



PRODUCTIVITYIST

CAUSE AND CONNECTION

with James Eder



Mike: I'd like to welcome James Eder to the Productivityist Podcast. Thanks for joining me, James.

James: You, too. Thanks for having me.

Mike: Alright. So, I'm going to start off with a quote from you. This is something I found on the place where all good quotes are found--on Facebook. Hi, everyone. I've launched Causr and helped people connect with each other around the world based on location. Imagine if you travel through a city and you're able to see which other ambassadors are around you and connect with them easily. Now you can. First off, why is this kind of connection important to you? Then I want to talk a little bit about what Causr is.

James: Absolutely. I think deep down we're all looking for connection. And I think it's like our social, just the DNA that we've been born with. We're social beings. If we can give people context and help people understand who is nearby, that's kind of the essence of why a community like this is really, really, important with connection.



- Mike:** So, what does-- I don't want to spend a lot of time on Causr, but people will be able to download it and check it out, but what does Causr do that helps impact that and allows people to leverage these connections or at least leverage the internet and leverage the technology to connect better and maybe even more in a more impactful way?
- James:** Yes, definitely. I think the key thing that I can share is the brief story that gives it a bit of context.
- Mike:** Sure.
- James:** I was sitting on London Underground, and a guy sat down next to me. I said, "Are you looking for a job?" He said, "Yes." A short version of a longer story is he ended up coming to work for my first startup. The question I asked as he was listening was, "What stops often a lot of those conversations happening?" And there are three core pillars, really. The first one is permission. Often, we don't feel like we have permission to just randomly start talking. The second is confidence and the third one which is I think is the most powerful is context. That was one of the first stories that really started the impetus behind Causr. What the app does, you download it-- I'm currently on iOS only, but we're getting on



James: Android soon. You log in, and then you can see who's nearby based on context. You can join different groups. That can be everything from marathon running, to your company, to alumni networks. So, the idea there is if you know someone from one of those networks, then that gives you the context to start a conversation. It's very much a platform to enable more face to face connection versus being the digital-- another digital platform I don't really think we need today.

Mike: Excellent. So, let's talk a little bit about why connection matters to you and the importance of it? When it comes to how technology should enable face to face connection, why do you think...I'll give you an example. Earlier this year, I went to my 25th-year high school reunion. So, there, I've just dated myself. But with Facebook now in play, there were a good number of people there, but there are probably some people that could have gone but just decided-- well, I'm already keeping up with what Mike or Barb or Brian or whoever is doing because I see them on Facebook all the time. So, I think that there's that value of getting face to face. That would be an example of how technology allowed us to all come together because before, you'd have to mail a letter and all that stuff. How technology can is one thing but how



Mike: technology should enable face to face connection, that's something I'd like you to unpack a little bit.

James: Sure. I think like years ago, whether it be the live to Skype or voice technology and video conferencing, people thought like people weren't going to travel anymore. You're never going to get on a plane and go and see, but there's the face to face connection that really you can sense and you can get a feeling and the response of how people are in real life. There's again a lot being said for remote working, but actually, it's when you get people in the room together. There's an energy in live events, and that's why people still attend conferences. You could probably access all the information online about the content delivered at conferences. But there's variation that I'm sure from a learning perspective, but it's actually that somatic experience by being there while you're sharing with other people that turns it then into a much powerful experience and the still same holds true, which is why, as you said, you're a union could be then so impactful despite some people feeling like they can get what they want or they could - they're updated with everyone, but it's the nuances and it's the context really that kind of unlocks and takes relationships to a deeper level.



James: What's also challenging today is people feel like they are experiencing connection and that they get a context with people's lives. But it also has filter which we often hear about and this is one of the challenges I think in social media today is kind of the depth of actually what you're getting.

Mike: I'm going to ask something that might seem a bit off kilter, but I'm going ask you anyways. Do you say, "Happy Birthday," to all the people on Facebook when their birthday show up? If so, how do you do it? If not, what do you do instead?

James: That's really interesting. You know what? I've heard an interesting view actually of birthdays on Facebook. One is actually to use it as a really useful filter to remove people who-- you don't really care about their birthday, then should they really be a friend of yours? So, to answer the question, I do selectively have and I've done it the last two days about their message. But at the same time, I do use it as a filter to remove people that I think, "Does this really matter to me and is this an important friendship to continue if I don't even care that it's their birthday?"



Mike: So, that's how you use it? All right. I want to talk a little bit more about setting aside time to make these connections because I mean, obviously, we're on the Productivityist Podcast. We want to talk about the time component. So, how do you craft time to not just establish new connections but foster existing ones?

James: Yes, I think that's a really great question. I think in terms of fostering new connections, it was one of the reasons that kind of Causr came about because I ended up traveling a huge amount for work into Madrid, in Athens, the US a number of times, and often finding myself I guess in that downtime. I think there's a statistic about traveling that somewhere between 30% to 60% of your time traveling is actually used for work and the rest of it is defunct and kind of almost a waste of time.

So, it's actually turning I guess that downtime, including if you're flying somewhere waiting instead of perhaps going and seeing your general social media to unlock if there are people nearby, they would be useful to connect with, especially in airports is a great example. Being able to unlock that time is really, really key. Using technology to help in



James: those situations. In terms of maintaining, I actually kind of-- I do a monthly newsletter that I send to all my contacts. That always creates-- it's amazing these conversations come back as a result of that message, just providing people an update. I had a bit of a gap between my first business and then launching Causr. I stopped sending that and I had emails from people saying, "Are you still sending the email because I've not received it in a while and if not, please make sure I'm on the list." That was a bit of a prompt to then say, "Well, look, I should start doing it again."

Mike: You mentioned to me when we were preparing for this, the idea of net giving versus networking. I love it. I mean I love the concept. Can you kind of dive into that a little bit more so that my audience's sense of care, what do you mean by that?

James: Definitely. I think a lot of people kind of word networking will say makes people I guess afraid or a bit abrasive or you can hear, "Okay, what can I do to get something from this event?" or "If attend or I don't want it to be a waste of time if I don't get something." Actually, by framing it and thinking, "How could we help other people?" You're probably doing far more



James: than other people during the event. Whether that be if you're at an event and you meet two different people that actually would make that really useful connection with each other, that's again, like an extremely powerful and playing almost as well, kind of a host of the event or kind of adding value. So, the idea behind that giving, instead of asking what can I get? When you focus on how you can help others, the focus shifts. Just do whatever you can to add value. Others will remember you far more than someone else in the room than someone who is trying to sell you something or position themselves in a certain way or trying to get something back. It's amazing how that kind attitude can result in whole list of things. I guess actually you come back from a lean startup with them and speaking with one of their events on Friday and the organizers then, just this evening, introduced me already to somebody else. It's amazing when you look back, I guess. Steve Jobs said, "You don't realize how the dot's joined, but it's only when you look back, you can see there's a perfect, I guess, line of how they all connect." I think that's the same way by putting yourself out and by helping and adding value and you can make a difference to people. It does come back, but in the moment when you're doing it, you might not know exactly how.



Mike: Social is used more when it comes to connection. This is something I'd like to dive into a little bit, too, because I was thinking about this as we were preparing for this and I recorded-- I'm doing more Facebook Lives. I'm doing more webinars. There is this video component-- well, actually when we started, you had your video on and I did, too, just so I could say, "Hey, we've been chatting back and forth via email, it'd be good to see our faces." Like actually chatting as opposed to just images of ourselves that we've seen each other in social profiles. So, I actually recorded-- when it comes to the Facebook Lives, I have a specific one I do, but that was the impromptu ones. I'm finding that it took me a while to be okay with me walking or being outside with my phone elevated. I will not use a selfie stick. [laughs] Elevated so that you could get a good shot of me while I do a quick Facebook Live for however long. I have seen that happen in airports, too. The reason this jogs my memory is that guys like Dave Asprey and I think there's a few others that have done them in airports before, it's like their flight's delayed or they've got nothing else to do, they're connecting. Where do you kind of draw the line between spending that time connecting with say your thousand true fans or those people that are paying attention to your stuff versus being in a public place where



Mike: maybe that technology can be disruptive to others that might be in the air? Not too long ago where I was sitting, waiting for a flight home and these guys started to play this video of a UFC fight. I love UFC, but louder than sin, like you could-- I'm like, "Okay, guys. Come on, it's like 11:00 at night. Can we--?" Where's that line? Should you be willing to enforce it on yourself, like put those boundaries of yourself as well as ask others to kind of like respect those, as well? I'd love to hear some thoughts on that.

James: Yes, definitely. I think there's the notion of like digital sabbath as well and the importance of like disconnecting and turning off and being respectful. It's very interesting as well there's kind of talk online a lot about people kind of referencing, "Well, if you've got a quiet carriage, why do you have like a networking carriage where people can go on a specific carriage and just be open to connect a thing and saying hello and those opportunities."

I think it is about balancing just the right time and respecting that and I think as well in the same way like one of the things kind of behind Causr goes around this, using technology, which I mentioned, enabling connection but by being on the



James: platform, you're saying you're open to that connection, whereas opposed to if you were in the departure around you, you went up to everyone and you started talking. Again, some people will be open there, another people wouldn't be, but you just don't know who.

Mike: Right.

James: So, it's all around, I guess that framing and that construct of actually how can you use it in a sensitive way. That's I guess the baseline which I mentioned earlier; the permission, confidence, and context. Actually, by being on the platform, you're giving people permission and that's in the same way--

Mike: To be fair, we live in a society that's a lot more tolerant to this, too.

James: I think there's sort of coffee shop in New York and I'm sure in other places now as well where you can go in and then they lock your phone away in a fake book or whatever it is on your table so you can't touch it while you're in. People are like proactively seeking out these places which is really, really key and I think it's important to be able to turn off.



Mike: So, as we wrap up, I want to talk a little bit about Causr. I mean you've told me why you put it together. What is the goal? Not just the short term, but what are your plans for this platform because I think that there's a lot there that can be-- there's a lot you can do with it.

James: Sure, definitely. So, I think in terms of our vision, the aim is to make meaningful connections where people nearby all around the world every day, and you think about, I guess, LinkedIn as around collecting your professional network and Facebook is connecting your friends. There are more people within the square-mile that you're sitting right now that you don't know than you know, that you could potentially unlock and help. I think there's a huge amount of like I guess fear and uncertainty in the world today. I guess these barriers that people put up and I think historically, it was much clearer for people which tribes people were in. So, you know almost-- you've got all the sports team and you'll notice this when you're leaving a match or a game or baseball, whatever it is, you've got the, I guess, the uniforms that people identify with. That's a great example. The creation of connections between like-minded people can really, really make a difference. I love the films like the Butterfly Effect and various things that like--



James: if you think about just a small way, if we can help make those connections that makes, again, the emphasis is that meaningful connection that can make a difference.

Mike: Yes, it's subjective. Yes, it's completely-- also I think meaningful is relative to-- actually, let's discuss this. Is it relative to the relationship or is it relative to the person behind the relationship?

So, for example, there's certain things that I would be willing to connect with someone about based on our current relationship, but they might not-- you know what I mean? I'm not saying there's rules, but there's certain things you'd be willing to share with one person they wouldn't be willing to share with another. I think that facilitation is important as well.

James: Definitely and I think there are different levels to it. I mean what's interesting though I think-- and this comes up in the world I guess of work-life balance and in terms of how people structure themselves. I think historically, those are lines are much, much clearer. At different times, I want to connect with different types of people and that will, again, depending



James: on that environment, like enable and want me to share in different context, but I think the lines very much blurring between I guess that hardline.

I love the question when-- if I'm not speaking at events and unlocking the question like, "What are people--" "What are you passionate about?" "What do you really care about?" When you get to the heart of that, like very quickly, you unlock something and excitement and energy. It's very different than going-- for some people, these are line, but where do you work or what do you do, etcetera, and I think it's-- yes, it's really, really important to be aware of that.

Mike: Alright. As we wrap up, I want to ask you one final question that's going to give somebody an action item as they leave here. So, for anyone listening, what's one thing that somebody can do? it could be simple, it could be complex or whatever, that someone can do today to create a meaningful connection or begin the process of creating a meaningful connection with someone or maybe a group of people?

James: Yes, definitely. So, of course there's downloading the Causr app. And next time you're traveling or riding on a train or



James: something, just break the ice and chat with the person next to you. You'll be amazed to how many people will just respond. Even if you're still unsure to say that, just say, "Hey, I was listening to a podcast and one of the challenges was to just say hello to you. Do you mind if I just say hi?" See what they say. I promise, it will result in stories, conversations, and opportunities that you didn't even know existed.

Mike: Well, James, we've had a few stories today. We've created a connection, and I hope that you will be able to continue that connection with my audience and with me. So, share with us now where people could go to learn more about you, and, of course, get the app.

James: You can go to [Causr.co](https://causr.co) which is [CAUSR.CO](https://causr.co), and you can find me on Twitter, so JamesEder, J-A-M-E-S-E-D-E-R, and also feel free to find me on LinkedIn and reach out. I have a podcast and I look forward to connecting with you.

Mike: James, thanks again for joining me today.

James: Thanks so much.



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