

Second Act Stories ([www.secondactstories.org](http://www.secondactstories.org))

Episode 29:  
Tennis Anyone? Leaving Boeing To Become Tennis Coach

<b>Who</b>	<b>Audio Segment</b>
Joe Tedino	<p>Well, I had a great 30-year career in public relations, and in corporate communications. Had a really great time, worked with some incredible people. I felt that my career had gone about as far as it could, and it was time to try something new, something that I was passionate about.</p> <p>I had been thinking for a while about tennis, I always wanted to figure out a way to try to do something career-wise that involved tennis. I didn't exactly know what that was.</p>
	<p>INTRO MUSIC; FADE TO BACK DROP FOR PODCAST OVERVIEW</p>
Andy Levine	<p>Welcome to Second Act Stories, a podcast that looks at people who have made major career changes and are pursuing more rewarding lives in a second act. I'm your host, Andy Levine.</p> <p>In this episode, I traveled to Chicago and sat down with Joe Tedino. Joe who is now 63 had a long career as a journalist and then a public relations executive at The Boeing Company.</p> <p>Writing and pr was Joe's job. But tennis was his passion. So when he finally opted to retire, he decided it was time to do what he loved most.</p> <p>Here's our interview with Joe Tedino...</p>
Andy	<p>Let's go back to the start where did you grow up, where did you go to school, that kind of thing.</p>
Joe	<p>-So I am originally from New Jersey, I grew up in Long Branch, New Jersey which is one of the shore towns in Central Jersey. And I went to community college for a little while, and then from there, I joined the Air Force. And the Air Force sent me to Texas, and I was in San Antonio, and then wind up in Austin. And while I was in Austin, I decided I was gonna stay and go to college. I'd always been interested in writing and journalism, and they had a pretty good journalism school there.</p> <p>And so I went and enrolled into journalism school at the University of Texas and got my degree there.</p>
Andy	<p>Joe worked as a journalist in Connecticut, Missouri and New York.</p>

Joe	<p>Well, I had a great time as a working journalist, you know, I wrote some incredible stories, followed some incredible stories.</p> <p>But I guess I felt like I probably had gone about as far as I could with journalism, and you know, as you know people in the corporate world make a little bit more money than you do as a journalist. And so went and got my advanced degree from Fordham. And that paved the way to get into corporate communications.</p>
Andy	I wanna get to the corporate communications work in a moment, but I wanna talk about tennis. How long you've been playing, when did you start, and tell me about that.
Joe	<p>It has been a love affair for many decades. I've played tennis since I was a kid, as a recreational player, and I've always felt that tennis was a really great sport for exercise, and also it has social aspects to it. Is a certain civility and decorum that you have that makes it a really great sport, and a great social sport. You don't have to be a top athlete to play tennis, and I hope to be able to continue playing tennis into my 70s and 80s.</p> <p>I took my tennis gear with me on the road over the years when I traveled for business, and I'd always try to squeeze in a game here and there with business colleagues and others.</p>
Andy	So he left the journalism world for more lucrative work in public relations. He worked for ten years at the Laurel Corporation (which was eventually purchased by Lockheed) and then for 15 years at The Boeing Company.
Andy	So take me to Boeing, and take me to that position and what you were doing with Boeing?
Joe	<p>Well, I had a couple of different jobs with Boeing over the 15 years that I worked there.</p> <p>I did a lot of work with the media, with the press, a lot of press conferences, press events, work trade shows. Managed several people both on the East Coast and also the West Coast. Then about 2010, 2011, the division that I was working for was folded into another part of the company, and there was an opportunity for me to come to Chicago in 2012, to work on the internal side of communications. So I was a manager of a team of people who were communicating to employees worldwide about pensions, benefits, pay etc.</p>
Andy	So remind me again how old are you now?
Joe	I just turned 63.
Andy	Just turned 63, by the way, you look in awesome shape, I'm sure tennis has something to do with that.
Joe	Thank you very much.

Andy	So at some point, it sounds like the... I don't wanna say the job at Boeing, but the corporate world was not as fulfilling as it could be for you. What caused you to think about a change and to go in a different direction here?
Joe	Well, I had a great 30-year career in public relations, and in corporate communications. As I said, I traveled around the world from my job over the years supporting government and commercial customers, space, national security programs, transportation programs, technology programs. Had a really great time, worked with some incredible people. I felt that my career had gone about as far as it could, and it was time to try something new, something that I was passionate about.
Andy	Was there any... sometimes there's a moment or event that triggers something like that. Was there any event the trigger that for you or?
Joe	I wouldn't say there was an event necessarily. I mean the company was making lots of changes over the course of the few years that I was doing that job in benefits communications, and I just felt like the time was right.
Andy	And how did the idea of tennis come up to you?
Joe	I had been thinking for a while about tennis, I always wanted to figure out a way to try to do something career-wise that involved tennis. I didn't exactly know what that was.
Andy	Joe sat down with Danny McDermott, the sports director and head tennis professional at the Lakeshore Sport and Fitness Club where Joe was a member.
Danny McDermott	He approached me and he said Danny I'm retiring this is my dream, this is my passion, this is what I want to do. And I gave him the roadmap, I sat down because this is what I do.
Andy	One key element of that road map was to become a certified tennis professional.
Joe	He suggested the Professional Tennis Registry. And so I looked into that and found out that they have a pretty straightforward process of how to become certified as a tennis instructor. So from that, at the beginning of 2017, I registered for their course, and they sent me a thick binder full of information that I had to absorb. They had a schedule of online videos that I needed to view and then get tested in. And they also had a schedule of on-court sessions and evaluations that I could choose from to do my on-court part of the certification. And they happened to have one in the spring of that year in Wheaton, which is a pretty close by suburb to Chicago. It took the better part of eight months.

Andy	So as you thought about this change, talk about the financial considerations, because I'm gonna guess you're making less as a tennis coach than you are as a corporate executive?
Joe	Yes, it pays quite a bit less than corporate management that's for sure. I'm lucky in that our adult son is out of the house and living on his own, and all of the college bills are paid off. My wife and I have been able to save enough so that I really don't have to earn a lot of money coaching tennis. And we have health insurance through her job.
Andy	So Joe earned certification from the Professional Tennis Registry. I asked him about next move.
Joe	<p>My approach is pretty much what I think most people do, hopefully, when they're looking for a job. And that is to start talking to people. So I knew a few tennis pros from my club, I also belong to another outdoor tennis club here in Chicago that's only open in the summer months, and I knew a couple of pros from that organization. So I just started talking to people about okay, where are the opportunities, you're not gonna find a lot of tennis coaching jobs on Indeed or on LinkedIn, so it's really word of mouth. And my goal was to try to get a part-time job with one of the tennis clubs private or public in Chicago, and really start to gain more experience with being a tennis instructor.</p> <p>Through those conversations, I learned that one avenue that I could pursue would be coaching high school tennis, which I really hadn't thought about.</p>
Andy	Joe interviewed with three different high schools. And he ultimately took a job as the assistant tennis coach at St. Ignatius College Prep.
Joe	<p>St. Ignatius is a Catholic school, downtown Chicago. They have about 1,400 students. And it's been a staple of Chicago life for 125 years, so there's a lot of history there. Our teams practice two hours a day, five days a week.</p> <p>And so in terms of what we do a typical practice session, we'll start out with stretching, dynamic stretching you know, upper body lower body, little bit of jogging, and then we'll go into some drills.</p> <p>We'll have them play singles and doubles games together, where we'll give them tactical and technical instruction while they do that. And then on Fridays, it's a lot of fun because the coaches get to play in the games, and so will be out on the court you know, with the kids playing pick up games, essentially.</p>
Andy	So I want you to contrast to working at Boeing, working as a tennis coach. What are the similarities and what are the complete differences?

Joe	<p>So I guess the biggest difference, Andy, is that as you pointed out coaching is a part-time job, and obviously corporate communications it's full time plus. Because particularly with a big company like Boeing you know, you're always on, and you can't predict what's gonna happen one day to the next. But there I think are a lot of similarities, like any job, coaching requires commitment, it requires a good attitude. And that's particularly important with these young people because they respond to facial expression and your attitude in general. It requires professionalism, teamwork, and good listening skills.</p>
Andy	<p>What's been the most rewarding part of the work in terms of your new life as a high school tennis coach?</p>
Joe	<p>Well I have to say that you know, working with these young people on court is really special. As I think I mentioned earlier you know they listen, they want to improve, they're asking for guidance, and they're asking for you to help them become a better tennis player, that's what it's all about. We had one player that stands out for me, was an 11th grader on our number two varsity doubles team who was having trouble at the net. And she was a bit tentative with her volleys, and during match play, she hit the balls into the net, or she hit them way out wide.</p> <p>And so I worked with her to focus on you know, proper stance, positioning, reducing her backswing, you know, a few other pointers. And she became one of the top volleyers on our team. And toward the end of the season, her mother told me how much the girl really appreciated the extra help that she had gotten and that made me feel really good.</p>
Andy	<p>I wanna switch gears on you here. Talk about advice you might give to someone who is thinking of going down a similar path to what you have just been down in terms of a change in career, doing something completely.</p>
Joe	<p>Well, the great thing about a second act is that you might not be bound by achievement or financial pursuits. You might have done as much as you've wanted to do in your other job, your main job or your career. And you know, your financial situation may provide you the opportunity to open up to pursue, you know, something that you're passionate about or something that doesn't just give you the financial income that you may need, but also gives you something that might be more fulfilling. Like in my case, I'm really fulfilled by being on the tennis courts. I always say any day on the tennis court is a great day.</p> <p>And so I think the place to start is to speak to as many people as you possibly can, who have done what you want to do.</p> <p>Like in my case, I wasn't even thinking about coaching at the high school level when I started talking to tennis pros. But I quickly learned that there were a lot of opportunities out there.</p>

Andy	So when you're in season and you're coaching, how many hours a week are you spending on the tennis court? I assume you continue to play on your own as well and for enjoyment. But you know, how many hours a week would you be on the tennis court?
Joe	I'd say altogether, like in September we had a lot of matches with the girls, and I tried to play tennis in the mornings at my outdoor club a lot during the week and on weekends. So I'd say I probably was on the court with the tennis team at least 15, if not 20 hours a week. And then probably played 10 hours myself.
Andy	That's a lot of time on the tennis court.
Joe	So it's a lot of time on the tennis court, yeah.
Andy	I mean did you ever get to a point where you're like oh God, I gotta get practice again, or I wish I hadn't signed up for this or whatever I mean or is it really tennis is just it's always fun?
Joe	I never feel that way that oh gosh, I gotta go out to the tennis courts, I'm always ready, always.
	OUTGOING MUSIC; FADE TO BACK DROP FOR PODCAST CONCLUSION
Andy	<p>So that is a wrap on Episode 29 of "Second Act Stories." Our special thanks to Joe Tedino for taking the time to meet with me.</p> <p>What impressed me so much about Joe was the way he methodically went about making this change. He first focused on getting his certification as a tennis instructor. Once he received his certification, he started networking with a dozen or so tennis coaches. And that's when the path of coaching a high school team emerged.</p> <p>Now he's also found a way to continue his career in writing – actually writing about his own second act. His latest story is featured in the August 2018 issue of Kiplinger's Magazine. I've provided a link in the show notes for this episode.</p> <p>We hope you'll keep listening. There are more second act stories just around the corner.</p>