverse, really great little crew and especially the executive in the branch and these things then happen and they action. And yes, it might happen a bit slower because it's like a voluntary organization. But yeah, I think that sometimes this... I don't know. And I think, like I said, I've sort of been that reluctant leader. It's only been in more recent times that people have sort of even pointed out leadership qualities and skills, or even saying like, "Oh, you being a leader in these things." I was like, "Oh, oh."

I haven't actually thought of myself, because I'm always... I even had that picture in my head. Like I think of leadership, I think of politicians, I think of the C-suite in corporates. I think of, I don't know, that traditional leader role that sort of fed to you. Especially as a young girl, I think that leadership position generally is a man, they're generally white, they're generally middle aged. That's what I sort of had in my head. And so when people sort of started saying things like that to me, I found it not confronting, but I was sort like, "Ah, yeah, I guess. Okay. Whatever. We'll roll with that."

**CM** Absolutely. And I think, like I said at the start, I don't think you're alone in that. I think that there's a lot of people that don't see themselves necessarily as leaders, but yet exhibit so many amazing qualities, the inspiration, the motivation, the communication being able to seek opportunities and take action on them, the ability to... I believe if we inspire other people, then we are in some form of leadership role. If we inspire people to take action, whether we realize we're consciously doing it or not, we are leading them, we are guiding them. And yeah, I think there's so many people that wouldn't call themselves as leaders, but actually probably are and are doing amazing things.

**JP** And I think I wonder just even listening to you say that I hadn't actually thought about like this before, but I wonder if coming from a teaching background, it sort of skewed my just idea around it, because on a daily basis I would teach six different groups of kids, a variety of different subjects and I am the leader in the room being the teacher, the subject matter expert, the one that is guiding and teaching and doing all of those things. And so I wonder maybe that could have impacted my opinion or view of me being a leader because realistically for nearly 10 years, that was my job. So I wonder, I actually hadn't really sort of thought about it like that before.

**CM** It's interesting, isn't it?

**JP** Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**CM** So through your story, you've told us about business number three. You've had two other successful businesses that you've passed on, sold on to other people. It's not all a bit of roses though, is it? What keeps you going when, for want of a better way of saying it, shit really hits the fan, if things aren't going so well? It's great to be inspiring and uplifting and energetic when everything's going well, but what about when things aren't going so well, what do you call on deep within in those situations?

**JP** Well, I'd say it's probably very much like the opposite end of things. Like when things are good, pretty much just whatever, it just happens again. And I sort of, again, that security of, if it falls over, it's not a big deal for us as a family. I think that has given me security to ride a lot of waves that we've sort of gone through. But there's also, I think stubbornness, I think that's probably worth acknowledging that yeah, I suppose I could just check out, say, "Well, look, it doesn't really matter if this doesn't work, whatever." But when you have staff and when you are paying wages, when what you are doing and the decisions that you are making are impacting literally the financial lives of your employees let alone the sort of the implications that can go with, I don't know, heaven forbid, their feelings as well.

**CM** That's another conversation.

**JP** Yeah. But like I had to make some pretty dramatic changes. Like even just with things really shifting around. I've had to let staff go, I've had to re-look at how I engage with the help that I need. And again, in a company that is changing a lot with having to adapt from being ... Well, with Pointer Remote, we were a complete novelty 18 months ago. People were like, "Oh, that's a cool idea." Like, "That's cute." It used to grind my gears because I'm like, "It's not cute. It's actually a really good idea." But then we have this global pandemic and everyone's like, "Wow! Remote work. Hmm, imagine that."

**CM** And you're like, "Hello."

**JP** Hello. I've just been saying this over here for a while. But with that came a lot of challenges. So I, for months last year, like in 2020, had people saying, "Oh, wow, Jo." Like, "You must be killing it." Like, "This is ... The world has just landed in your lap." Like, "Everyone's doing this now. Everyone's working remotely." Like, "Go you." And at the same time, I was like smiling and nodding, but at the same time, no one was recruiting. So no one was advertising jobs with us, which turned off that revenue stream of the business. We spent a lot of time running programs, which again was never lost on me how counterintuitive it was that we ran physical workshops to teach people about remote work, but we do because people, especially in the regional areas still love coming together and that education comes also with socialization. But of course, we can't go anywhere. So everything got canceled.

I also spent a lot of time on the road, speaking at events and conferences and all of these things about what we were doing and the concept and educating and all of these things. Of course, that got switched off. So while I was like, "Yeah, killing it" to everyone on the outside, I literally was like, our revenue streams got completely turned off. And so we had to do some really serious rejigging of how we did things, switching things up to actually consulting directly into businesses, which we hadn't done a huge amount of. We had a lot of government organizations coming to us panicking because they very traditionally were very office bound and were freaking out because the admin staff were taking desktops home.

**CM** Yup.

**JP** And I said, "Well, have you given them laptops?" "No." "Well, of course they need to take the desktops home." "But our policy say, desktop stay in the office." Again, we have to, yes, in words of 2020 do some pretty serious pivoting, but I've had this sort of, I guess in a struggle with it in that while my company has taken a really big hit in the last 18 months to two years, I can't help, but just be so over the moon and so excited about literally everything that I had been advocating for and saying happened in a matter of six weeks globally. And I would never change it at all. And I would rather close the doors to my business and say, "Oh, okay, cool, that was great." And I would love to think that we played some role in making ...

## Don't flog a dead horse.

**JP** What could have been a hellish time for people easier, but also that we may have made some people more prepared for what happened. So I would be able to sleep at night doing that, but also I really like it and it's really shined a lot on the advocacy side of things that I really was doing and I didn't realize, and that's where I need to work out a business model or for us that is beneficial to all the things that we're already doing. But on top of that, I can get that real purpose piece out of it for me. So that's been a really big learning for me. And I guess, yeah, I don't know, that sort of changes things again though. I think in other situations where people might be like, "Oh, but you know, you started a business to advertise jobs on it." But things can change. Who cares? The world has changed very dramatically.

**CM** Exactly. And it brings us back to what we were talking about just before, doesn't it? It's like if you keep that mentality of, "This is what Pointer Remote does. This is what we do. This is what we've always done. Oh, shit! Now, we can't do that anymore, or now there's some big multinational players doing the same thing and competing, how are we going to compete? Ah!" If we are in that kind of victim reactive kind of mindset, we are missing the point, aren't we? I think you touched on some really, really key things there in as much as you mentioned it so quickly, people could have almost fledged over it, but you've got this amazing inner resolve. You've got this attitude of well, worst case scenario, it doesn't matter if I have to close the doors, which ... How do I get my words out? Which I think is an inner confidence, isn't it?

If we can all have some kind of inner confidence or inner peace to come to some kind of realization like that, that event actually happening, probably never will. Because exactly like you've said there, you are always going to be finding ways of, okay, well, this is what we used to do, but this is the purpose, this is the core, this is what drives me and I can do that so much better by doing that. And so while in five years time, your business might look very different to how it was two years ago, you are still energized by it. You are still doing amazing things and you've just tweaked and adapted and I think that in itself is an amazing leadership quality.

**JP** Well, thanks. Well, I think like that I ... But I a hundred percent agree with everything that you're saying, but I think that also realizing that sometimes you're flogging a dead horse. Like, don't do that.

**CM** Yeah.

**JP** And don't be embarrassed because the only ones that will ever knock you are the ones that, like you said, have never sort of put their neck out or ever tried something different. And the thing is, realistically, I don't actually know people like that anymore. I know them and I know they exist, but they're not in my orbit and like attracts like, and you find other people. And I don't know, I genuinely can't even remember a time when people were like, "Oh, is that, is that a great idea?" Obviously, they've said it to my big pie in the sky ideas when I go off the radar there. But as far as like with the three businesses that I've done, no one has ever said, "Ooh." To me. They could well have behind my back. But either that they're not in my world enough to say it to my face or they did and I just didn't hear it.

**CM** You just didn't hear it.

**JP** That's true.

**CM** Ultimately, and I love that. Ultimately, we are never, ever, ever going to please everybody. There will always be someone that has something to say about something that we are doing. And I think I've learned myself in my own business, if we try and cater to everybody, we actually cater to nobody. So we just focus on, on what we do and who we do it for and if people don't like it essentially, that's their problem, isn't it? It's not our problem to make them feel better.

**Clear  
purpose and  
an adaptive  
mindset.**

**JP** A hundred percent. And I think something that's really interesting there with like not being everything to everyone, but also that when the things aren't or big things happen. So like for us, SEEK, who had not ... I'd sort of talked about them being competitors as ours, but they weren't really because they were just this mega beast, but their business model was always around the fact that you had to apply like advertiser job in a specific town and that's how they made money. You might advertise the job in five towns, but they were able to flick a switch overnight to advertise a job remotely. And so that did impact us very, very dramatically. And so where I've done a huge amount of really drilling down into our vision and mission and purpose and those sorts of things, and it's really honed in on like, how can I really play a role in the economic development and stimulus of rural communities by playing a part around that ... Remote work really does play a vital role in that.

So as far as a small business being able to access skills that aren't available in their town, and as far as an individual being able to access work, if you connect those people with things on either side, their rural community benefits, that individual benefits, their family unit benefits. But then they go and have dinner at a pub once a fortnight, that business benefits. They're shopping at the IGA, rather than driving into a regional center to go to an ALDI. They're doing all of these things that play such an amazing role in driving economic development in a rural community. And for me, how can I niche down on that and really play a part in that? I think that's been a real driver for us to sort of make these decisions.

And like I said, looking at business structure and how we can be working with corporates to do that on a bigger scale with how we're set up. But then like on the other hand, I'm doing some really awesome work with this amazing company that works with highly skilled workers and displaced people that are in refugee camps around the world. They've just finished a program. They partner with MIT and Cambridge University. One of their graduates who is an Iranian Kurd living in a refugee camp in Greece has just started a job with Facebook in Ireland. Like ...

**CM** Wow.

**JP** So incredibly that there is just ... The impact stuff that you can do on a really small scale through to really big scale stuff. Again, that's why I can say with confidence, if Pointer itself couldn't actually sort of make it work, I can make it work in other ways with working with other organizations and we can still be doing that impact piece in a different way.

**CM** A hundred percent. That's what I meant and you just articulated it in so much clearer language. When your purpose is so clear, when you know deep down what that driver is for you, if the vehicle that you are currently trying to make that work through, doesn't work, you find another vehicle. And that's, I guess that's essentially what you're saying. That's how you get through those hard times. When you've got that core purpose strong enough, it just keeps you going.

**JP** A hundred percent. And like I said when how this is so funny that the business has pretty much done a full circle back into education.

**CM** Yeah, yeah.

**JP** Like two of the schools I taught at while I was teaching have closed due to not having enough kids there. So those towns' populations have declined enough to not warrant having a public school in those towns. And so I know the direct impact of having a family stay in a town, one family staying in one town can keep a school open.

**CM** Yes.

**JP** That one family can literally, the differences-

**CM** Enough to break it down.

**JP** Yeah, a hundred percent. And that difference of that one person having access to one salary, when you drill down into it in that level, like, mate, even if I put one person in a job once a month, that, for me, when you do the numbers on that, and you look at the impact that that could have, that's how I get out of bed when the days are crap. That sort of stuff.

**CM** You know what? The next thing I was going to ask you was, what's success to you? How do you define success? And you might have just answered it right there. Is there anything you'd add?

**JP** Yeah. The emails that I get and like, there's ... I'm sure there's lots of careers that you can get this, especially if you're like a heart surgeon or something, you get letters from people saying thanks to you, you changed my life. But I, in the like four plus years that we've been going, I get emails from people that say, "Thank you. You have changed my life." And as woo-woo as that sounds, I genuinely understand what that means. So whether that is a person with a disability that literally has been excluded from the workforce, particularly if they live in a rural area or whether it is a mum coming back into the workforce after being out of the loop for 10 years doing babies or caring for an elderly parent or in-law to be able to sort of literally plug them back into the world through a job. Like, that's so good. Like, it's so good.

And I got to tell you, I still think that there's not many jobs where you get to get things like that, the warm and fuzzies. Like I got tagged a post yesterday on LinkedIn with a company that's just hired a new team member through us and they're in Queensland and they're all sitting out and catching up and they're...

**CM** Doing all the things we can't

**JP** They tagged me in a post of like, they're so stoked that not only the organization's growing, but they've been able to grow it with a really ... Like, they're just getting more diversity into their organization.

**CM** That's amazing.

**JP** And all those things. It's my warm and fuzzies, very much so.

**CM** I like it. We need it. We need warm and fuzzies. As human beings, we are driven by significance to some extent or another. And that doesn't mean that we're all egocentric, wanting to make the world about us, but we like to feel that what we're doing makes a difference. And so I think having that kind of recognition, it's going to make you want to get out of bed in the morning and keep going, doesn't it? And keep getting through those times when they are a bit tougher.

What about, this is something that I ask everybody that I interview because I'm a firm believer that to be operating at our best we've got to hold high standards for ourselves. Is there anything that you absolutely non-negotiably have to do for yourself in order to make sure that you're always going to perform, whether that's performing mum duties, farm duties, life duties, business duties, whatever it is? Have you got a set routine or a set amount of things that you have to do to make sure you can work optimally?

**JP** No. Do as I say, not as I do a hundred percent. I have got better in more recent years, but like, oh, my self care, lowest priority and doing a pretty poor job at running business and running households at the same time. I've burnt out twice to like rock bottom burnout things before. So no, I'm not good at all at doing that. But I say that I have put things in place now that I feel have done me the world of good. I see a psychologist once a month, which has been a complete game changer for me. Which is so funny because half the time we just end up talking about work. And so I feel like she's like my business coach as well. Which is really good. So that has been something that I've been so pleased that I've put into the mix.

**CM** Yes.

**JP** Look, I was trying to do things like non-negotiables about like Pilates once a week, again, very woo-woo. But again, that makes it a bit challenging when the world's in and out of lockdowns.

**CM** Oh, yeah.

**JP** But just trying to ... Actually, do you know what the most ridiculous thing, which I've actually put in place, which again, going back to my stubbornness was buying an Apple Watch and closing my rings every day. That has actually become a fixation for me that I feel is actually having like-

**CM** Positive impact. I love it.

**JP** Again, that's starting small. And again, just trying to do things like not have my phone in bed and trying to go back to reading. I read for pleasure and it comes in ebbs and flows. Like I won't read for six months and then I'll smash three books out in a weekend. Just trying to slow the pace down, I think that's pretty much where I'm at now. Like, I've got two daughters that ... I always used to roll my eyes when people are like, "Oh, they grow up so fast." But I'm like, "Ugh, they're growing up so fast." And it's happening too quickly. And so I'm actually really trying to just be a bit more present. I don't work at nighttime now. I don't work on Fridays and I have it on my email signature and on my.

**CM** Yeah, I've seen that. Yeah.

**JP** And even just saying, I don't work on Fridays in my voicemail, people will leave me a voicemail on a Friday and they say, "Oh, no rush, ring me back on Monday." Or they acknowledge in my email signature.

"Oh no, look," if I try and sort of be a bit flex to make it work for someone. "No, no, I see you don't work on Fridays. Let's do it next week."

**CM** Yep.

**JP** And I think just putting those boundaries in. People are actually quite ... And they're like, "Oh, I'm totally going to do that." And I was like, "You go, you."

**CM** See, you do have them.

**JP** I hadn't actually explicitly thought about them that much. But yes, there are some things that I am doing.

**CM** Leave us with, if you could give your younger self one piece of advice of everything you've learned and your life journey, your motherhood journey, your business journey, what would be the single biggest piece of advice you could give your 21-year-old self?

**JP** I would do everything the same.

**CM** Wow.

**JP** I would do everything the same. I traveled, I kissed boys. I did all sorts of things that a hundred percent have all played a part in getting to where I am and have shaped me as a human. So I genuinely wouldn't change anything. I guess I actually wish that I'd sort of known ... Well, maybe they didn't even exist, I don't know. My still understanding of the share market is quite a thing, but like EFTs, if I'd known about EFTs when I was 21, I would've just started buying EFTs on the share market. Even if it was like 50 bucks a month.

**CM** Yeah.

**JP** Like, man, I've started now, but I feel just wasted opportunities. But then 50 bucks a month would've meant like one less pint in Ireland.

**CM** Keep doing what you're doing, girl. Live life, have fun and invest in EFTs. That would be the advice to your 21-year-old self.

**JP** Pretty much.

**CM** Buy some shares in Zoom as soon as they float, because you just don't know what's going to happen in 2020.

**JP** Yes. Yeah. And I think, yeah, I think that sort of thing, like it's so again, like the gender pay gap and how things are just so different for women and let alone other minority groups, but for women in particular, I just ... I don't know, that's been something I'm really conscious of and especially having daughters as well.

**CM** Yeah.

**JP** That financial literacy and financial security and a man is not a plan, even though I've just talked about how none of these things wouldn't have happened if I didn't have my man bank rolling me.

**CM** Love it.

**JP** Again, do as I say, not as I do. That's pretty much my mantra.

**CM** Oh, Jo. I love talking to you. I love hearing and you speak and hearing your stories. It's always so entertaining and it is just candid and it's real. And I love it. And that's why I wanted you to be a part of this series. So thank you so much. If anyone wants to get in contact with you, connect on LinkedIn, find out more about Pointer Remote, where can they find you?

**JP** Well, Pointer Remote, you can head straight to our website, [pointtoremove.com](http://pointtoremove.com) will get you there. I'm quite active on LinkedIn, so Jo Palmer. Feel free to find me on there and tell me that you heard us, which would be good. I always like hearing that people have sort of come across what we're up to. But yeah, I think that really ... And again, we'll point of being pretty much a tech version of what I'm like in life. Like I love connecting people that are doing similar things or that have similar ideas and I'm just always really interested in meeting new people and seeing how someone I already know could be able to help them with where they're at. And then I really appreciate it when people do the same thing to me. Like that is a two-way street and where I always try and go into a new conversation or a new relationship, meeting someone new or something is like always sort of trying to think how I could help and it's always awesome when it's reciprocated as well.

**CM** Love it. Love it. Excellent. Thank you so much again. It's been a wonderful conversation and I trust that everybody listening has gotten great value out of it. Thanks very much.

**JP** Thanks for having me.





# The Winding Road

For more episodes visit: [windingroad.com.au](http://windingroad.com.au)