

Ep #228: Leaving Partnership in an Established RIA to
Join a Fintech Startup RIA with Brent Weiss



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Welcome to the *New Planner Podcast*, where it's all about helping you successfully enter the financial planning profession and accelerate your financial planning career.

This podcast will help you understand the profession, become familiar with the various career paths available to you, and avoid the mistakes that limit your success.

Join your host, Caleb Brown, to explore the human side of creating a successful planning career through interviews, personal experience, and insights from the trenches.

Let's get started.

Caleb Brown: Welcome to the 228th episode of the New Planner podcast. This is Caleb Brown, your host. My guest today is Brent Weiss, who is a co-founder and head of financial wellness at Facet. Brent joins the show today to share how his career journey took him from a student athlete at Notre Dame to a financial planner.

He shared how he got interested in the profession during his last semester while planning to take a personal finance course. The class ended up getting canceled, but it spurred him into action to do his own research on financial planning and joining the profession. Stay tuned to the end too, as he shares how he secured his first position and why he left to join his startup and how his career has developed since then. I hope you enjoy this episode with Brent Weiss.

Hey, Brent. Welcome to the New Planner podcast.

Brent Weiss: Hey Caleb. Great to see you. It's funny that they're recording and said, "Are you okay recording?" And I was gonna ask you, like, is it okay that we record this session today?

Caleb Brown: Absolutely. Yeah. I think the lawyers made me put that on there so

Brent Weiss: Yeah, been there, done that, at a virtual company. I've been hearing that for about eight and a half years now.

Caleb Brown: Glad to have you on here, and go back a while, I guess, you and I. So glad to have you on here and look forward to the conversation today and just start us out with how you, because I don't think you went to school to be a planner, so—

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Brent Weiss: I did not. No.

Caleb Brown: Maybe just walk us through from the very beginning and then we will fast forward to your time at Facet.

Brent Weiss: Yeah, I don't, you know, Caleb, I don't even think this was an option in school when—maybe I'm dating myself there. I mean, I'm coming up in my 20-year reunion from the University of Notre Dame, so I'm not even sure if they had it, like formal programs.

I know it's sort of grown like a wildfire here to some extent. I will share this real quick. I'm trying to remember when we met, Caleb, but it was at a conference, and I remember you were giving a presentation, and I remember walking in there and like, and this isn't because I'm on your podcast by the way, it's just you actually helped shape the way I think about this industry, too. And I was so blown away by the way you were thinking about bringing sort of the next generation of planners in that I actually said, "You know what? I'm gonna be a part of this." I went up to Caleb, I think after that, and said, "Hey, like how do we just connect and get to know one another?"

And that's led to a great relationship. So how did I get started? I was a senior at the University of Notre Dame. Alright, so like maybe some of people listening to your podcast, not at Notre Dame, but seniors or getting ready to go out and sort of figure out like, "Hey, what am I gonna do in my career?" And so I started thinking about this going well, I just in theory went to school for I don't know how many years, right?

15, whatever that number of years you go to school, and I'm a senior at Notre Dame and I'm coming out with this nice degree, and I'm going, "Great. I'm gonna figure out how to make money." But then I'm thinking to myself, "What the heck do I do with it? Like, they never teach you how to do this thing called money or adulting in college."

And oddly enough, my final semester, Notre Dame offered a class on personal finance. Now, I didn't know it at the time, by the way. I didn't know I wanted to be a financial planner at that time. I had gone to interviews with some companies, but didn't know I was gonna do this. But I ran over and I signed up like, this is great.

This is exactly what I need. Perfect timing. A week later, I get an email that says, "Sorry, the class has been canceled. Only three people were on the list." All right. Now the other two people, the teacher and the teacher's assistant.

Caleb Brown: Oh man.

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Brent Weiss: And then there was me, and I'm like, "Huh, this is not fortunate for me," right? Now, okay, here's the kicker. So what I did, I think that was something put in my path to make me realize, "Hey, you know what? This is a challenge for so many people who are coming into a career." That's also an opportunity. And that is quite literally the thing that led me to start Googling at the time, right?

There was not, we weren't using AI, search engine, that kinda stuff. But I Googled it and stumbled upon the CFP professional curriculum and designation, and I was like, "Whoa. You mean I can learn this stuff so I can better manage my own money? I can help other people understand how to do this thing called financial planning and manage their money, and I can make money doing it?"

And that right there, Caleb, was the inflection point that started my now 20-year career as a financial advisor and proud card and caring member of the CFP professional community.

Caleb Brown: I forgot about the Notre Dame thing. So nice sugar bowl, by the way. Absolutely. Devastating for a Bulldog fan, but anyways.

Okay. I'm with you. I can relate to that a little bit, right? Kind of fell into it. Stumbled into it. I think you said you got 2005, so yeah, there were some CFP programs, not very many of 'em. Now there's a lot more.

Brent Weiss: And none that I was aware of. It wasn't something as prevalent as it is today.

Caleb Brown: Okay, so you started doing that, and then did you pursue the CFP right after college or not? I think you joined a firm. Didn't you join a firm right after school?

Brent Weiss: Well, yeah, so this is interesting, right? So I actually left the University of Notre Dame without a job, and that was by choice. By the way, at the time, the job I eventually got didn't exist.

The jobs that existed back then were Morgan Stanley, Merrill Lynch. They were always looking for athletes who could sell, right? It's just like this tenacity thing. I literally had a job offer, and I forget which one it was, but I remember sitting there, and I'm like, "What do you do—" Because I remember I looked at the CFP curriculum, but I listened to the guy who ran the branch, and he was telling me about this.

He is like, "Oh yeah, we're gonna buy this stock today and sell that stock and blah." I was like, "What about all these other things that you're doing?" Right? And so I was like,

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“Ah, this doesn't really fit what I want.” Now, fortunate for me, I had family who was like, yeah, take the summer. I spent it at the beach.

It was a good summer, but all that kinda stuff. Now, well, during the summer I was also looking around, saying like, “Where do I find an opportunity?” I reached out to my network in baseball and then found somebody in the Baltimore area that I sat down with, and he was, in my opinion, doing financial planning the right way, which isn't done by everybody, right?

Caleb, I think you know this, but at the time, he's like, “I can't afford you. He just started his own business.” And I looked at him and I said, “I don't care what you can pay me. Just give me a number and we'll make it happen.” Because the job I was looking for didn't exist at that time. Now, the good news is for people getting into the industry, younger professionals, let's call it the next generation, the job I eventually found, it does exist today, right? There are larger RIAs, there's career paths. All this stuff is sort of more formalized.

They existed back then. You just couldn't find it online for the most part. And that was October, I think, October 5th of 2005, is when I started in my career. And I'll share this with you by the way, if there's like one takeaway from anybody listening to this podcast today, is find a mentor, find a coach, find somebody who will help you become an excellent financial planner.

By the way, his name is Eric Brockman. He's outta Baltimore. I have tremendous loyalty and respect to this guy. He brought me in. He was running a tremendous firm. We built a firm together. He encouraged me to get my CFP professional and said, “This is what financial planning is really all about.” Now there's different things, fee structure, all that kinda jazz we can talk about later.

But the point of this is that I found somebody who truly believed in me. I supported him in running his business. He taught me everything about running the business. And I used to do it, trading via spreadsheets and then go plug 'em into the system. Like, old school stuff, right? But he really encouraged me to excel and to learn and get my CFP early. And I got my CFP designation in 2007, and then I became a partner in the firm at 27 or 28. And I was really a catalyst for what now has been a tremendous 20-year career.

Caleb Brown: Got it. Okay. So you got in kind of an associate or servicing advisor or something salaried-based, may not have been a lot of salary, but it was enough to kind of get you going and supporting and helping grow the business.

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Brent Weiss: Yeah, I mean, look, I started in the portfolio, I mean, Schwab portfolio centered. Do you remember that?

Caleb Brown: Yeah, I do remember that.

Brent Weiss: I like, I mean, I feel like we're talking about, I don't know, like, cotton looms or something like that, and like some old technology, like, "When did this exist?" Right, "Are you crazy?"

But, so I started actually in portfolio reconciliation. So I learned the downloads, the reconciliations, the systems, the trading. I mean, I was like running, I was scheduling for him. I was sitting in all of his meetings. But at the same time, I was going for, I think back then, like what series seven, series 66.

I don't, I no longer hold the licenses anymore. I was getting my insurance licenses. And then eventually, once I had that, then I started pursuing something a little more complicated, the CFP designation as well. So like, started early, I mean, didn't really worry about how soon can I become an advisor.

And by the way, I think this is rare too, because a lot of times when you join a firm, depending on the firm, I think I should say, Caleb, 'cause this is, back then it didn't exist. It's like, it was sort of like, "Here's your phone book. Go make some phone calls." When I started with Eric, he was like, "Look, I have a lot of clients already. I don't need you to go find them 'cause at the age of 22, you're probably not bringing in ideal clients for the firm yet," right? He said, "I just need you to help me run the business, service 'em really well, and I will teach you everything you need to know so you can eventually sort of take on some of my clients and start developing your own clients as well over time."

That to me was a turning point because I was able to focus on my education, learn the industry, learn the business, learn trading, learn all of it, and then gradually over time, step into an advisor role.

Caleb Brown: Just, I mean, keep walking through the timeline. I mean, how long, so it looks like you were there, you said four or five or six years later, you became a partner in the firm. That's amazing. Talk to us about that.

Brent Weiss: Yeah, so, so that ties into this whole idea of finding a mentor, finding somebody who will take you under their wing and really teach you how the business works. I mean, there was probably, as I was going along, getting my licenses, my designations, my CFP certification, and by the way, when you find somebody who really supports you, 'cause I took the accelerated CFP class, right?

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So there was six months of intense education just outta school. But I guess I was in the mode for it, right? Just a couple years later. And then once I, and as I was going through that, we caught it sort of living classroom. I would just sit in his meetings from like 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM and not say a word. I'd said to sit there and shut up at first, right?

Now, let's say the first six months I sat there, shut up, and then eventually we figured out, "Hey, can you talk about education savings accounts or 5, 2, 9 plans and not mess it up," kind of thing. So I got, but I got to see how he would prepare for meetings, how he would run meetings, how he would navigate conversations, the easy ones, the challenging ones, how he would wrap up for meetings.

And then over time, I'd say after probably about three years, four years in, then he said, "Okay, now it's your time to take over." Sort of going from the passenger seat to the driver's seat. And I'll tell you what, when I took over, first of all, I'm nervous as heck 'cause I'm like 26 years old going like, "What am I doing here sitting in front of some clients," at the time who were 55, 60. Like, what are they thinking of a 25-year-old somebody, a 26-year-old? That's a challenging conversation to have. I think the more awkward thing for me was having Eric sitting there watching me, just like every word—I'm sure, think it's like when you walk into like a psychologist, psychiatrist's office, like they're analyzing every word you say.

I'm like looking over to Eric. Like, "Did I say it? Did I mess that one up? Did I—" And he is like, "Just run the meeting." I'm like, "Okay, good." But I'll tell you what, that sort of like drinking from a fire hose or being held to the fire, right, was such a transformative experience for me.

It was hard, it was challenging, it was scary, and also probably one of the bigger inflection points in my career 'cause you gotta make some mistakes at first. Right? And by the way, I wasn't giving bad advice. It's just sometimes you're a little awkward in terms of how to introduce yourself, run the meeting, how to wrap up, all that kind of good stuff.

But I had him there as a coach and a guide to make sure I had it right. So the training reel, training reels on the bike for a while. And then we just eventually decided, "Hey, you're ready. Take the wheel." I'm gonna step out and run with it. And that was, geez, I'm trying to think. I'm guessing on timeframes here, but probably 26, 27.

'Cause I think when I was 28, I became a partner in the firm and we were a smaller firm too, by the way. So I don't wanna make it seem like you can be a, you're gonna be a partner that soon, firms are structured differently. There's compensation, buy-ins, and all that.

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Caleb Brown: Well, you were the first guy hired, right? Weren't you the first guy hired?

Brent Weiss: Well, at the firm? No, at the first advisor.

Caleb Brown: Okay.

Brent Weiss: I would say that was gonna go on a career path because they, I think when I joined, there were only four people at the firm. And then what happened is somebody stepped away, and then he was like, "Oh, hey, now I can afford to pay you. If you wanna talk salary, we can talk salary." I actually had to go live with my grandparents who lived down the street for a while. That's what the salary was. But look, it was an agreement 'cause he was starting the company. And then, so there were four, then there was three, and then I joined, make it four.

And then look, we had a heck of a lot of fun over the next decade, building an incredible firm, doing financial planning the right way, truly comprehensive, not just about accumulation or investing. Again, we could talk about fee models and all that and like ideal clientele. We had a really, really fun decade, building a business together, growing that to about 17 employees.

And it was just a really, really cool experience for me. Cool being a technical term and I think the foundation or launching pad for my career now that I transitioned over to Facet.

Caleb Brown: And talk to us about that. I mean, it sounds like you have the dream scenario and you're there 11 years, everything's going great. You're growing the business, and you're partner, and then you walked away from it.

Brent Weiss: Yeah. So, very short backstory. I grew up with my grandparents. And my parents were around too, by the way. So grew up, but I grew up in a house with my grandparents. My grandfather never got to retire until it was like early eighties.

There's many reasons behind that. But they didn't have a ton of money. And by the way, like we, I had a beautiful childhood, like I'm not complaining about that, but he had to keep working, 'cause in theory he's taking care of his own kids and his grandkids, 'cause I'm living with my grandparents, right? So he had to work until he's into his eighties to make sure that we were financially sound.

My grandmother did retire when she was around 65 and had \$50,000 to her name, and I was around 13 at the time there. And she did find a financial advisor when she retired. And I don't know how she got introduced to her, introduced that individual. But I

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remember that my grandmother was told to invest in an individual stock, and it was a stock outta South America.

It was literally a penny stock that was going for a company that was gonna cure cancer. Now, the backstory from my grandmother is that she had cancer a couple years back. So when I look at this now, I'm like, "Wow, that financial advisor was really just a dirtbag." Okay? So he made a fat commission, and my days after school were coming home, and this is back in the AOL dial-up days.

I could still hear the, like the internet screeching as you dial in kind of thing. But I remember every single day I'd watch my grandmother to log in, and all we watched was that stock go down and down. And she kept reading articles, "Oh, this company's getting closer. They're getting closer." And I always ask people today, like, "Have we found a cure for cancer?" The answer is no. Well, you can imagine what happened to her money. It was gone. So when I was working at my first firm and with Eric, like I think like most financial advisors, both managers, you try to find this ideal clientele, million dollars plus, 500,000 plus investible assets.

My family never had that. And so for a while I'm thinking, how do I serve families like mine? There are a heck of a lot more families out there that don't have a million dollars than that do. Okay. And by the way, this is not commentary around like who you should work with or you should serve, right? That is just a personal choice.

For me, I wanted to fight for families like my family, right? Notre Dame has this like ad series around on Saturdays and college football season, "What would you fight for?" And so my whole thing is like back in, in my mid to late twenties, I didn't know at the time, but I was kind of transitioning in this phase of like, what am I gonna fight for in my career?

And it was fighting for families like mine, fighting for greater access, for democratization of high-quality financial advice, but not just democratizing it, but you know, redefining what it should be and the role of money plays in our lives. And so like this was happening in my late twenties, early thirties.

And then oddly enough, I got connected randomly from a former coworker of mine to now my business partners here at Facet, other co-founders, Anders Jones, and Patrick McKenna, who sat down and they come outta San Francisco. They're big in the, I mean, they're independent investor investors themselves, healthcare, technology, et cetera, entrepreneurs.

And we kind of got together and had, well, let me pause there for a second, pretty follow-up questions, and I'll tell you about the time that Anders and I met for coffee that I

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thought was gonna be 30 minutes, and it turned into something pretty transformative in my career.

Caleb Brown: Yeah, I mean, I think we're tracking with you. I mean, I get the pivot in wanting to serve someone like you. I mean, that, I mean, just like me, I mean, I wanna fight for the new planners and the new entrants and the people that don't wanna start in the sales jobs, right? That's what keeps me going. And so I can relate to that. So just so you got connected with the guys that were, you guys were eventually gonna create Facets, so pick it up there.

Brent Weiss: Yeah, so, so I got an email. Actually, February of 2016, oddly enough, I still have the emails. It's kind of funny, go back and read the emails from back and forth from Anders. And he is like, "Hey, I'm trying to, I'm just trying to like talk to some financial advisors about an idea that I have. Would you be willing to spend 30 minutes with me?"

And I said, sure. 30 minutes is sort of like a professional thing. I'll go meet with them. We met at a place called T Evolve down in Baltimore City for, again, what I thought was gonna be 30 minutes. Five hours later, we were still sitting at the table. Yeah. Because we just had this alignment around—now, and Andrew's background is very interesting 'cause his mother helped actually set up the 401k business at Fidelity, right?

So he had some ties to the industry. He understood it. He had seemed like the lack of innovation and utilization of technology at that time in financial services. And so he had this thesis as a guy coming outta Stanford, where like their mindset is all about entrepreneurship, disruption, new businesses, et cetera, about how do you change or how do you apply a different business model?

Our go-to market strategy to the financial advice space, how do you make it more affordable? How do you lower the cost, make it more accessible, improve the quality, et cetera. And we just sat down, and I started sharing like, here's my family story. Here's where I really wanna work with, and things I've been thinking about.

I've been doing this for wealthier families. I want to bring this kind of thing to individuals. It's not a lower service for less money. It's a really high-quality service. You just have to find the ways to use technology to lower the cost. It was almost the exact same story. And so we started going back and forth like, holy cow, how did two guys on the complete opposite side of the country have a similar belief around what financial planning or financial advice should be?

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And so 30 minutes turned into the five hours. And that initial meeting then led to the founding of Facet, and that was eight and a half years ago, coming up on nine years when we started Facet.

Caleb Brown: And we might have some people, some listeners, that aren't familiar with it. So just talk to us about the service model and how it's different.

Brent Weiss: Yeah. So I always like to start this with not just what do we do, but like what do we believe, right? And my belief, our belief at Facet is that our financial health, our financial wellness is just as essential as our mental, physical, social career, professional health to living well, period. Right? So when you look at it that way, and we started to say, but far too many people lack access to high-quality financial advice, right?

Really comprehensive advice and really the idea of re-imagining the role of money in life. It's not just about how much you have, it's what you do with it that matters. It's how you align money to what matters most to you, your values, the things you want to achieve, safety, security for your family, financial independence. And we just started saying, but the service model, like what's the quality of the advice? Well, it's disparate and still today, right? Some people provide asset management, some provide comprehensive planning. And we said, "Well, what should it really be and how do we make that better?"

What's the quality of the advice? As Michael Kitces says, right? One of your partners and co-founders says. It's the people giving the advice. What's the quality of 'em? are they CFP professionals? Do they just have a series 7? Are they really qualified to give you the advice? What about compensation models?

Now, I will be very honest here, Caleb. I am not a big fan of the percentage of assets model. By the way, I'm a reformed charging and commission-charging financial advisor. Okay. Full disclosure to everybody listening to this podcast.

Caleb Brown: You've tried it all, hadn't you?

Brent Weiss: Yeah, I've been there. I had to test everything, like look, at Facet, we're all about testing and learning as a consumer tech company that's providing financial advice.

Hopefully democratizing access and redefining it, but I'm not a big fan of that model. I think there are conflicts of interest. I think there's a misalignment of who actually

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benefits as your assets and your wealth grows. Just because you charge 1% doesn't mean you're providing the right advice.

And I'll stay away from that today, Caleb. 'cause that's not the point of our conversation here, right. But we just sat down and said, "Okay, what do we believe this business needs to be to better serve all people, to democratize access to high quality financial advice? How do we use technology?" Back then, it wasn't AI, now it's AI machine learning—to lower the cost. What's a better service model? Membership subscription, flat fee that better aligns that members need or want. With how we charge and deliver services, right? What is truly comprehensive financial planning? What should it be, and how do we deliver those services? I think the big idea, one of the big ideas we had in 2016, too, was like, "Let's go completely virtual."

So before COVID, before everybody started saying Zoom, before Zoom was a household name, we said, "Hey, you know what?" We can sort of see where advice is going. Gone are the days where you have to take a half-day off of work, drive to the office, meet with your financial advisor. We said it, "We're gonna go to a virtual."

I guess looking back, we were true visionaries, not just in Facet and creating a new business model within financial services, but also in terms of seeing the future in terms of virtual advice. So we started out using technology to lower the cost, create efficiency for financial advisors, right?

Delivering higher quality service to our members at a lower price point. Virtual delivery of those services, right? Still providing investment management. We manage money. We manage \$4 billion dollars for our members today. We don't charge anything once you're a member. We're not charging 1% of that money. It's a flat fee.

It's a membership model. And so all of these things start to come together. And I think the funny part of this, Caleb, is if you go out and ask people like, "Hey, what should financial advice be? What if we just looked at everything in your life that money touches? What if you could work with a true expert in a CFP professional? What if you could have access to it?" I'm not gonna say anytime, 'cause we're not doing video calls at 2:00 AM, right? "You can hop on a virtual call. What if you could use a technology to access your account, see your plan better, sort of build a better relationship with your money? And what if it was actually tailored to you in flat fee?"

So it was affordable, accessible, better advice, more holistic, comprehensive, and have to do more with your money, what would you think? People are like, "That's a brilliant idea." I go, "Well, that's Facet in a nutshell," right?

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Caleb Brown: Let's just walk through a sample client. So you got 40-year-old, couple million bucks. They sign up. Like what are they getting? What do they pay?

Brent Weiss: Well, here's the thing. So first of all, we call 'em members 'cause we have a membership for our flat fee. Okay? Our typical member is not 40 with a couple million dollars. I mean, the cool thing is when you think about, 'cause one of the challenges in the industry right now is advisors, wealth managers are trying to figure out how do we service the, like how do we serve younger generations, right? Well, our average members are around 40 to 45. But they're not sitting there with a couple million dollars. Now, by the way, we have those members because they found out about our flat fee model, and they're like, "Well, if I have \$2 million dollars and I pay 1% is 20 grand. Well, if I go to Facet," you know, our highest tier service model right now is \$6,000.

They go, "What? 20 versus six. I'm still getting a CFP professionals, still getting comprehensive services, et cetera." But our typical member is probably in their thirties or forties. They're making good money. They're making six figures. Probably have, they have investible assets, right? But a lot of it's sitting in a 401k or a 403B.

They might have a little bit in a Roth or an IRA. So the traditional wealth management model of 1% breaks down for them. It's like, "Well, I don't want much to manage today, Caleb. What do I do?" It's like, "Well, that's why we have a membership model." Okay. So in terms of what we provide, I mean, golly, like what do you learn as a CFP if, like, if you can name, we learned it as a CFP, we provide that to our members.

I mean, it's everything from looking at how they make their money, to cashflow, to tax planning, to workplace benefits, to savings, investing, insurance, estate planning, right? Like all of these things are items that we deliver and provide to our members. We just built very specific membership tiers based upon where people are in life.

If you're 32 just married with a kid, you need something very different than if you're 60 with maybe a million dollars getting ready for retirement. And so we just built this and said, "What do people need?" There's different levels of complexity or service models, and let's just make sure that we can provide really high-quality advice at appropriate price.

Caleb Brown: Got it. I'm with you. Maybe just talk about, 'cause I was looking at you're head of, you mentioned this earlier, like financial wellness, you're head of financial wellness. So as your career has progressed and you've co-founded this company and you're doing all these other things. I mean, are you still working with clients, or have you just gone, "I'm the executive. I'm leadership. I'm over here." And if so, I mean, do you miss the clients in the trenches?

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Brent Weiss: Well, so here's what I can share with you, Caleb and everybody that's probably that's gonna listen to this podcast is I got into this business because I love working with people, period.

And I hate even saying I love helping people, 'cause people don't need help. Right? What they want is support, they want guidance. They want a teammate. They want an expert on, like, on their team to help them make the better decisions with their money and improve the quality of their lives. I love that and will never get away from that.

So I don't have as many members as a traditional, as a typical CFP here at Facet, because I'm running the business, I'm doing a bunch of other things in terms of sales and marketing, and you name it. Okay. But yes, I do still have a handful of member relationships that I keep, and it is one of the highlights of my day because I got into this business to help people, support people, guide them, coach them, and I still do that to this day amongst many other hats that we wear. But that's the nature of a startup as well.

Caleb Brown: Got it. Love it. Absolutely. Well, Brent, well, I mean, great story. I mean, lot of cool stuff you've got going on. Any final tips or comments you'd like to leave the audience with?

Brent Weiss: Absolutely. I'm glad you asked that question. So we have a—so a little story here is we started a scholarship here at Facet for African American Black sort of CFP—I forget the right word, the CFP board wants me to use candidates. There we go. Okay. Who want financial assistance to pay for the CFP certificate. Because they could be like six or seven grand, right.

Not just, don't have that line around for a lot of people. We just saw our latest class, the seven scholarship winners, and like you wanna talk about moments and give you chills like every single year when you see this like golly, we're improving the profession. We're helping people get into this, help more people expand, access, et cetera. One of the things that I said to them is, because they were always asking for career advice, I just said, "Look, honestly, as you're getting started work to learn, not just to earn."

Because if I go back to when I was 22, 23, and Eric took a flyer on me and said, "Can I trust this guy to help me build a good business?" He was committed and we had a commitment to each other. I said, "Eric, I will help you build the business you want, if you will help me become the planner that I want to be."

Being able to have a coach, a mentor, whether it's in your own business, the one you go to work for, or outside, like in, go to the financial planning association meetings. Find somebody who's willing to coach or mentor you. Hands down my number one piece of

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advice for people, if you want to accelerate your career and master your craft early, right?

Because by the way, if you go start your own business one day, it can be a lonely profession. But if you find a community, you find a mentor, you really will take your career to the next level very, very quickly. The second thing I would share here is too, don't overthink it when you're younger, right? If you find a company, don't try to find the perfect fit.

You're young. Explore, learn, fail, test, do whatever. Pay the bills, number one, right? But like, go out there, go to the conferences, call Caleb for crying out loud. Follow Michael Kitces, who is still like, I take Michael Kitces classes to this day and I've been doing it for 20 years, 'cause the guy's brilliant.

Those are probably the two things that I would suggest, and if there's a third thing here, and not to be too boo booo or like corny here, but really understand who you want to serve and who you want to help. I don't know why I heard this. It might even be a Michael Kitces thing or XY planning thing, but the riches are in the niches, right?

Find a group of people or a community where you can provide unparalleled value, differentiated value to that group or community, and that will accelerate your career. Far too many advisors go, "I'm gonna work with everybody. I don't care where you are, what you need." If you can find a group of people that you're passionate about helping and supporting, I think you put those three things together. It may not happen overnight, but I think you'll end up having a very, very successful and fruitful career within five or 10 years, and you're gonna be on the rocket ship to having a wonderful life while also helping some great people out there.

Caleb Brown: Brent, thanks so much for coming on the show.

Brent Weiss: Caleb, my pleasure. And thanks for having me.

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