***Neal Pancholi on Shawn Carter (aka Jay-Z)***

*Shawn Carter, also known as Jay-Z, is a world famous and successful rapper, songwriter, entrepreneur, and CEO. Born in 1969 (currently 43 years old), Jay-Z has navigated a career that began in the housing projects of Marcy in Brooklyn, and currently sits him a top of the music industry. With a net fortune of approximately $500 million, Jay-Z is CEO of Rock-a-Fella records, owns Rocawear Clothing, is the former CEO of Def Jam, has sold over 50 million albums world wide, and is generally considered the greatest rapper of all-time. Also, he is a co-owner of a nightclub and the Brooklyn Nets basketball team. While Jay-Z has risen to the top professionally, it was evolution of his self, community, and family, which has made him so successful.*

*Jay-Z, the youngest of four children, had a very rough family and community life from the start. Born into housing projects, Jay-Z was constantly surrounded by drugs and prostitution. At age 11, his father left the family. Soon thereafter, Jay-Z began selling drugs for money. With his mom working multiple jobs to keep the family afloat, Jay-Z took it upon himself to be an entrepreneur, albeit for illegal items. He regularly sold marijuana, crack cocaine, and bootleg CD’s. While he is known to have a very close relationship with his family today, Jay-Z was not a trusting young man. After his father left home, the lack of a male role model had a profound effect on him. This culminated in Jay-Z shooting his brother, suspecting him of stealing a gold necklace from his room.*

*Soon thereafter, Jay-Z was sentenced to probation. During this time, he spent some time reflecting on his self. He focused on his dream of wanting to be a rapper. His community and family did not change, but he combined the two areas with his work. Jay-Z, at an early age and throughout his career, has always rapped about what he has known: his community and his family. He candidly tells stories about his upbringing and the actions he took to make ends meet. Common themes include drug use, scandalous behavior, and murder. By combining his family and community with his work, he was able to find a passion in telling stories about his life through music.*

*In 1989, Jay-Z was finally discovered, and publicly brought in front of the world. He made his first album soon after. No record companies were willing to sign him, so with his two friends, he sold his CDs out of a trunk and eventually started Roc-a-fella records.*

*While he did combine separate areas of his life, there were regular set backs in his growth and development. Although he had combined his community and family into his profession via rapping about his upbringing and life experiences, not all of his experiments were successful. A few years after creating Roc-a-fella with his two friends, there were clashes. While Jay-Z wanted to change his image to be more mainstream, his friends preferred his gangsta-rap image. They saw his development away from this as a weakness in the business, while Jay-Z saw it as an opportunity to appeal to a larger fan base. Eventually, Jay-Z found it necessary to separate aspects of his life: his community and his work. He still used his community experiences to tell his stories, but he decided to remove his community members from his professional life. The conflict between the two was creating chaos in his world, and by separating the areas, he was able to find better peace and joy in his work and his relationships.*

*In 2003, Jay-Z again mixed his family and work. This time, he met his future wife-to-be, Beyoncé Knowles, while recording “03 Bonnie & Clyde” with her. The couple dated and went on to marry. During their time together, they have had a very mixed approach to combing their work and family lives. In one case, Jay-Z and Beyoncé collaborate on various songs and albums, which enhances their careers as it covers a larger fan base. On the other hand, the couple never speaks about their home life in public. Few very people have any knowledge about their relationship, and that is how the couple prefers it. They like to be seen as two separate individuals who are musicians and performers, with a marriage behind the scenes.*

*After spending a year as CEO of Def Jam, Jay-Z decided to retire in 2007. During his tenure as CEO, his days were packed from 5AM until 11PM. He never saw his family and reportedly was not enjoying his life. He made the realization that it was not worth it for him, and that he would rather re-focus on what made him happy: a better balance of his community and friends, family, and his career in music production.*

*Recently, in 2012, Jay-Z became a father. Again in this instance, he strongly separates the family domain from the work domain of his life, to ensure privacy and some sort of normalcy for this child. However, he also raps about his daughter and the potential struggles she will face due to her father’s music and lewd culture it has created. He talks about her to the public, but in a one-way conversation. He does not allow his word to complicate his family, only allowing the world to see what he wants them to.*

*Jay-Z’s evolution from a drug dealer, to hip-hop mogul, to husband, and now father has a very interesting blend of Total Leadership. In his self domain, he has always remained private about his life, but shares his thoughts, views, and experiences with the world via his music. He has retired and un-retired two times, which implies that he is experimenting and understanding the best balance for his domains. He combines his family, community, and work domains when he raps about his life and shares that, which allows him to follow his passion of music. At the same time, he experiments by intensely separating other aspects of his work and family by not allowing the public to gain a view into his normal life.*

*Jay-Z’s success in the work domain is greatly shaped about how he relates all four of his domains to one another. He understands when to integrate them for success and happiness, and when to separate them. He is constantly reflecting on his past and his growth, allowing him to understand what he should do next to be happy. At times, he has experimented and failed, but he has learned from those experiences to find the right balance in all four domains. Whatever Jay-Z does, from starting a clothing line, releasing a new album, or purchasing a minority share in the Brooklyn Nets, his guiding principal is to ensure that the action is related to and improves all four of his domains.*

*Jay-Z teaches us that it is important to experiment to understand what makes us happy. Each individual’s balances in the four domains are different, and they will change over time. It is important to be in-tune with one’s domains and make change accordingly.*

*Sources:*

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