

Former Head Start student and “Success Strategist” Jonathan Edison is one of the most compelling thought leaders and Motivational Speakers today. As an expert in human development, he delivers strategies, methods and tools filled with insight and humor that consistently move people and organizations to their highest potential. His personal motto is “Results DON’T LIE, people do!”

Growing up in an environment that was a prescription for failure, young John John—his grandmother’s affectionate nickname for him—faced many hardships. After exposing him to drugs and violence, his mother was removed from the household by the Department of Social Services when he was five years old. Two years later, Jonathan’s father left to start a new family on another side of town. Then, his grandmother Cloraine, who took on the challenge of raising him, died of cancer when he was 14.

Now homeless, Jonathan was forced to take up residence in his aunt’s basement. To afford the \$50.00 monthly rent and his portion of the electric bill, he worked a full-time job as a dishwasher/bus boy at Chili’s Grill and Bar in the evenings and on weekends. He graduated from high school with a 1.63 grade point average and completed his first year of college with a 0.82 GPA before dropping out completely.

Instead of becoming another statistic, Jonathan found the courage he needed within himself to rise above adversity. He enrolled in remedial classes at Wayne County Community College. In 1993, Jonathan graduated with an associate’s degree as a part of the Urban Teacher Program. In 1995 Jonathan continued his education at Wayne State University, earning a bachelor’s and a master’s degree in only 3 semesters. During college, Jonathan worked as a bus attendant, waiter, gas station attendant and often slept in his car so that he could hold down his jobs and attend classes.

After teaching for four years, at age 27, Jonathan became the youngest assistant principal in the history of Detroit Public Schools. In 2002, he was named Wayne County Spokesman for Success. Then, along with hundreds of other dedicated educators, Jonathan was fired. With no savings, clients or plan, in 2004 he launched Edison Speaks International, a motivational and training development company. Since then, Jonathan has shared his “Strategies for Success” with over 1,000 audiences and 2 million people, authored 10 books and spoken in more than 45 states and 10 countries. Jonathan provides powerful and entertaining Keynote messages for Departments of Education, School Districts, Schools, Parent Organizations, Head Start Programs and Corporate Businesses. Currently, he is a Harvard student studying the psychology of human performance where he founded and created the 9 Pathways of Success Social Emotional Solution.