

don't write *that* book!

Episode 17:

Audiobooks

Mike Michalowicz ([00:01](#)):

Welcome back to the Don't Write That book podcast where you can learn how to write your bestseller and own your authorship. Follow along with us as we give you an insider's view of the book industry. Now, here are your hosts, myself, **Mike Michalowicz** and **AJ Harper**. It's always a breath of fresh air to see you.

AJ Harper ([00:19](#)):

Yeah. And we haven't actually, we skipped September, so for recording.

Mike Michalowicz ([00:25](#)):

Yeah. We did skip for September. And, um, I mean, we've met prior, well, we've met in between, but I just remembering our trip to the cabin and there's that bear, and I think someone's taking a bath in the middle of the morning in the lake.

AJ Harper ([00:40](#)):

Remember? It's not a lake.

Mike Michalowicz ([00:41](#)):

Oh, it was a pond. It wasn't even a pond. It was a

AJ Harper ([00:43](#)):

Not even a pond.

Mike Michalowicz ([00:43](#)):

What would you call that? Between a pond and a pond?

AJ Harper ([00:45](#)):

I come from Minnesota. I know a lake. Mm. <laugh>.

Mike Michalowicz ([00:49](#)):

Let's just take a sip of coffee. You said. What would you consider that to be?

AJ Harper ([00:53](#)):

don't write *that* book!

I guess it's technically a little pond. A little pond. Baby pond. Baby pond. Is there a word? Punto. <laugh>. There's probably a word.

Mike Michalowicz ([01:00](#)):

Yeah. There probably is a word between a pond and a large puddle.

AJ Harper ([01:05](#)):

Yeah. Something between a trough

Mike Michalowicz ([01:07](#)):

<laugh>. Right.

AJ Harper ([01:09](#)):

Right. And a pond. Right. It's what the bear was hanging out in. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz ([01:12](#)):

Washing himself and, and bathing.

AJ Harper ([01:14](#)):

Having a great old time and doing laps. Without a care. Not a care in the world.

Mike Michalowicz ([01:18](#)):

Um, and today, today we're going to be talking about audio books. Uh, for me the timing is idyllic. I just got back from the audio studio yesterday, uh, after doing my five or six consecutive days of recording.

AJ Harper ([01:31](#)):

Was this for *All In*? Because I know you just rerecorded *Profit First* earlier this year.

Mike Michalowicz ([01:37](#)):

That's right.

AJ Harper ([01:38](#)):

So you've been doing a lot of audio?

Mike Michalowicz ([01:40](#)):

Yeah. And this is the first one I'm reading the story, um, that you encouraged me to share about my father.

AJ Harper ([01:47](#)):

Oh, how'd you get through it?

don't write *that* book!

Mike Michalowicz ([01:49](#)):

I cried through the whole thing and, uh, at the end he's like, this is perfect, because the emotion's there. But I actually had to rerecord sections because it was inaudible.

AJ Harper ([01:58](#)):

Remember I asked you, can I read that for my, um, group?

Mike Michalowicz ([02:02](#)):

Yeah. Your group session. Yeah.

AJ Harper ([02:03](#)):

And I couldn't get through it. Ugh. I was choking up. I did that. Oh, thing you do in your voice. Yeah. Could not, could not get through it without getting emotional about your dad.

Mike Michalowicz ([02:14](#)):

So thank you. I couldn't not get emotional about Helen Fuller and my dad.

AJ Harper ([02:19](#)):

Yeah. All of it. The whole, the whole positioning, the whole story, the whole meaning behind it.

Mike Michalowicz ([02:24](#)):

The studio is called Common Mode. And the owner, his name is Paul Fowlie, was on it doing the editing. Um, which he doesn't typically do. He just happened to be, by chance. And at the end, after that story, he said, holy cow. He goes, I get, I get the book now. I'm like, what do you mean? He goes, you're talking about a social worker, Helen Fuller, and there's all these people doing social work who don't ever get the accolades or the recognition because they're the Helen Fullers. They're not the big names, they're not the famous ones. They'll never be on the cover of a magazine. But he goes, she has had a generational impact. Like she has this cascading impact. And maybe social workers will hear this and see they are such important leaders.

AJ Harper ([03:08](#)):

Right. And you didn't write the book for social workers?

Mike Michalowicz ([03:11](#)):

No, but they're, they are leaders too.

AJ Harper ([03:13](#)):

Yeah. There's just a great story.

Mike Michalowicz ([03:16](#)):

Yeah.

don't write *that* book!

AJ Harper ([03:17](#)):

Probably one, probably one of our, probably the best.

Mike Michalowicz ([03:20](#)):

Probably the best, probably the best. I, I think it.

AJ Harper ([03:22](#)):

I'm pretty, I'm partial to the *Clockwork: Revised* call to greatness. But that said, this one is probably the best.

Mike Michalowicz ([03:30](#)):

The *Clockwork* with, uh, the, uh, Lin Manuel. Yeah. Lin Manuel Miranda. Yes. Yeah. That is a great story. You know what's so powerful about the stories that we create or share is the visualization. I can't remember the words. I can see the picture of him in the hammock. Yeah. I can see him with, uh, an 800 pound, uh, page Hamilton book. And his wife, you know, saying prior to that, you, it's the vacation or we're done type of mandate.

AJ Harper ([03:59](#)):

I don't think she said that.

Mike Michalowicz ([04:00](#)):

Well, no, but she was frustrated. He was a, it was a 24-hour call.

AJ Harper ([04:03](#)):

I think she was just trying to get him a vacation. <laugh>. I think you might like, I don't want to comment on their marriage,

Mike Michalowicz ([04:08](#)):

<laugh> No, that's true. That's true. But that's the visual visualization that comes to my mind. Um, and so I think all this preamble sets us for what we're going to talk about today, which is audio books. I do want to introduce my co-host, **AJ Harper**. Uh, an extraordinary spouse. When, uh, I saw Polly, we were on Polly's—

AJ Harper ([04:23](#)):

Polly is my wife for all, who's wondering.

Mike Michalowicz ([04:25](#)):

Who doesn't know? Yeah. When I saw your wife and we were on Zoom. Yeah. The affection she has for you? And there sat the flowers that she gets you every day. Yeah.

AJ Harper ([04:35](#)):

don't write *that* book!

Well, not every day, <laugh>. Oh my gosh. I would be so broke.

Mike Michalowicz ([04:38](#)):

Oh, how often does she get you flowers? Every week?

AJ Harper ([04:40](#)):

Pretty much every week.

Mike Michalowicz ([04:41](#)):

Okay. Every week I see them every day.

AJ Harper ([04:43](#)):

Every day. Can you imagine?

Mike Michalowicz ([04:45](#)):

I thought, because I see them every day. Yeah.

AJ Harper ([04:46](#)):

Well.

Mike Michalowicz ([04:47](#)):

And maybe because I don't see you every day. I always think they're fresh new ones <laugh> because it seems that way.

AJ Harper ([04:52](#)):

A week's pretty good. Once a week's pretty good.

Mike Michalowicz ([04:54](#)):

So you're an amazing spouse. And you can just see it in her eyes. It was, it was beautiful.

AJ Harper ([04:58](#)):

We have a lot of affection for each other. Clearly. She's still completely inappropriate with me. <laugh> The way you want a spouse to be. You know, we like each other.

Mike Michalowicz ([05:08](#)):

So thank you for being here.

AJ Harper ([05:08](#)):

Thank you. Um, you know, I could say the same thing about you for sure, but I think, um, for all of you who don't know, Mike, author of 10 books. 10 Books. I don't even know, you know, I know, I know it. I

don't write *that* book!

don't, I know what it is. 10 books, nonfiction, and then one children's book. Yes. So you have 11 books under your belt.

Mike Michalowicz ([05:36](#)):

And I'm excited about our next one. We just started talking about it.

AJ Harper ([05:40](#)):

Well, what's funny is we've outlined three, but we've never done that before. Never.

Mike Michalowicz ([05:44](#)):

But the outline process is going so quickly. I have a flight going to Australia next Tuesday or whatever. And I can't wait for the flight. And I think I'm flying economy, which I know sounds absurd to not be able to go—

AJ Harper ([05:59](#)):

It's like 3,000 hours.

Mike Michalowicz ([06:01](#)):

Yeah. <laugh>, 3,000 miles. Yeah.

AJ Harper ([06:03](#)):

Hours. <laugh>.

Mike Michalowicz ([06:05](#)):

Yeah,

AJ Harper ([06:05](#)):

Yeah, yeah. I'm just joking. But that's a long time to be in economy.

Mike Michalowicz ([06:07](#)):

It's a long, yeah. It's a long, it's 20 hours of flying time. But that, that can be all writing time now. And so now I'm excited about it. I will be the most uncomfortable, but I, I get so immersed in it, I'll just crank and crank and crank. And I know out of the x thousands of words that come out, maybe there'll be two paragraphs that are quality. But just getting that out. So started.

AJ Harper ([06:26](#)):

But see, I think if I were introducing you, you just introduced yourself. I think the way you just said that is so indicative of our writing process together. But your joy of writing. Hmm. I think people sometimes have a misconception about our creative relationship that we, I'm just writing every single word. You're telling me what to do. It's such a collaborative thing. But what isn't often said is how much you love, how

don't write *that* book!

much you love to tell stories, how much you love to help people, how much you love to get ideas down. So I'm glad you shared that a little bit.

Mike Michalowicz ([07:00](#)):

Oh, thank you my friend. Yeah, there was one time, just as a quick anecdote, and then we'll kick into this anecdote, was, uh, I wrote something, I think it was a back flap copy or something. And, uh, I sent it to you and then you come back with great feedback and usually within 15 minutes it is polished and, and tight. One time, one time in our entire relationship, we came back and said, oh, this is perfect. And I can't remember if it's back flap copy or whatever. I didn't tell you this. I spent an entire flight eight hours working on 500 words or less.

AJ Harper ([07:32](#)):

It's harder to write shorter pieces.

Mike Michalowicz ([07:34](#)):

It was so hard. I kept, I'm like, I'm just not going to give up. I kept on doing it and doing it <laugh>, and I sent it and you said, "oh, this is perfect." <laugh> And I never told you that was eight hours of effort. Normally it would be a half hour. Send it to you. 15 minutes. Perfect.

AJ Harper ([07:49](#)):

Aw, I love that even more. Yeah, true. Did it. True story. Aw, true story. I love it when anybody works hard on writing.

Mike Michalowicz ([07:55](#)):

Yeah. Good, good. Yeah. Well, you got to work hard on audio books. Um, so why don't we start off with what an audio book is and maybe the importance of an audio book. Um, this is my own percentages, but I think you have a better perspective because of how many authors you work with. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> of my sales, again, this is nonfiction, prescriptive in the, in the business space, 53% of my overall sales are on audio. About a little less than four. I'll say 40% are in print and about 7% in eBook. The point is the majority of my sales are in audio. And I think that's atypical.

AJ Harper ([08:37](#)):

It is because you have a, you have a knack for creating a great audiobook. And it's a, it's a big focus. I think sometimes people think of doing an audiobook as just something else that, another format they need to create and don't think about it as its own art form.

Mike Michalowicz ([08:53](#)):

When reading an audiobook, I'm going to start digging into some tips. Uh, but I want to go through the stuff we, we've prepared for. But I've heard other authors, and they do what's called straight reads. They lead, read letter for letter, word for word, what's in their book. And sometimes it doesn't even make sense. They'll say, um, "as I refer to above, for example," in their recording.

don't write *that* book!

AJ Harper ([09:12](#)):

Oh yeah. The little, yeah—

Mike Michalowicz ([09:14](#)):

Yeah. And, and those little nuances. I know it's a straight read and yes, the reader can figure it out, but it's, it loses that fluidity.

AJ Harper ([09:21](#)):

Could just be as I referred to earlier. Yeah,

Mike Michalowicz ([09:24](#)):

Exactly. And those little minor changes make it feel like you are reading to the individual. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. So, um, that's my first little tip. So let's talk about this. You had some stats in here. The global audio market is worth over \$5.3 billion in revenue now, and it's projected to reach 35 billion by 2030. So we're recording this in 2023. We're talking about a seven times amplification.

AJ Harper ([09:52](#)):

So the thing about audiobooks is it's had double digit growth most years for a really long time, just year after year. This, by the way, these stats are from wordsrated.com. Yep. So I think people underestimate just how fast it's growing culturally. It's changing the way people read is changing. Yeah. Um, and I think it's a huge dominates in fiction. It's 65% in fiction.

AJ Harper ([10:21](#)):

Yeah. And, you know, that's a different animal. And we can talk briefly about it. I do have experience with it as a former fiction publisher, uh, and what that process is like. We'll be primarily talking about recording a nonfiction book today, but we can talk a little bit about that. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz ([10:41](#)):

But even nonfiction is growing by 27% every year. That's remarkable. I'll tell you about the cultural shift that I've seen. because you said there's like the shift going on. It used to be, and I'm doing air quotes around that, that people would say, oh, Mike, I read your book. And then they would qualify, say, well, I didn't read it. I'm listening to the audio now. And that was over recent years more frequently. And maybe it's just me, but I hear people say, Mike, I read your book and there's no more qualification. And then it may come out in conversation. Oh, it was the audio. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. It was interesting. People don't have to now qualify that, which means it's a more accepted approach.

AJ Harper ([11:13](#)):

It is. And, uh, you know, with my own book, I know I hear all the time. "I bought, I got your book on audio. And then I bought it in hardcover."

Mike Michalowicz ([11:24](#)):

don't write *that* book!

Yeah. Why do you think that is?

AJ Harper ([11:25](#)):

I think people are, there's, there's two sets. There's people who listen to audiobooks because that's their preference. They're busy. They don't like reading <laugh>. Right. They're whatever it is, they just enjoy it. But then there's another group that's kind of using audiobooks to test a book. If you're on Audible and you have all these free credits, you can just click, see if you like that book or not. Yes. No Skin Off your Nose. Yeah. No big deal. It might even, it, it oftentimes it's free because of the credits. And then if you like it, you get the hardcover.

Mike Michalowicz ([11:56](#)):

That's a good point.

AJ Harper ([11:57](#)):

So, or paperback.

Mike Michalowicz ([11:59](#)):

So how Audible specifically works, which is the 800-pound gorilla, I think in the audio space.

AJ Harper ([12:03](#)):

Yeah. Have to talk about it. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz ([12:05](#)):

Yeah. And it's a shame because they assert such control and authority. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, they are dictating the path. You know, I, I hope a real contender comes about and that there's at least two, maybe three. But what's interesting to me is, um, <laugh>, I just lost my train of thought. What were you saying?

AJ Harper ([12:23](#)):

Well, we're just talking about how your people will test books out.

Mike Michalowicz ([12:28](#)):

Oh. Tell you. That's right. Okay. Thank you. Yeah. <laugh>. So what's interesting to me is my subscription, I think this is the standard subscription, is you get X credits per month. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> one or two, three, that credit can buy any book of any length. Um, and we, I want to talk about the finances and the economics for the, the author in just a little bit. But, um, to your point, I can just test out any single book if I have enough credits. When I have fewer credits, um, I become more selective. And there's times I run out of my credits and then I make a deliberate purchase. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And that I become very selective of. Sure. But when I have credits, even though it's a cost, right? You're paying that monthly fee. The cost is perhaps effectively the same.

don't write *that* book!

AJ Harper ([13:05](#)):

You think it's free.

Mike Michalowicz ([13:06](#)):

You think it's free, but it's not. I am much more freewheeling in the selection. Oh, someone just recommended a book called the, uh, the *Expectation Effect*. And I was like, it's not relevant to what I'm doing right now, but I got to credit, I'll buy it. And by the way, it's a great book, at least for me. It's rich with research and science and so forth. Um, but when I don't have a credit, then, then I become so selective.

AJ Harper ([13:34](#)):

And I think if you're writing a must-read, if you're writing the book that you need to write, which is truly a remarkable must-read book, they're going to get the paperback or hardcover version because they want to mark it up. They want to dog-ear, or they want to put post-its in it, they want to keep it as a reference. So it's, um, it's not that you're just getting audiobook money. You're probably also getting, that's, it's, it's helping to sell your print book.

Mike Michalowicz ([13:59](#)):

And, um, I wonder just a marketing idea now, if a marketing campaign for a book launch or an Evergreen promotion is to remind people of their free credits, I'm wonder if you sent out an email saying, Hey, if you have a free credit, I, you know, this is the opportunity to get my book on something you have already. Uh, yeah. Just an idea that came by. Um, so I think it was Seth Godin who said, "people are buying hardcover books as souvenirs." Yeah. And I, I, I used, I I do agree with, there is a portion that wants to display the book and get it autographed or, or have as a reminder. Um, but I still do believe a lot of people that purchase a book are, it's for the consumption of the book. There is still something that is, I don't know, that tangibility, that an audiobook. There, there are a different experience.

AJ Harper ([14:48](#)):

Yeah. People like to read. And again, if your book is, if you're writing nonfiction, often your book becomes a reference. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz ([14:54](#)):

So, um, let's talk about who should read the book.

AJ Harper ([14:57](#)):

Yeah. You have a strong opinion.

Mike Michalowicz ([14:59](#)):

The freaking author.

AJ Harper ([15:00](#)):

don't write *that* book!

The freaking author.

Mike Michalowicz ([15:02](#)):

<laugh>. Yeah. And I'll put a little asterisk on it. I am not familiar enough with the fiction, the fiction space.

AJ Harper ([15:09](#)):

So we're talking nonfiction. If you wrote your book, it's nonfiction. You should read it. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz ([15:14](#)):

And, and here's why you the author know why you wrote what you wrote. So you can give inflection, um, you can just put your authority, your voice, tonality into it appropriately. I, I read, and I'm sharing with you pre -going on air, um, in *All In*, I just read, I got returned from the studio yesterday, or maybe we did this.

AJ Harper ([15:33](#)):

It's on air. We just said it.

Mike Michalowicz ([15:34](#)):

We just said it. Yeah. Yeah. That, okay. Thank you. <laugh> So emotional. I forgot if a, um, professional voice did that, they wouldn't have emotion.

AJ Harper ([15:43](#)):

No, they wouldn't. And so really the primary reason is connection. And it's not, it's not just in the tonality. It's also how a reader feels when they aren't listening to the actual author of a nonfiction book. It annoys them.

Mike Michalowicz ([15:56](#)):

I agree.

AJ Harper ([15:57](#)):

I mean, there are probably some exceptions maybe if you're writing a history book.

Mike Michalowicz ([16:03](#)):

Okay.

AJ Harper ([16:04](#)):

But if I'm, if we're talking prescriptive nonfiction, personal professional development, self-help, memoir, um, I don't know. I feel like you need to read it. I agree. And if you look at reviews of audio books that are not nonfiction, that are not read by the author, you will always see people complaining, I wish it was read by the author.

don't write *that* book!

Mike Michalowicz ([16:25](#)):

And do they criticize the professional voice? Is there specific criticism?

AJ Harper ([16:29](#)):

I mean, sometimes, but mostly it's just feeling like disconnect.

Mike Michalowicz ([16:32](#)):

That's it. Disconnect.

AJ Harper ([16:33](#)):

So you work so hard trying to write a book that truly connects with your readers, and then now you completely disconnect. Yeah. On the audio book front. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz ([16:41](#)):

It, to me, it is another form of intimate experience. You know, a book is read in the, in your bed, but an audio book, you're in someone's ear. And same thing, they could be on the toilet or they could be exercising or out for a walk. I mean, people listen at all times and they're building this bond effectively with you. In intimacy, there's a relationship. And I know this to be true because when I do speaking engagements, I just returned from the UK, spoke with this large audience out there, and they did pictures afterwards. I did pictures with hundreds of people and consistently came up and said, I feel like I know you. Like, we're like, we're best friends. And I'm like, oh, I appreciate that you're watching a lot of videos. No. Or maybe it's the audio book. And when they hear the exact same voice on stage, or when you're talking one-on-one, it's the exact same voice. There's that instant connection. So read your own book.

AJ Harper ([17:33](#)):

Fiction though. You can hire talent.

Mike Michalowicz ([17:35](#)):

How do you find talent?

AJ Harper ([17:36](#)):

So actually on ACX, which is the platform that you can use, if you self-publish or you decide to do your audiobook on your own in agreement with your publisher, you can find talent that's part of their whole program. So you can either upload your files exactly. Done completely, you handled in the studio, or you can work with a producer and you can find talent that there's a huge voice talent pool. You do auditions just like anything else. Hmm. And, uh, and it's actually not that complicated.

Mike Michalowicz ([18:10](#)):

Um, ACX is, is that owned by Amazon who also owns Audible?

don't write *that* book!

AJ Harper ([18:14](#)):

Yes. Okay. So owned by the 800-pound gorilla. But you can also do it through FindAWay Voices is another, another, I would say they're the next in line under, under Audible.

Mike Michalowicz ([18:23](#)):

ACXI I've actually never heard of them. Are they simply a way to source out town or are they--?

AJ Harper ([18:27](#)):

No, they're a distribution network for anything outside of Audible.

Mike Michalowicz ([18:31](#)):

What, do you know what the distribution platforms are? There's Audible.

AJ Harper ([18:35](#)):

I don't know all of them. Okay. I think there's, there's a ton.

Mike Michalowicz ([18:37](#)):

iTunes, I think.

AJ Harper ([18:39](#)):

Yes, there's iTunes, but there's also different platforms within say, um, libraries and universities. Oh, right. So I don't have them all, but if you go, if you post your audio book on ACX and you do Findaway Voices, you got it covered.

Mike Michalowicz ([18:56](#)):

Okay. Oh, and you can do both.

AJ Harper ([18:58](#)):

You can do both. But then that changes your royalties. Your compensation plan.

Mike Michalowicz ([19:01](#)):

Yeah.

AJ Harper ([19:02](#)):

Yeah. Because of the 800-pound gorilla, which has a monopoly.

Mike Michalowicz ([19:04](#)):

Yeah. Which is smart. And their strategy is we'll pay you more if you remain exclusive to us.

AJ Harper ([19:08](#)):

don't write *that* book!

Yeah. Or a more negative way of putting it is we'll penalize you because you are not loyal.

Mike Michalowicz ([19:13](#)):

Yeah. Okay.

AJ Harper ([19:15](#)):

I don't know. I have, I have feelings. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz ([19:17](#)):

Well, what are your feelings? Like what if, if Utopia could be created, what would it be?

AJ Harper ([19:23](#)):

That Amazon would work with authors. <laugh>. Yeah. Right. To see, to help them grow rather than penalizing them for trying to make their book accessible to more people.

Mike Michalowicz ([19:36](#)):

One thing that's interesting, Noah, our editor at Penguin share with me, he said, book volume, total book sales has continually increased, um, perhaps even at its fastest rate. But there, there people are buying more of a popular book and less of the new books. So it's harder to get discovered as a new author is my translation of that.

AJ Harper ([19:56](#)):

I don't know. I'm sure it's true. I just, I've been in publishing so long that I feel like it's always hard.

Mike Michalowicz ([20:01](#)):

Have you heard of this woman, Rebecca Yarros?

AJ Harper ([20:06](#)):

No.

Mike Michalowicz ([20:06](#)):

All right. Someone, I was talking to someone about a book launch, so I'm deviating here from what we're talking about. But they said, oh, Rebecca Yarros is launching her book. You should use her strategy. I said, what is it? So I quickly googled, she, she's an established author in the fiction space. She put out a new book title that she did not give the title. And she doesn't even tell you what the book content is. So you go to Amazon and you know how that, that picture, it says like, cover to come. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, you know, that's what the, that's what it is. It says Rebecca Yarros. Uh, it does not say, the title says title to be determined. And it is selling off the hook. There's a release date, which is imminent as of this recording. It may be only a few weeks away, and it's selling like hotcakes.

AJ Harper ([20:43](#)):

don't write *that* book!

Yeah. But that's not a typical situation. It's that somebody who has, who has an established fan base. Yeah. A person who has an established fan base can do whatever the heck they want. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz ([20:51](#)):

Could you imagine if every author's launched that way? I'm a brand new author. I have no title.

AJ Harper ([20:55](#)):

No book.

Mike Michalowicz ([20:56](#)):

Who wants it? Yeah. All right. So, um, you can with, uh, ACX and Findaway you can, um, you can self-publish. What about hybrid publishers you've worked with? Page Two. How's the audio process work with them?

AJ Harper ([21:11](#)):

So it's your choice with hybrid, you have some ability to make the decision on your own. You're going to pay for it in either way. Okay. So I, for example, opted to take over the audio book myself rather than use their program. But usually you can work with them. They have something in-House or you more often they're contracting with someone to help them with audiobook. I personally wanted to handle it myself.

Mike Michalowicz ([21:35](#)):

Okay. So handling yourself means the whole kit-n-kaboodle you, you got to, yeah.

AJ Harper ([21:39](#)):

I called you, I texted you. I said, who should I, who's the studio? Who, where should I go to record my audio book? Yeah. So I had an in. Yeah. But honestly, anyone who's listening, it's not that hard. There's recording studios in, in every metropolitan area. Yes. And you just have to find one that has experience recording audio books specifically. You definitely want people who know how to do that.

Mike Michalowicz ([22:00](#)):

And you went to a Common Mode.

AJ Harper ([22:02](#)):

I think I went to Common Mode. Yeah. And, uh, but then what happens is they send you the files once they're done. And we'll talk about that process in a little bit. But I just, uh, I just had my team upload the files and, um, Common Mode actually helped with that. But my team helped get it done and easy peasy.

Mike Michalowicz ([22:21](#)):

Good. And by doing it all yourself, all the royalties go to you?

AJ Harper ([22:26](#)):

don't write *that* book!

Yes. All the royalties go to me. But because I chose to also load it on Findaway Voices for accessibility, I get less of a percentage from Amazon than I would if I had given them their loyalty code.

Mike Michalowicz ([22:39](#)):

And what is the sales through Findaway volume versus ACX or do you know?

AJ Harper ([22:45](#)):

Honestly, I'm sorry. Yeah, I know. I'm just not like you. I'm just not looking at it. Yeah. It's less.

Mike Michalowicz ([22:51](#)):

Yeah. But, but do you think there is some through Findaway? Do you have a sense of percentage? I mean, to see if you make... Your best guess.

AJ Harper ([22:57](#)):

I mean, no, ACX dwarfs. Yeah. So I'm sure you can argue I should, if it's just a purely monetary, just going with ACX makes can make sense. Yes. Because that's how you're connecting to Audible. Yeah. But then for me, it's just my little heart bleeds for people that might want to get it on a different platform.

Mike Michalowicz ([23:16](#)):

Yeah. You're finding the people on the Outer Fringe because there are certain people that, that say, I'll never buy through Amazon or just don't care about,

AJ Harper ([23:23](#)):

There are actually a lot of anti-Amazon folks and the number grows. Keeps growing. Yeah. Yeah. So I don't know. My, I love accessibility. That's just my thing. Yeah. So, um, yeah.

Mike Michalowicz ([23:33](#)):

Okay. So that's hybrid. And then if you did use the Page Two path, how does that work? Do you, do they instruct you on that?

AJ Harper ([23:43](#)):

Yeah, I mean, they're, all the hybrids have different ways of doing it. You know, I know a lot of Page Two authors, they're actually even doing it at home and they have these instructions about how to do it.

Mike Michalowicz ([23:54](#)):

Oh yeah. Okay.

AJ Harper ([23:55](#)):

Yeah. I think I remember a couple of the authors that I work with who got PageTwo contracts talking about being in their closets or whatever, recording, trying. Oh my gosh. Personally, I don't want that kind

don't write *that* book!

of headache. I just want to walk into the studio. I want a producer to help. But I mean, yeah, their books are out and they're great. Yeah. So there's a lot of different ways to do it.

Mike Michalowicz ([24:14](#)):

Another little deviation, but I got to share, I had to do an audio track. I am, I just filmed a sizzle reel for a TV show. We'll see if it hits. They said they needed some voiceovers and, um, they sent me the script, but I was in London at the time for a speaking engagement, and they said we need this turned around in 24 hours. So they said, find a closet. Well, the hotel, these are European hotels. There's no closet. So what I did is I took the luggage rack, leaned on the side, I took the night table and I took the duvet from the bed. And it was like this fort from like, when I was five years old. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> in there, recorded the audio. It's the best sounding audio I've ever had.

AJ Harper ([24:50](#)):

<laugh>

Mike Michalowicz ([24:52](#)):

It's unbelievable.

AJ Harper ([24:53](#)):

I can't imagine doing that for three days for an audio book.

Mike Michalowicz ([24:56](#)):

Just reading straight under in a fort.

AJ Harper ([24:58](#)):

Could you imagine? But I mean, I'm sure people have done it.

Mike Michalowicz ([25:02](#)):

I'm sure people have done it. All right. So let's talk about traditional. Um, that's who I have. The traditional publishers take two routes too. One is some of them have their own internal audio team. Penguin has that, um, or they outsource it to an audio house and they basically, they get, uh, sub rights, is that the right word?

AJ Harper ([25:25](#)):

It's subsidiary rights.

Mike Michalowicz ([25:26](#)):

Subsidiary rights, yeah. Subsidiary rights. So, um, with *Profit First* and why I had to rerecord it was originally it went through subsidiary, it was, um, I can't remember the name of the, the company anymore, but, uh, what happens is it dilutes the revenue stream for you. So they, the subsidiary takes a percentage that's the business they're in. They then give that the remaining money to Penguin. Penguin.

don't write *that* book!

The traditional house in this case takes their percentage and you the author, get less. So, uh, once the rights expired, I think the norm is somewhere between five to even 10 years. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Yep. Um, mine was five years. I told Penguin, we got to get it back. And I said, I'd like to take it myself. And they're like, no, no, no. But we said, we'll take it. We Penguin will take it. And so I saw an immediate rise in our per unit, uh, royalty for the author.

AJ Harper (26:16):

Yeah. Because they're not paying the fee to that middle person.

Mike Michalowicz (26:19):

Right, exactly. So I would just encourage someone, if you work with a traditional house, have them do it, or ideally with your agent, or if you negotiate the contract yourself, get the rights for the audio for you. If you at all can.

AJ Harper (26:32):

I mean, good luck with that. Yeah. With a Big five. And that's going to be a no-go. But getting it and asking them to do it in-House, it's always baffled me. Why Big Five doesn't automatically do it in-House. They should have a studio. Yeah. They should have their own.

Mike Michalowicz (26:45):

They should have their own studio.

AJ Harper (26:45):

Yeah. Yeah. There should be a Penguin Random House Studios Shaman. Maybe there is for the other ones. Yes. But we didn't know about one from Penguin. No. Let me tell you, when I had, uh, the little, my little publishing company with two co-founders audio books. So we were fiction. And as a reminder, if you don't know from listeners, we sold that company, it's been, what, a year and a half, almost two years to Chicago Review Press. We had a really popular young adult series where they, we sold the audiobook rights to the first two books. How that works is they pay in advance small and then again, pay into the royalties. They handled everything. They handled the voice talent. We didn't have anything to do with it. We just got the deal. But then, you know, we knew we could make more money if we brought it in-House and just did it ourselves.

AJ Harper (27:33):

Yes. So we did for a Julian Winters book, who is a New York Times bestselling author. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, we've found the voice talent. It wasn't me actually who was handling that. It was one of my partners. And she did a great job and found the voice talent, got it done. Had the producer, everything. So then you're, you're the, as the publisher uploading all that stuff yourself and making way more money. Yes. So it just baffles me. Yeah. Especially if I were a smaller publisher. Yeah. I, it would make so much more money. Yeah. It's actually not that hard.

Mike Michalowicz (28:10):

don't write *that* book!

Yeah. So this exact situation went down with a, uh, smaller publisher that we're working with and we're helping another author out. And they just, uh, found an al a subsidiary to do the audio rights. And it is baffling. So I quickly said, Hey, hey, we, the author would like to be the subsidiary. We'll pay you the per exact same percentage. You know, whatever the deal you got, we'll take that deal. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> and do it ourselves.

AJ Harper (28:33):

Um, did they agree?

Mike Michalowicz (28:35):

Uh, the answer is pending.

AJ Harper (28:38):

I don't know, man. I don't know if there are any publishers listening to this, but this seems like a no brainer to me. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz (28:45):

And as an author, uh, if you have the opportunity to, to publish it on your own, the numbers all point to audio books are increasing in sales. It, it's becoming the dominant force. Um, and you have authoritative control over too. Or, or at least a directive control over it. You know, one of the things I do when I read my audio books, and I encourage every of our listeners to do this, is I riff, I will break from the, the read of the book and say, let me tell you why I'm writing this. Or here's another story that came up. Or sometimes I even have a dialogue with the producer. And, uh, to me, this is like that TV show, *The Office*, you'd watch *The Office* and all of a sudden Jim would look straight at the camera and make a gesture or say something that was this voyeuristic look that the viewer gets into the show. It gives you another perspective, another dimension. And that's what these rifts do in books. And I'm surprised how few authors do that.

AJ Harper (29:38):

Yeah. We've got some other hacks we're going to talk about too, too.

Mike Michalowicz (29:41):

Yeah. Okay. Um, what about you? Other question? This is just an oddball, what about international translations and the audio book?

AJ Harper (29:52):

I mean, just, just like anything, if there's enough demand for a book, if a people want to read it. Yeah. And if a publisher in another country is already publishing the print version, the translated version of your book in their country, and it's got a lot of interest, then they might ask you, Hey, we want to do an audio book. Yeah. Right. So, uh, like anything with the, with selling subsidiary rates, it's about demand. Yeah.

don't write *that* book!

Mike Michalowicz ([30:17](#)):

Yeah. Um, you can get, just a quick tip is sometimes you can work with that publisher and get your voice in there too. So if you're a native English speaker and you don't speak the foreign language, they may allow you to do a small, hello, this is **Mike Michalowicz**, uh, intro. Um, or you can say a few words, um, in, in the native language, even if it's broken. I did that with a Spanish edition. Oh, that's cool. So I'm, I'm like, ow. And I just said a few words.

AJ Harper ([30:43](#)):

It just gives you a little bit of a connection.

Mike Michalowicz ([30:44](#)):

Exactly.

AJ Harper ([30:45](#)):

I like that.

Mike Michalowicz ([30:46](#)):

Um, and I, I also asked for the reader to be, uh, a woman named Sophia Maeu in Mexico. She's a famous, famous personal finance expert. And, uh, she did the read of *Profit First*.

AJ Harper ([30:59](#)):

Oh, so you're getting her follow, people are interested in her already.

Mike Michalowicz ([31:05](#)):

Exactly. March. And she liked it because it increased her credibility. It opened her into the business space, gave her an intro, uh, but it also leveraged her momentum. So it was a win-win.

AJ Harper ([31:13](#)):

And in fiction, you know, that's why you get respected actor.

Mike Michalowicz ([31:17](#)):

Yeah. Famous voice. Or people

AJ Harper ([31:18](#)):

Want to listen to that actor because they love that actor. Yep.

Mike Michalowicz ([31:20](#)):

Yeah. When do you release a audiobook?

AJ Harper ([31:23](#)):

don't write *that* book!

So I think the best time is on Pub Day. And the reason I think it's the best time is because I, people want to have all their choices. They want all the formats. They want eBook, they want their paperback and hardcover or just one of the two, and they want that audiobook. So sometimes it's hard to coordinate that. Yeah. If you're working with a traditional publisher, it's going to happen. But with hybrid and, and self-publish, it can be challenging because there's a lot to do. And so you think, ah, I'm going to do that later. It's not that you shouldn't do it later, you can, and then you can use it as an opportunity to promote the book again. Hey, the audio book is available. But personally, I still think Pub Day is the best.

Mike Michalowicz ([32:02](#)):

I'll give you another reason why Pub Day is the best, because you have to read it probably two to three months in advance while you still can make some edits to the print. That's

AJ Harper ([32:11](#)):

Right.

Mike Michalowicz ([32:12](#)):

You catch such an unbelievable amount of grammatical and typographical errors during a read an out loud read.

AJ Harper ([32:18](#)):

I caught 11

Mike Michalowicz ([32:20](#)):

On yours?

AJ Harper ([32:21](#)):

On mine when it had been edited to the nth degree because not only did I have the traditional path, I am an editor, but I also got editor friends who weren't even part of my editing team to also look at it. And I still had 11.

Mike Michalowicz ([32:36](#)):

And I think doing the read of *All In* just now, similar, like the word new for a new car was spelled KNEW or something.

AJ Harper ([32:43](#)):

Yeah. It's stuff everybody misses. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz ([32:46](#)):

I wasn't, I'm surprised though the computer doesn't catch that.

AJ Harper ([32:49](#)):

don't write *that* book!

Like, there's no computer that's going to catch that.

Mike Michalowicz ([32:52](#)):

The new car came out or something. Like, you know, you think no, because—

AJ Harper ([32:55](#)):

A person is proofreading, not a computer.

Mike Michalowicz ([32:57](#)):

But don't they have, like word doesn't, doesn't word come up with a little red squiggly line and say no. Oh, okay. Well I caught that in the read. I'm like, what the mama, how did I, how did I miss that?

AJ Harper ([33:07](#)):

How did we? Because we fill it in. We read it. Yeah. And we just, our brain just keeps moving. Ah, the human mind.

Mike Michalowicz ([33:12](#)):

Hey, there is an argument to come out with a, uh, audiobook post publication date. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And, uh, well, you make the argument for the Marketing Boost. Yeah. Yours came out with Publishing Date. I have one instance where an audiobook came out after the publishing date. It was with *Profit First* with the new release. So *Profit First* came out with the audiobook, but then the rights came back from the subsidiary. Yeah. When they got back, I had to rerecord the song. Kind of like Taylor Swift had to rerecord her songs. The book. Yeah, the book.

AJ Harper ([33:43](#)):

Yeah. You rerecorded the book.

Mike Michalowicz ([33:44](#)):

Oh, that's why, I mean, yeah. I rerecorded the book. The whole book added new material. It's an opportunity to add new material, new case studies as riffs. And then we announced it saying, Hey, *Profit First* is being re-released in audio with new case studies included in, it's 99% the same but 1% new. And that triggered well for us thousands of new sales.

AJ Harper ([34:03](#)):

I mean, I think the argument there though, Mike, would be, Hey, that's a re-release of an audio book. Correct? Not, uh, I just think, I think this is good to have it on Pub day if you can, but do it anyway whenever you can. Do it. Do it. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz ([34:14](#)):

No, I understand. I understand. Um, yeah, we've never done it intentionally where the book came out and then we waited and then the audio came out months later.

don't write *that* book!

AJ Harper ([34:24](#)):

No. Yeah. I don't think it's as effective, but I still think do it whenever you can do it.

Mike Michalowicz ([34:28](#)):

Did you have a voice coach for your book?

AJ Harper ([34:30](#)):

No.

Mike Michalowicz ([34:31](#)):

Oh, you, because in your words, the notes, this says AJ, voice coach.

AJ Harper ([34:35](#)):

Uh, that's because I won't talk about it. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz ([34:37](#)):

But I thought you, that's, I thought maybe you had experience where you hired a voice coach.

AJ Harper ([34:40](#)):

No.

Mike Michalowicz ([34:41](#)):

What, what's your tips? I got some voice tips too.

AJ Harper ([34:43](#)):

Okay. So here's the thing. People I think are nervous to read their books for the same reason they're nervous about public speaking. Or other things like that. I think most people don't know what it takes to read. I mean, it's a three to three to six day, depending on how many long your book is. You're going to do what, three, four hours in the studio, come back the next day. But even those three or four hours, your voice is going to get tired. You don't have good breathing. Uh, and so it, it, you start to fade out. So a voice coach can help you stay stronger in voice, learn how to breathe properly. But there's another factor, and this is the thing that I see with a lot of people who read, they don't understand how to read and they don't because they don't know operative words. Right. So they read without any enunciation of a specific word for emphasis. Yes. Or they have the same lilt in their voice for every single sentence. There's a commercial on TV right now where the lilt is like an arc.

Mike Michalowicz ([35:42](#)):

I haven't heard that word before.

AJ Harper ([35:45](#)):

don't write *that* book!

Just a sound. I mean, I'm not going to give you the dictionary definition. Yeah. because I don't know it right now. But it's that it's the same tone throughout. Yeah. At the same place.

Mike Michalowicz ([35:55](#)):

Yeah. Okay.

AJ Harper ([35:55](#)):

Okay. Okay. And then they also speak in exactly the same rhythm. And that's what we start to hear as like a droning. Oh my gosh. Just a drone. And it's boring. And we as human beings can't listen to it. Annoys us. Yes. We, so we have to have varying rhythm and pacing. We have to shift up our tonality and we have to understand the operative words is probably the main thing. I love that there's a commercial right now. I don't want to say who it is, but it's some bathroom, like jacuzzi, fix your shower.

Mike Michalowicz ([36:26](#)):

Okay.

AJ Harper ([36:27](#)):

She does the same intonation at the end of her sentences for every sentence.

Mike Michalowicz ([36:33](#)):

Oh. And that got into a commercial? You think they'd catch it?

AJ Harper ([36:37](#)):

No, I don't. I'm sure they tried. All I can surmise is that they gave up.

Mike Michalowicz ([36:41](#)):

Oh, is it a famous person?

AJ Harper ([36:44](#)):

Yes. So that person hasn't had training in operative words in how to do that. So I do think that it's important and that can, that's not necessarily a voice coach, although they can help you. That's more of a public speaking coach. I know. They do that work at Heroic with Michael and Amy Port. But to really understand, where's my emphasis? When I recorded my book, people said, oh, did you, uh, did you outline all your operative words? Did you get coaching? I'm from theater. For me, I didn't do any of that. I just read it. Because I know how to do it from theater. But if you have no experience with it and you're going to record it, you need to get a little bit of training. Yes. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz ([37:26](#)):

That's a great insight. Uh, couple additional elements with that. A, uh, bring honey with you to the studio. I'm always taking honey just to soothe the throat, um, and bring your own water. I was surprised at Common Mode. They ran out of water. I'm like, isn't this the profession you're in? People, the

don't write *that* book!

operative words, like a sentence. I can't believe he did that. It could be. I can't believe he did that. Or I can't believe he did it. It's like, get a little froggy. I can't, I didn't have honey. I didn't have, I can't believe he did that is another way to do it.

AJ Harper ([37:59](#)):

Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz ([38:01](#)):

I can't believe he did that. Yeah. Or, and did that. Right. Yeah. So there's one sentence with, I don't know how many words that six words, seven words can have I literally six or seven different meanings just by the operative word. Here's why I did in preparation, read your book to yourself before you go into the studio, even if it's just a skim. So you understand the context that you're reading into. Otherwise, there's going to be a lot of rereading. You read a sentence and you're like, oh, actually, when I wrote this, I meant to emphasize. I can't believe he did that and I read it wrong. And you have to reread it again. So just by skimming through in advance, you understand the context of what you're about to read. That was a big, um, a big aha for me. Um, and then the last thing is, for me, I really try to put big emphasis into the operative words. I try to change tonality. I want to bring energy and emotion. What happens is sometimes I speed up the reading, sometimes I slow down. I make a lot of errors. And what I used to do was I'd make an error. Stop. Producer would say, okay, rewind. I just said, do, do I need, if I make an error to wait for you to say something they said, we prefer not.

AJ Harper ([39:17](#)):

No. They just want you to pause for a couple of days.

Mike Michalowicz ([39:18](#)):

Yeah. Just take a pause. Restart. Yeah. That sped up this process. Like in the collective. I've saved one full day by just doing that.

AJ Harper ([39:27](#)):

<laugh>. I, I wish I, I I wish I, I don't really want to sit for the whole thing.

Mike Michalowicz ([39:32](#)):

Oh, you'd kill yourself.

AJ Harper ([39:32](#)):

But I think we had a little bit of a different experience. Although I did go to Common Mode. Yeah. But I have to tell you the Common Mode, funny story.

Mike Michalowicz ([39:40](#)):

Oh, give it to me. Lay it on me.

don't write *that* book!

AJ Harper ([39:42](#)):

So I had to record the audio book for *Write a Must-Read*, but I had so little time. But Common Mode is open 24 hours. So, Laura Stone, my wonderful right hand, she said, "Okay, are you going to get up early?" I said, "I'll get up early." <laugh> Keep in mind it's an hour and 15 minutes from my house.

Mike Michalowicz ([40:00](#)):

Yeah. It's a drive.

AJ Harper ([40:02](#)):

Not a big deal. Here on the East Coast, we're used to doing stuff like that. But still, uh, my, my session started at 4:00 AM so I left the house at 2 45. Get this, Common Mode is one of the most, uh, fantastic recording studios. Yeah. On the East Coast. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz ([40:22](#)):

It's so good.

AJ Harper ([40:23](#)):

They do Stephen King's books. Huge big reality. Uh, like tons of books. Is a big deal.

Mike Michalowicz ([40:29](#)):

Hillary Clinton's book, they did.

AJ Harper ([40:30](#)):

So I'm thinking I'm going to Common Mode. This is really exciting. I get there <laugh> shit all around me. No offense to you, Mike. The typical Jersey strip malls on both sides.

Mike Michalowicz ([40:43](#)):

Yeah. Highway, highway.

AJ Harper ([40:44](#)):

And Strip malls. Yep. Common Mode is in a tiny grungy strip mall behind you, behind a strip mall. It's four o'clock in the morning. It's like the Sopranos. Yeah. I'm pulling in.

Mike Michalowicz ([40:57](#)):

And there's a dumpster back there, ironically too.

AJ Harper ([40:59](#)):

4:00 AM pitch black. Yeah. Grungy. The, the strip mall that wasn't even worthy of being on the strip.

Mike Michalowicz ([41:07](#)):

don't write *that* book!

Yep.

AJ Harper ([41:07](#)):

I would. And there's just a door. Yep. And a little tiny sign to me. It should be like, this is where, this is where the kings and Queens record, of literature. Nuh, it's <laugh>. Then I walk in and you know what it looks like there. Yeah. Yeah. It is small.

Mike Michalowicz ([41:24](#)):

It's grungy itself inside.

AJ Harper ([41:26](#)):

Well, it's clean. They're very into crystals. They got the crystals. But that's the, that was my, you know, shock. And then they're just amazing. They're just pros at what they do and they put the best stuff out. But <laugh>, it, it was very disconcerting at four o'clock in the morning by myself. Yeah. So that the third day I asked someone to come with me.

Mike Michalowicz ([41:45](#)):

Oh, because you were at the Concerned Safety?

AJ Harper ([41:47](#)):

Honestly. Yeah. It was four in the morning in, I mean, I'm telling you, it does look like the Sopranos back there.

Mike Michalowicz ([41:52](#)):

It does. It does. And the only other business, there's two others there. There's an abandoned real estate business. And next to it is a massage parlor.

AJ Harper ([41:59](#)):

That's right. I forgot that part.

Mike Michalowicz ([42:01](#)):

Every time I pull up, I'm like, what is going on? What is happening? And it doesn't feel like a good—

AJ Harper ([42:05](#)):

But they're amazing. They're the best and they're the best. And you're really safe. But it just gives you—

Mike Michalowicz ([42:09](#)):

You are safe.

AJ Harper ([42:09](#)):

don't write *that* book!

It is funny when you're trying to just record a book. And it's funny what's happening to me.

Mike Michalowicz ([42:12](#)):

It's very funny. Once I, I took a break during a session. I stepped outside to get some fresh air and I went behind the dumpster. And it's, it's woods behind that building. Uh, they have a cat habitat, an abandoned cat habitat. Took all these cats back there.

AJ Harper ([42:28](#)):

What? It just got better.

Mike Michalowicz ([42:29](#)):

Oh. And there's an airport just down the road and they're on the, uh, the descent pathway for the airplanes. Go over the building. I wouldn't be surprised if they had to stop your reads because like, oh, plane landing.

AJ Harper ([42:39](#)):

They didn't, they must have some serious soundproofing.

Mike Michalowicz ([42:43](#)):

Oh no. They don't have enough soundproof.

AJ Harper ([42:45](#)):

Because, you know why four o'clock in the morning.

Mike Michalowicz ([42:47](#)):

Yeah, exactly. Four o'clock in the morning. Yeah. For me it's like, oh, plane landing. Hold on. <laugh>. Oh, motorcycle. There's a motorcycle.

AJ Harper ([42:54](#)):

So funny.

Mike Michalowicz ([42:54](#)):

Yeah. Um, why do you need a producer? Why can't you just, why shouldn't you maybe just do it yourself?

AJ Harper ([43:01](#)):

Producers know how to know how it should sound. Yes. And they know they're keeping track. First of all, the producer also has the book in front of them as well. So they're going to let you know when you read it wrong, you might not realize you read it wrong. Just like you might miss an error in writing it. Yep. You, you might skip a word.

don't write *that* book!

Mike Michalowicz ([43:22](#)):

I insert words. Yeah.

AJ Harper ([43:25](#)):

Also, they can see the big picture. They know what needs to be done. They know they can hear when you're starting to falter, they can hear when you're tired. Yeah. Um, and they know how to, um, put it all together. So you need that expert there.

Mike Michalowicz ([43:40](#)):

Yeah, that's absolutely true. At Common Mode. And I've recorded other studios too. There's usually a producer and an engineer. So someone that's working the record, they're listening to. So you have two ears listening in. Um, and to your point, I've inserted words and changed things up on the fly without even realizing it. What's interesting is I preference or preference, I, um, stage my recordings with them by saying I do riff. And sometimes when I'm reading, it just flows naturally in a different way. If you determine to be acceptable, we're going to go with it. And they do. So it becomes a much more fluid read. Much more natural.

AJ Harper ([44:19](#)):

That's one of your hacks. You're known for it. I hear people, when people talk to me about *Profit First* or any of the books, they say, oh, I love Mike's audio books. It's, he cracks me up.

Mike Michalowicz ([44:29](#)):

I hear it all the time. Yeah. Yeah. And I'm like, this voice, like this is the voice that you like, love.

AJ Harper ([44:34](#)):

<laugh> It's because you're riffing and it feels like some something new and different. And inside baseball stuff.

Mike Michalowicz ([44:39](#)):

Yeah. So here's another ultimate hack I learned during a TV pilot I was filming is, uh, when you want to talk to one person, there is a shift in your tonality. And how to get there was take a picture of one person and put it in front of you. And every so often, look at that picture of that person, whoever it may be, and just imagine you're talking to them and wow, it changes. because we're in studio facing each other. The way people are hearing this right now, it feels like, because it is an intimate conversation. If, uh, I was just recording to tape and you're recording to tape and we mix it in together, it comes across differently,

AJ Harper ([45:12](#)):

Obviously. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz ([45:13](#)):

don't write *that* book!

Absolutely. So that's the hack. Have a picture of someone. Um, I, the only picture I had available when I was doing that pilot was a picture of this guy's grandchild. So we put a little baby up there, but my voice changed.

AJ Harper ([45:24](#)):

That's a baby.

Mike Michalowicz ([45:25](#)):

The baby.

AJ Harper ([45:26](#)):

But I think, okay, so you do off the cuff riffing. It's natural to you. Yeah. You're a funny guy. You know how to riff on your own content. Some people, that's not a comfortable place for them. Right. But that doesn't mean you still can't give extras. Yep. In the audiobook, such as updates on content, deleted content, um, uh, things that you wanted to talk about in more detail that you couldn't, and you can just write that out and script it so you don't have to do off the cuff to add additional material.

Mike Michalowicz ([45:56](#)):

That's right. Um, one technique I use is why. So as I'm doing the read, I'll say, why did I write that in the back of my head? And then if something hits that of significance, that becomes a riff point. Oh, let me share with you why I wrote this. Um, always use the word you, not you all or everyone. Hey, let me tell everyone why I did this. Now you're breaking that intimacy of the one-on-one. Mm. So I never say that. I never say, Hey everyone, I just want you to know. I say, I want you to know why I did this. Um, we do extras, bonuses. So for *Profit First*, the Rerecord, we included a song, uh, the backstory is our members. We went down to Nashville and did a recording down there with a professional musician who helped us assemble a song. Uh, smartly. We contacted this, the location made sure that we had the full rights to it, but then we rewrote the song using those same lyrics.

Mike Michalowicz ([46:53](#)):

But we had a musician perform it and put it on the back of a book. It's exceptional because it's different. Like, have you ever gotten an audiobook that concludes a song about the book? Probably not in the nonfiction space, particularly in business. And so people will comment on it. The best thing was, uh, about 10,000 units have sold now the audiobook in the new format. We went to, uh, our most recent meetup at ProCon, the annual event we have with our members. And we announced in front of everyone, bill Litster, he was the, he's a member and also a musical performer. I said, we have great news. Uh, the book has been listened to 10,000 times with your song. So you have 10,000 downloads in your song. I said, and I looked it up, uh, a, a book that goes platinum sells a million, uh, gold is 500,000. Whatever. I said, I ranked it, you're officially plastic. You've gone plastic <laugh>. So yeah, that was that. Um, another little extra you can add is an interview at the end.

AJ Harper ([47:49](#)):

Oh, yeah, yeah.

don't write *that* book!

Mike Michalowicz ([47:51](#)):

We, we did it all in I do with all my books. And, uh, it doesn't have to be about the book itself. So in this, uh, interview, the producer asked me what other books you're working on? And I said, there's, I said there's three that me and AJ are considering. And it may be a book on personal finance. I didn't think we'd go that path, but I think it's time. Um, so you can give your readers anticipation for what's down the pike. You can give them insights into what's going on. And if you want to go really, really cool, kind of cool and edgy, reach out to your community in advance and say, if you have any questions for me that you'd want me to answer on my audiobook.

AJ Harper ([48:24](#)):

Yeah. You could do a Q and A and then you'll have to listen to the audiobook to get the answers.

Mike Michalowicz ([48:30](#)):

Oh, there you go. I love it.

AJ Harper ([48:31](#)):

And then, and that also changes how the book is priced, because part of exactly the determining factor in how a book is priced is the length of the audio.

Mike Michalowicz ([48:40](#)):

Yes. So that's a commonly misunderstood thing about audiobooks. You have a retail price in your audiobook, but if people can buy a book on credit, how Audible specifically does this is they have a pool of money assigned based upon minutes listened to. So, uh, the longer your book is, and the more people listen to it, the more you get paid. So you want people getting through your entire book. So it's got to be quality, engaging content. Um, that's all the stuff I had do. Do you have anything else?

AJ Harper ([49:12](#)):

No, I just think it's important. Just like we say, don't write that book. Don't record that audio book. Yeah. That's, um, that you haven't prepared for, that you haven't given thought to give thought to it. Prepare for it. Think about it as its own art form. And by all means, whatever you do, don't skip it. <laugh>.

Mike Michalowicz ([49:31](#)):

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Don't skip audiobook.

AJ Harper ([49:33](#)):

Don't skip it. Yeah, you need to get the audio book done. It's just part of being an author today.

Mike Michalowicz ([49:37](#)):

I invite you to go to dwtb-podcast.com. That's our website. You can get free materials. Plus we'd love for you to join our email list. We want to hear your stories too. So if you have any stories you can share with us, you can email myself and AJ at Hello at [dwtb-podcast.com](mailto:Hello@dwtb-podcast.com). And uh, as a

don't write *that* book!

reminder, thanks for joining us today. We look forward to having you on the next episode. We hope you're getting tons of knowledge out of this. And don't write that book. Write this one.