

# don't write *that* book!

## Episode 36:

### New Book Updates

**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.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:17](#)):

So, you're right, we, we did not decide to be in Limbo Land. It's been a very peculiar six months to, to maybe a year.

**AJ Harper** ([00:25](#)):

Mm. Yeah. It's been a, it's been a minute.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:28](#)):

It's been a minute. Yeah. I think what I didn't really appreciate until we got into this is the writing process is generally over six months before a book is printed, maybe even a year. There's editorial, there's some back and forth, but the core concepts are pinned down, and there's like this year waiting period and all in got extended on two occurrences by Penguin.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([00:59](#)):

So there's kind of this hiatus, not for marketing, but for the writing process. And we've written, we started writing books before a new book's been published.

**AJ Harper** ([01:07](#)):

Yes. Almost right away.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([01:09](#)):

And now it's been, you know, we're in June, um, but we're about to commit.

**AJ Harper** ([01:15](#)):

Well, we did commit.

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**Mike Michalowicz** ([01:17](#)):

Well, the, the publisher doesn't know yet.

**AJ Harper** ([01:18](#)):

<laugh> <laugh>. Hee hee.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([01:22](#)):

Ha, that's what we're talking about. I'm here in studio with AJ Harper. Uh, I just want to acknowledge effort, uh, about you. You make the effort to be here every single time you've been, you've beaten me here to the studio probably the last four times. Every time?

**AJ Harper** ([01:37](#)):

I got the code now.

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

Yeah. You got the code. You come in. The only thing is you, you get a coffee for you. You don't have hot coffee waiting for me.

**AJ Harper** ([01:44](#)):

I'm sorry. <laugh>. I could screw that up though. You know what I have is a Dunkin Coffee. Oh,

**Mike Michalowicz** ([01:50](#)):

Yeah. Not for me.

**AJ Harper** ([01:50](#)):

I can bring a Dunkin'. Okay. I, I'm not really a Dunkin' person, but they're, they took away my Starbucks.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([01:56](#)):

Oh, I, no, I don't care about any of those. I, I just like black coffee for the ritual. I don't even necessarily like the flavor, particularly.

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

I'm terrible at making coffee. I want you to know this about me.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([02:06](#)):

I did not know that about you.

**AJ Harper** ([02:07](#)):

It, I don't know how I screw it up.

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**Mike Michalowicz** ([02:10](#)):

Well.

**AJ Harper** ([02:10](#)):

It seems like it should be simple.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([02:12](#)):

It should be

**AJ Harper** ([02:13](#)):

It's dish water. Or like you have, like, you could chew it. <Laugh>

**Mike Michalowicz** ([02:19](#)):

Or you could chew it. Um, you know, the best coffee in the world is from my experience, inevitably Europe, even Australia's got nailed down. Like, the coffee is remarkably better than American coffee as a general rule.

**AJ Harper** ([02:33](#)):

Mm-hmm. <Affirmative>.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([02:34](#)):

I don't know why we can't figure this out. And, and when you go to Europe, they have Americanos where they water down their coffee specifically for the American palate. But honestly, any American who travels to Europe or down under will discover such a superior coffee.

**AJ Harper** ([02:49](#)):

I wonder if I would be better at coffee in Europe.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([02:53](#)):

You might be. You may be a European barista. You don't even know it.

**AJ Harper** ([02:56](#)):

Maybe that's just what's happening, <laugh>.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([02:58](#)):

So that's where I want to acknowledge about you. My partner, my writing partner, AJ Harper, is, is there every single time and usually early.

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**AJ Harper** ([03:05](#)):

Yeah. I, I try to be early. I like to be early. I appreciate it. But you're the same way. And you taught me something a long time ago. I'll just mention about you. I always tell people Mike's exactly who he seems to be. Thank you. And I think that's a high compliment of anyone. When a person is who they are in all situations, that's a person you want to know. But the late thing you taught me, actually it was through a book you wrote. If you're going to be late, if, see, what did you say? If you're going to be late, say 15 minutes, say you're going to be half an hour late. Yes. And then you're going to be perceived as busting it. <Laugh> Yeah. So I, I'm not really late, but I do try that now. If I know I'm going to be late, I'll do an extra.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([03:50](#)):

Yes. Beautiful. What most people do is I'm running late, and if, if all of the stars align, I can get there in 10 minutes. I'll say I'll be there in about 10 minutes. And the stars never align. And you get there 12 minutes late and someone's like, you said, 10 minutes. And they're so, they measure on their clock. And you're like, Mm-Hmm. Now you're late again. So you're at least wait in a row. So I'll say, I'll be there in 20 minutes. And then you're home or home. You're here at wherever your destination is in, in 10 or 15 minutes or 12 minutes, and you're early. I do this with my wife all the time for, for our marriage. And she still doesn't catch it. She'll say, Hey, Mike, when are you going to be home tonight? And I'll say, worst, worst, worst case scenario, six 15. So I'll say six 30. And I get home at 5 45. And she's like, you're early.

**AJ Harper** ([04:34](#)):

I need to try this.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([04:35](#)):

It's amazing.

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

But she's not going to listen to this.

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

No. She doesn't listen to it. She doesn't read my books. Nothing.

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

I don't think I, my wife sometimes listens to this. If I say, listen to this one episode, she'll listen to it. So I don't know if I can try that now. <laugh>.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([04:50](#)):

Oh, you're screwed. No, my wife doesn't listen to these things. She actually once asked me, she's like, does it offend you? I said, no, it, this is not, if it is not to be of service to you, these books and what I'm

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doing. So yeah, it's my career. But you don't listen. I didn't go to my, my parents' work to see how's my dad doing today? Like, you don't have to do that.

**AJ Harper** ([05:10](#)):

It's not parents. It's just, I think it mattered. I think there were a couple episodes I asked my wife to listen to because they were episodes I wasn't comfortable sharing <laugh>. Okay. Yeah. Like when I talked about writer's block, and also when I talked about trying to decide which book to write, which coincidentally we're giving updates about today.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([05:29](#)):

Yeah. We're totally, yeah. So just one little kinda, because this will play into it, I got invited to a, um, someone's home a couple weeks ago that said, Hey, we're having a home concert. They, they brought in the small performance group. They were remarkable. And you'll meet some new guests. You've, you've never met before. Every single one was an author. I, and not in the prescriptive nonfiction business space. They were all over. One guy was like, um, scientific research. Another one was like, you know, government, one woman, she was a Harvard professor and wrote about something. It was so fascinating, this diverse group of people. I'd never heard of their names, never met any of them. I did my research after the fact, you know, quickly go on Amazon, what's going on? So when someone had ask me what I do, it was interesting. My wife was with me.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([06:19](#)):

She'd speak up right away. He goes, he's an author. Like, she's almost felt like defensive of me. Like he's a good author. <laugh>, He's successful. Like, it just kind of funny. But at that group was a hybrid publisher and it's someone I had a dialogue with. Now, subsequently, I don't necessarily believe their organization is a fit. He himself may be a fit. But there's something that hybrid's doing that he turned me onto is imprints. So you can get an imprint, you can get women with a traditional publisher, but hybrids are doing this. And so now you can bring authors in under your umbrella, if you will. And this is something I think that happens in the music industry. Like these bands will tour and they'll have these other bands, uh, doing the opening act and so forth. It's a way to give those bands exposure, but they may be vested to some degree in that band. And now you can do it with hybrid publishing. Have your own imprint.

**AJ Harper** ([07:14](#)):

You're taking a percentage, too?

**Mike Michalowicz** ([07:16](#)):

And Yeah. Take a percentage. Yeah. I don't know if the music bands are, but as a, if you have your own imprint, you get a percentage of the royalties or above and beyond the royalties of that author. So you're, uh, inspired to, uh, to help them sell books.

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**AJ Harper** ([07:30](#)):

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([07:31](#)):

So that was interesting. So let's first do an update of where we are and then, or what happened, what transpired, and then where we are. Yeah. Okay. All In comes out, a few weeks later, I get a call from Noah. The opening line is, we love you here at Penguin. And I'm like, oh gosh.

**AJ Harper** ([07:47](#)):

Here comes, knows our editor at Penguin Random House.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([07:50](#)):

Who I've never met in person, and we've been working together. Have

**AJ Harper** ([07:52](#)):

We never met him? Is it shocking? I feel like we have though. Shocking. We have not. But it's all the Zooms.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([07:57](#)):

It's all the Zooms. I know exactly what he looks like. I think he's a very tall man. I've never met him, and I don't like that. I wish I, I wish I had the opportunity to. But we tried on two current occasions and an illness or travel.

**AJ Harper** ([08:10](#)):

It's a negative of the post pandemic. We used to go up to the, it was the Penguin offices before they moved over to Random House

**Mike Michalowicz** ([08:18](#)):

On Houston or something, or,

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

Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([08:20](#)):

Yeah. So, uh, he calls and says, Mike, you know, it's funny, you know, we love you here at Penguin. And I'm like, oh, here comes. And he goes, but your sales are not acceptable effectively. He goes, why? Why didn't you sell 50 or 60,000 copies of all in the first week? And his argument was, Profit First has a massive readership. Why aren't they translating to this? It's a great question you put.

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**AJ Harper** ([08:45](#)):

Fair question.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([08:45](#)):

Fair. And then he shared another author that, uh, has a large social media following that's he said, wrote a generic book. I don't know his exact words, but basically a generic book. And has been very successful in the launch. It's interestingly, it's dying very quickly now, but that's not no surprise. A generic book will do that. I wonder, this is now in reflection. There's stuff going on at these major publishers. Did you see that Article Penguin Let Go. Two Major.

**AJ Harper** ([09:11](#)):

I sent it to you, man. <laugh>.

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

But you were the source of that. Okay.

**AJ Harper** ([09:16](#)):

Yes. It was in the Times. Yeah. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([09:18](#)):

Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> two major publishers. I mean, long-term publishers that were there terminated and at least one person had no clue what was coming according to the article. Yeah. The market's changing. Book sales overall for most authors are down. I think at least last year when the numbers were shared with me through Penguin, book sales as a cumulative, all books, there's actually an uptrend

**AJ Harper** ([09:38](#)):

Uptrend. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([09:39](#)):

But it's a few authors selling a lot more and many authors selling less. I think there's a shakeup going on. There's

**AJ Harper** ([09:47](#)):

A shakeup going on. But see, the industry is bad reactor. It's like they just go into this like weird scarcity, you know, dump everybody overboard kind of mentality. And I just don't think that they run their ships very well. (Yeah.) So they sort of freak out, make these big cuts, but then they also get on bandwagons when it's, they think that's the right thing to do. I feel like the publishing industry is always behind.

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**Mike Michalowicz** ([10:17](#)):

It feels that way. Well, yeah, because they're large organizations. They move slowly.

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

They move slowly. And this is a, a reason why smaller presses are sometimes better, you know, because they're nimble.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([10:29](#)):

Yeah. But also in defense of these large corp, these large organizations, they, they have that flywheel spinning, so they can't abandon it. It's their bread and butter.

**AJ Harper** ([10:38](#)):

No, for sure. I'm not, I mean, I, there's a place for everybody, but I never, any people else ask me, what do you think about the future of publishing? I, I, people have been saying it's going to die as long as I've been in the industry, which has gone on 20 years. Yeah. So it just changes. It morphs. None of it is reliable.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([10:55](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([10:56](#)):

You have to be adaptable.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([10:57](#)):

You have to be adaptable. I mean, the ideal author is someone who sells a ton of books the day it starts and has a backlist that never dies. Like that's the ideal.

**AJ Harper** ([11:05](#)):

Yeah. That's a Unicorn.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([11:05](#)):

That's a Unicorn. Unicorn that, that these publishers want. So the call comes and he says, uh, we don't want to publish another book with you until we get this sorted out. Now, subsequently, All In, as of today, we record three episodes, uh, in one sitting. So we recorded the other two episodes. Today, I think I already shared, about 15,000 books, maybe a little bit more, of All In have sold. We are at the six-month point. And it's on an upward trend. We actually, I think, sold five or 600 units last week, or maybe actually more than that. So it's on an upward trend again, what's interesting, and we'll, we'll see if that sustains. For most of my books, actually, every single book, including Profit First, Launch period, of course, has the most sales. And then it goes into its trend where it kind of sells in. And then every single book, except for Surge, has a slow-growing back



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**AJ Harper** ([11:56](#)):

List. And there's a reason.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([11:58](#)):

Because they're good effing books.

**AJ Harper** ([11:59](#)):

That's it. Yeah.

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

<laugh>. Because they're good books.

**AJ Harper** ([12:01](#)):

That's it. That and your, you pounding the pavement.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([12:06](#)):

And, and pound pavement. Right. And I'm learning bulk sales now. Thank you. Yay.

**AJ Harper** ([12:11](#)):

You finally. I'm so happy

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

You finally convinced me. Yay. I, I see the value now as an additive to, uh, individual sales. So, just to give a little history lesson with Penguin, after writing Pumpkin Plan, I pitched Profit First to them. They said, no, we don't need another accounting book. We don't want it. Right. Okay. Your mistake, Penguin, but fine. And then they called a year or two later when they said, your backlist is unbelievable. Why does this keep selling the Pumpkin Plan? And we want Profit First. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, I, I wonder maybe we're experiencing it, but So Penguin, they said, uh, we don't want to do another book with you unless, uh, we figure out why you're not having these big boxes.

**AJ Harper** ([12:50](#)):

So this is just so we're clear from that profit, first to the now saying, we don't want to do another book with you in between. We had Clockwork, Clockwork Revised and Expanded. Fix This Next, Get Different and All In.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([13:05](#)):

Correct.

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**AJ Harper** ([13:07](#)):

Am I missing one?

**Mike Michalowicz** ([13:08](#)):

I think there's another one in there. No, maybe not. No. So then a, so this the update that we didn't share, A week or two later, Noah calls me. We're talking about, uh, a workbook. Because I, because there's been some inquiries and specifically the, the rise of AI. There's all these like AI workbooks. Mm-Hmm. There's, there's probably five dozen now available. And they're horrible. But it's, it's very gray law, but it's allowed. So I said, you know, I'm thinking about doing a workbook. He's like, well, we didn't want to do anything else. I'll get back to you. I'm going to talk with Adrian. They go, um, you know, how's a six figure advance? <Laugh>

**AJ Harper** ([13:46](#)):

<laugh>

**Mike Michalowicz** ([13:47](#)):

I'm like, what? And then I said, I, I don't really care about the advance so much. And he comes back and goes, well, we, we can sweeten that. We can increase it by 50% more if you want. And it just, maybe because it was because it was Profit First specific, it was just interesting.

**AJ Harper** ([14:02](#)):

Yeah. Because it was part of that money maker. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([14:04](#)):

Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Yeah. So I get it. And then when I looked at the royalties, ran the calculations, and my God, uh, what they were offering for workbooks is half of what you get traditionally for a book. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. But that's their setup. And I could try negotiating so forth, but it wasn't going to get much out of it. I, and I planted that seed. I said, what?

**AJ Harper** ([14:24](#)):

And we're, I'm sorry. I'm glad I'm giving Mike a look. And the most important thing was it that advance was going to come out our Profit First freaking royalties.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([14:36](#)):

Oh yeah. So it was, it was a, it almost a scam advance. Thank you for sharing that.

**AJ Harper** ([14:41](#)):

That's, that's a, that is a scam advance.

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**Mike Michalowicz** ([14:43](#)):

He said, yeah, we'll, we'll take it out Profit First because it's part of the Profit First Domain.

**AJ Harper** ([14:47](#)):

No.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([14:49](#)):

I'm like, oh. No. Thanks for giving me the money six months early. Thank you. But it's coming anyway

**AJ Harper** ([14:54](#)):

Because everybody, we get a twice a year big old check for Profit First royalties because the book long since earned out. And so then we wouldn't get that anymore. We'd get this advance, then we have to wait for that to earn out.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([15:07](#)):

Correct. Yeah. (No.) So it's frustrating. So I, uh, declined and then I have an obligation to go back to them. The first right of Refusal, I think it's called.

**AJ Harper** ([15:20](#)):

Right of First Refusal.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([15:21](#)):

Right of first refusal. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And what does that mean technically?

**AJ Harper** ([15:24](#)):

So most, most publishers have that baked into contracts. And it just means if you've got a new book, you need to run a, We have Dibs. (Yeah.) And it's not dibs on we get to publish it. It's, we get a first chance to say no or Yes. If, if they say yes, you don't have to accept the offer. So there are some exceptions to this. For example, sometimes if you're writing a series, it would be mandatory that they would get the series. Right? But it's brand new book, not part of a series. They have the, they don't have to fight with other publishers to make the offer. Right. So you're going to bring it to them first and they can either pass or say, yes, we would like to publish it. Here's our offer.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([16:10](#)):

So if they say Yes, you don't have to accept it.

**AJ Harper** ([16:13](#)):

You shouldn't. So you just want to make sure that that's, you understand that in your contract that it's just the ability to make the offer. Okay.

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**Mike Michalowicz** ([16:22](#)):

Exclusively of, of anyone else. But you could technically then say, okay, I want to pursue it elsewhere. If it's the same, if it's a derivative of the same title, Profit First Mastery, or something book,

**AJ Harper** ([16:35](#)):

Well then you're in a different contractual issue. So they're not going to let you go off and do Profit First with Simon and Schuster.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([16:42](#)):

Exactly. So, so I went back to them and said, I got the new book. So let me tell you how the new book has come about.

**AJ Harper** ([16:49](#)):

Just so we're clear, they don't want anything new from us. Right. And except a workbook that the terms were not good. So you said no. No. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([16:59](#)):

Yeah. And so now I go back to them saying, I'm going to do the next book. And they say, well what is it?

**AJ Harper** ([17:04](#)):

Because you have to technically you're required to. Yeah. Even though they said, we don't want anything else from you, you still had to go, required to go through the process. I'm,

**Mike Michalowicz** ([17:11](#)):

I'm required to. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. So I went back to Noah and said, um, do a new book. But lemme tell you how this new book came about. It's something we've been talking about and discussing.

**AJ Harper** ([17:20](#)):

We talked on this podcast about how you had about two or three ideas that you've been kicking around. We've actually outlined I think two, potentially three separate books so far.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([17:29](#)):

Yes. Yes. And all will be done at some point. But this one, a client effectively presented it. So, uh, it's a company called A-One Garage Door Services

**AJ Harper** ([17:40](#)):

<laugh>. Right. I love the A-one. I'm going to be first that, you know, it's old school because it's first in the phone book.

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**Mike Michalowicz** ([17:46](#)):

It's so old school. Yeah. A one Garage Door Services. So what you're thinking like, oh, this is some local guy down the street here in Boonton. He fixed garages. Yeah. Him and his 900 employees. Just to give you a sense, it's a, a company of about a thousand people. There's the 900, you know, workforce plus the managerial team. Tommy Mur Morello, I think's the owner or founder, and, sorry, I probably bastardize his name, but Tommy. And so I was teaching Profit First. And, uh, I presented to his, his managerial team a long time ago. And they deployed it. And it's been very successful for their organization. So Tommy calls and says, Profit First has been transformative for us by notice the challenge with our employees. They are making, they pay their employees very well. This guy, Tommy is just so heartfelt and he cares about his team.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([18:34](#)):

They deployed Dream Manager by Matthew Kelly for the organization there. And he said, these people in general are making more money here than they were in any comparable job before. So they've come into money and he goes, they don't know how to manage it. Some are coming out of debt or whatever. And some are experiencing financial challenges on a personal front and don't know how to manage it. And some make more money, but they don't keep it, it, it, it kind of faded away. I want Profit First for them. He says, are you willing to do it? I said, funny enough, Tommy, I I'm working on a personal finance concept. I've been playing around with it. And you may be forcing the hand here. I intend one day to write a book on this. And I said, but I need to test it out. So I said, there may be 900 tests we can run to prove out these concepts. So I have the outline. I want to develop it as we teach it. And it's become a course for them.

**AJ Harper** ([19:26](#)):

Yeah. So we already decided to do this book. We were, actually, this is the one I was excited about.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([19:32](#)):

Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([19:33](#)):

And yeah, we put it on the back burner.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([19:37](#)):

Yep.

**AJ Harper** ([19:37](#)):

And then now you're reviving it. Yeah.

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**Mike Michalowicz** ([19:40](#)):

I want to do it too. You know, one of the concerns I face is I'm the entrepreneurial guy. My life's purpose is to eradicate entrepreneurial poverty. And so the internal conflict is, am I ignoring what I believe to be my calling? Am I shelving something?

**AJ Harper** ([20:03](#)):

No.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([20:04](#)):

I know. Well, this, this is the internal conflict. And I, I think I've come to a resolution with this, but that's going on the other side says, with personal finance, if you don't have that mastered and you own a business as an example, and you have a good healthy financial business, but poor personal finances, the business will suffer. Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([20:21](#)):

I was going to say, I mean, that makes, it's a, that's a great, that's a great alignment right there. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([20:25](#)):

So I'm like, oh, that's, I got to do this. There's, there's many entrepreneurs who say, I'm nailing my business now, but not my personal finances. And there's the reverse too. People nail their personal. I've also found, I, I love personal finance books, but I've also found that many require the person to change who they are. You've got to change your habits. You have to have discipline, which means kind of this internal fight. And the kind of core thesis is don't change your habits. Channel your habits. Like what, what I'm arguing is you're already wired for managing money. I think every human being is, we've just got to expose what you're wired to do and then we've got to leverage that to your advantage.

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

Yeah. So similar to Profit First Methodology.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([21:13](#)):

I, in many ways,

**AJ Harper** ([21:15](#)):

So, let me I have a question, but, so you pitched this to Noah? (Yeah.) And I want to know exactly what was said. This is for my personal, I have not heard this by the way, anybody. This is get all my news on the podcast.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([21:28](#)):

I go, Hey Noah. AJ and I really like you

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

<laugh>. You did not <laugh>.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([21:34](#)):

Oh no, that's... "We like you."

**AJ Harper** ([21:34](#)):

Wait, wait.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([21:37](#)):

Yeah. Now it, it came in two stages. The pitches for us are just, it's all phone now. We don't have to write a proposal. Sometimes we're one or two pagers. So I just emailed him and said, Hey, I'm ready for the next book. And he email me back goes, what space is it in? I said, it's going to be, it's going to be the personal finance book. Can we have a call? He's like, absolutely. With that little, it's going to be a personal finance book. He already went to Adrian, went to the team, said, Mike's moving this space. So the call was, they already had to reached a decision. Yeah. By the time we had the call. So I call him on Friday. I took my sons on the Bourbon Trail. We went down to Kentucky. So I'm just leaving for the trip. And then my last call is, I call to Noah. I said, Hey Noah, you know what's going? Yeah. We love you. Amazing. Great. You know, some catch up. And he goes, um, so tell me real quick about the book. I said, it's Profit First for Personal. He goes, uh, are you going to use that title Profit first in there? I said, no, no. So I know where the second he said that, I said, know where it's going, <laugh>. So I said, we, we, internal discussion. He goes, we're not, the personal finance is not our space. And it's just not something--

**AJ Harper** ([22:38](#)):

You just gave him an easy out.

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

Yeah. Which ironically, one of the most recent books they shared was on personal finance called Don't Buy This, buy that. So, but he goes, it's really not for a fit for us. And I said, great. I said, I'm going to, I'm going to go shop it. He goes, you going to other traditional? I said, I'm not sure how I'm going. He said, okay. He goes, just assure me you won't use the Profit First title. He goes, that's the only conflict. I said, I won't, I said, just assure me you're going to get me a release because I, I want it documented, which I didn't receive yet. I gotta check with him. I've been released. I, I don't want them coming back saying, oh, we never said X, Y, Z. So I just want it documented. And that was basically it. I love you, man. Love you, too, man.

**AJ Harper** ([23:15](#)):

Love you, man.

# don't write *that* book!

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

No hardship, no hard feelings. It was funny when I hung up the phone, I still felt a discomfort. Like, it's over now. Is it is.

**AJ Harper** ([23:25](#)):

I mean, it was, we had a good time.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([23:26](#)):

It was been a great run. But it's atypical too. May many people don't have runs that long.

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

But listen, what? Oh, I think you texted me. Because I asked you a couple times what happened. Yeah, yeah, yeah. And you texted me and it's like, we're, we're free. We're out. Yeah. Yeah. And I was like, yeah, great. Let's go. Because here's the thing, everything is cyclical. You can't get stuck in that rut. And we need to get out.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([23:51](#)):

Totally.

**AJ Harper** ([23:52](#)):

So I'm thrilled. And personally, I think that was just another one of those moments where Penguin's going to go, God dangit.

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

Yeah, I think so. I think it's going to be big.

**AJ Harper** ([24:05](#)):

I see. I promise you that's what's going to happen. Yeah. I promise you that's what's going to happen.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([24:10](#)):

Kind of when they turned down Profit First. It was so interesting. Lisa Diona, who I never worked with, but she was an agent for,

**AJ Harper** ([24:16](#)):

Well we did work with her. We did, we try and get a proposal together to see if we, it would be a good fit



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**Mike Michalowicz** ([24:21](#)):

With Profit First. And she said the, uh, famous line to me, well, famous to me. She said, "Make them regret it."

**AJ Harper** ([24:26](#)):

Make them regret it.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([24:28](#)):

And then that's when we dis—we finished the relationship with Lisa Debone too. I said, I have to do this book. She says, we can't represent you. We don't, we don't believe in it.

**AJ Harper** ([24:36](#)):

That was--

**Mike Michalowicz** ([24:37](#)):

Another accounting book.

**AJ Harper** ([24:38](#)):

That was Profit First, everybody.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([24:39](#)):

Profit First. Yeah. No one believed in it except for me and you. Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([24:41](#)):

Well, I mean, whatever. Let's go.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([24:43](#)):

Yeah. So now we're in the position of choosing different publishing options. The three publishing options, of course, are traditional, are hybrid or self.

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

And within all of those are very, are different offshoots. So, so

**Mike Michalowicz** ([24:57](#)):

One of the things, you know, you and I were talking about, I don't know if it was on the podcast or just separately, is the royalties and the royalty structure. So the net effect is if you do traditional, on average, you'll make about \$3, \$3.50 per buck print. Kindle audio with hybrid is about \$8 a book. You're, you're only

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**AJ Harper** ([25:18](#)):

Expensive. Yeah. But you're, but you're, you're covering the printing cost for that.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([25:22](#)):

Yeah. So it depends on your print volume. So

**AJ Harper** ([25:24](#)):

It could be five, \$6 per book

**Mike Michalowicz** ([25:27](#)):

To print.

**AJ Harper** ([25:28](#)):

No net Net.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([25:29](#)):

So it means your print cost will be \$3.

**AJ Harper** ([25:32](#)):

It depends. Depends.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([25:33](#)):

Yeah. So it's definitely something you've got to calculate.

**AJ Harper** ([25:36](#)):

Because it's volume based and also format based and page count based.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([25:40](#)):

So that's a real calculation that we got put in there. So, you know, in a traditional 3.50 to three 50 book in a hybrid it may be five books. You're only talking about a dollar 50 more per book. Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([25:51](#)):

But if you're talking about three, 400,000 books, it's not a small number.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([25:56](#)):

It's \$600,000 or more. Right. It's 500,000 bucks. Right. So you've got to, you there, there's a point on volume that makes sense. There's no advance on on hybrid.

# don't write *that* book!

**AJ Harper** ([26:05](#)):

There's an investment.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([26:06](#)):

There's an investment. Right. So I've got to talk, I'm going to talk with, uh, Trena or, um, who's the other person over (Jesse.) Jesse Today actually it just happens to be this afternoon.

**AJ Harper** ([26:16](#)):

It's June 3rd. By the way, everybody when I'm recording

**Mike Michalowicz** ([26:18](#)):

This, today's June 3rd. Yeah. Yeah. So

**AJ Harper** ([26:21](#)):

Page Two is a top tier hybrid. Yep.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([26:23](#)):

So

**AJ Harper** ([26:23](#)):

It's also my publisher. Yep. And I chose them because I wanted more money.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([26:27](#)):

And MBS is, we were talking about MBS last week. He's with them

**AJ Harper** ([26:30](#)):

And control and they have a crackerjack editorial team. And I like the way that they are committed to backlist.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([26:38](#)):

Yeah. I think one of the many benefits of hybrid is the flexibility. So A-One garage door services we can now deliver. I'm talking about bulk sales. 900 bucks. That has Tommy's story because he went from rags to riches. His story is unbelievable. I thought I had a story. The guy's got a story, um, of the first chapter can be about what Tommy is and why this company is so invested in people's financial success because of what he struggled with. So now we write a, an intro or chapter about that, stamp A one on the front. They have 900 specialized copies for them. And this is what our buddy Phil Jones does over and over again. He'll in a hybrid.

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**AJ Harper** ([27:23](#)):

I don't actually know him. He's your buddy, buddy.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([27:27](#)):

Oh. I've, uh,

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

I talk about him.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([27:29](#)):

I thought you knew him. (No.) So that's what he does. I asked Penguin this exact same question. I said, you know, I'm going to be able to do these kind of custom runs with, we were talking about workbooks at the time and they go, yeah, yeah, we can do that if you do 3000 units <laugh> and they can't. And it's just Oh, so the flexibility is there. Yeah. The monetary wins may be there. And I'm going to do a little chat GPT-4.0 analysis on, just to make sure I know the numbers exactly. The timing is the question I'm facing right now. From your experience, is it when you do, uh, hybrid, is it faster to market? Is it slower? What what's your experience?

**AJ Harper** ([28:09](#)):

It just depends if you owe trade distribution or not. Okay. So, you know, there are some, there are some exceptions. So for example, Greenleaf, they have, they can get stuff to market faster. They were hybrid, but that's because they were a distribution company to begin with. And they're their own distribution. So they're not following the same, they have their own sales team. They're not following the same timelines. So sometimes they can get it done faster. But tra if you're going for trade distribution, which we would be, you are still looking at the same traditional timelines.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([28:44](#)):

Now let's, let's walk our listeners through the timelines. So what happens now is, uh, presumably in the near future we'll have a publishing deal. (Yes.) I'll come back to you. I'll call you up and say, okay, this is what we're doing. Still a little bit of me just still wants to look into maybe some other traditionals.

**AJ Harper** ([29:06](#)):

It doesn't hurt.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([29:07](#)):

Yeah. Because my thought is, um, McGraw Hill, whoever is maybe say, you know, oh, this is exactly what we're looking for. Exactly at the right time. (Why not?) And here's a million dollar advance or something. Yeah. So.

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**AJ Harper** ([29:20](#)):

Why the hell not? I think we should try.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([29:21](#)):

Okay.

**AJ Harper** ([29:22](#)):

By the way, we are legit having this conversation.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([29:25](#)):

Oh yeah. This legit, this is legit, legit on freaking podcast. Okay. So then I'll try.

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

Look all the, all the worst case scenario is, you can say no. Correct. You can opt out.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([29:35](#)):

And if I do that, does, does that taint us at all? Anywhere else? Like, does the word get back to other publishers saying, oh, you know, he came out to pitch and didn't, didn't accept anybody. Does that?

**AJ Harper** ([29:48](#)):

I wouldn't worry about it. (Yeah.) Okay. I mean, if you did it repeatedly, if you were a, you know, you know, repeat offender with that kind of stuff, maybe. Yeah. But is this a one time thing?

**Mike Michalowicz** ([29:59](#)):

Okay. So what I'll do, just again, we're just talking.

**AJ Harper** ([30:02](#)):

That means we need to get a proposal together.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([30:05](#)):

Yeah. We have to do a proposal. The other thing is, um, I don't have an agent, so there's two things I could get. Get an agent. I'm not a fan. (No.) So what I'm going to do is reach out to other authors I know and say, Hey, who's your editor?

**AJ Harper** ([30:18](#)):

Yeah. Easy. Yeah. You know, one of our old editors is over at McMillan.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([30:23](#)):

Who's that? Carey?

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**AJ Harper** ([30:25](#)):

I'll, I'll message you.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([30:26](#)):

Okay. Um, you know, I'm buddies who's with Meet Sethi. Yeah. So I'll give them a call.

**AJ Harper** ([30:32](#)):

You have enough friends.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([30:32](#)):

Yeah. So what I do is call my network.

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

So, everybody, this is the thing. Publishing is gatekeepers.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([30:38](#)):

That's right.

**AJ Harper** ([30:38](#)):

So get past the gatekeepers. This is very hard. You have a privilege and advantage now that you earned by selling, writing a bunch of books and selling a bunch of books. And meeting people and knowing people. So I really don't think you need to get an agent unless you're trying to get some sort of auction or something. But I don't know, man. Just, I don't-- I think you're a solo guy.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([30:59](#)):

Yeah. I'm a solo guy. I just,

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

It's 15%.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([31:02](#)):

Is a lot of money. 15% is a lot of money for a life. Um, so if I did get an agent, I would talk to Lucinda. She's extraordinary.

**AJ Harper** ([31:12](#)):

And her book is Get Signed.

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**Mike Michalowicz** ([31:14](#)):

Yeah, exactly. <laugh>. Exactly. She's great. Um, so we'll look at that then. So we'll get a publishing deal. If we're going to go to traditional, that'll probably take about a month, you know. What I may do is reach out to folks, tell me if this is the right approach, see if there's interest, and then write the proposal as opposed to write the proposal first. Or do you start, do you start writing the proposal right away? Because that takes some time.

**AJ Harper** ([31:41](#)):

I always tell people, have the proposal ready to go so that when they say Yes, I'm interested, you can attach it to an email.

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

Okay. Then we should hop on.

**AJ Harper** ([31:50](#)):

We can do a short one.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([31:51](#)):

We can do a short one and Yeah. Okay. So we'll do a proposal. Um, I'll talk with, I've been very candid with, uh, Page Two and other hybrids I've talked to. I said, listen, if Penguin back in the day comes back with a deal I can't refuse, I'm not going to refuse.

**AJ Harper** ([32:06](#)):

Yeah. And they're grownups. They know they get it.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([32:08](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. Um, so I'm going to, we're going to measure those pros and cons, but what I will come back with is I'll know the number of what the percentage has to be from a traditional and what the advance has to be to offset a hybrid at different book volumes.

**AJ Harper** ([32:24](#)):

I mean, I, I think that's one of the cool things that you do with Penned With Purpose, is that you can assess those things.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([32:29](#)):

We do this analysis. Yeah. So, we'll,

**AJ Harper** ([32:30](#)):

Most people can't figure that out on their own.

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**Mike Michalowicz** ([32:31](#)):

Yeah. We'll say if you do 50,000 books, here's the better choice. If you do a hundred, here's the better choice. If you do 500 or a million, if you do doing 10,000, here's the better choice. And here's the, and basically we calculate exactly what the advance needs to be. Uh, so you'll know. So we're just going to run our against that spreadsheet.

**AJ Harper** ([32:46](#)):

I I'm, I I think you're going to get a deal.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([32:49](#)):

Traditional. Yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([32:50](#)):

I have a feeling. But I'm excited to work on the proposal. Let's go, let's go do it.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([32:56](#)):

Let's rock and roll. Let's do it. And I got some cool stuff. Good. And I'll get the first chapter too, going, you know,

**AJ Harper** ([33:01](#)):

So let's talk about then what that's going to look like. I know a lot of people ask me, okay. Then they want to know what's, how does it work for us now the two of us going forward? So we'll do the proposal now. We've just agreed on this podcast. By the time this airs, we either will have had a accepted a deal from a traditional publisher or a hybrid publisher.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([33:21](#)):

Yeah. We are, we're not going to do self-publishing. It's just too many moving pieces.

**AJ Harper** ([33:24](#)):

No, and it's also, it's actually really challenging in terms of distribution. (That's right. That's right.) So forget it. That's right. We don't want to do it.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([33:32](#)):

It's going to be one of those two. We're busy.

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

Yep. So, we'll, by the time this airs, we I, we will have a deal either from a hybrid or a traditional



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**Mike Michalowicz** ([33:42](#)):

Yep.

**AJ Harper** ([33:42](#)):

And that's it. But our next step is to do the proposal. You don't need the proposal for your conversation with page two, but if you were a new author, you would need that.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([33:52](#)):

Oh, with Page Two even. Oh, yeah.

**AJ Harper** ([33:54](#)):

Okay. Yeah. Now you don't need a full, they love to get a full proposal. But you don't, you don't have to always do a full, it could just be some components that they want from you. So it's not necessarily the 30 to 60 page deal. But I do think it's, they love to see it, you know? Because it shows that you've worked it out.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([34:13](#)):

Yeah. Uh, so the proposal is, there's key elements. We, we have an episode.

**AJ Harper** ([34:18](#)):

We did A whole episode on it.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([34:19](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. So we'll be preparing that. But you and I'll iterate very quickly over the next couple weeks.

**AJ Harper** ([34:23](#)):

Yeah. We'll

**Mike Michalowicz** ([34:23](#)):

Go fast. We'll get it done. Uh, we'll have a sample chapter, I assume.

**AJ Harper** ([34:28](#)):

Um,

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

Or sample. Maybe not.

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

I don't, I'm going to say let's just see if we can shop it without it. I mean, you have 10 books. (Yeah, yeah.) You know what I mean?

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

Yeah. It's not necessary. Um, I will shop it directly. So with Pen With Purpose, Adayla for our team has shopped other deals. This one will be me personally, because I want to have that influence. Um, what then when they, if we get a, a deal that we accept, they sign, and usually it's 16 months out, I noticed is from the day of signing 'til the books hit the shelves,

**AJ Harper** ([35:03](#)):

Depending on the writing time we need. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([35:07](#)):

Um, what would be the timing for a self, uh, for a hybrid similar timeframe?

**AJ Harper** ([35:10](#)):

Like I said, if it's a, uh, trade distribution you're looking at similar.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([35:15](#)):

Okay. Okay. And then what do we do next? So we get the deal, we determine our path.

**AJ Harper** ([35:21](#)):

And also it depends if the manuscript's done right. So, for example, sometimes I have authors who pitch Page Two, who you're talking to today, and they're actually done with the manuscript. By the time they're pitching them. So obviously that timeline is going to shift. Our timeline. Timeline includes writing it.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([35:38](#)):

Okay. Okay. That helps a lot. Yeah. And then during this process, we start writing the book. I think one thing is interesting, because I think it's relevant, is the title selection. We usually go into the working title. But that doesn't mean it's going to be the final title. And sometimes when you're writing it's like, oh, this is a better choice of a title. So that may change. Um, then

**AJ Harper** ([36:02](#)):

And we do have a title, but we're not sharing it right now. (No, no.) Because it's probably going to change.

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**Mike Michalowicz** ([36:07](#)):

It's probably going to change. Yeah. And I, and we will test the title aggressively because that-- Yeah. Then I think it's realistic to say from today about 16 months. So it says June 3rd, 2024. So late fall 2025 Christmas time is probably when this book will be out.

**AJ Harper** ([36:26](#)):

I mean. Yeah. Depending on what's on deck for that publisher. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([36:31](#)):

You know, the marketing though, will start immediately. Special. Especially because this is a new or expanded flavor of what I've done.

**AJ Harper** ([36:43](#)):

Yeah. You, you, so just to talk about this for a minute, I personally feel that this is a, an area I've been wanting you to get. I've been telling you about this for almost a year now. I think you are a tremendous motivator. You help so many people realize their entrepreneurial dreams. And part of what we've always done in every book is that arm over the shoulder. Yeah. You can do it. Not in any trite way, just in a humble, you got this kind of way. And I feel strongly that that's a space that makes sense for you. I mean, we can keep writing about all different aspects of business, but ultimately this isn't the missing link component that I think you do automatically for folks. So I'm thrilled because I feel like we can combine that with this personal finance, that same energy. If you can do this. Yeah. But because it's not specifically anchored in the entrepreneurial space and broadens your readership, it's different. And you have to do a lot more legwork to get that book ready to market. Agreed. You're going to be in, uh, it's, it's a, some of the same readers, but also some new readers. And it's in a space you're not familiar with.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([38:07](#)):

That's right.

**AJ Harper** ([38:08](#)):

So you might read it, you might have friends who write in it, but that's not the same thing.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([38:12](#)):

Yeah. It is a new space. So there's going to be a, a learning curve for me. My marketing belief is heavy, constant education in this space to the community. So through video content, whatever it is, but starting to put education out there to say, oh, Mike is teaching this, or Mike has this.

**AJ Harper** ([38:32](#)):

You almost have to start thinking, okay, I'm building this now brand new. Yeah.

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**Mike Michalowicz (38:38):**

But not ignoring the existing

**AJ Harper (38:39):**

Community. No, not even. No. You'll bring readers over. But you got to know the people in the space just as if you were starting with book one. Yeah. You have, you gotta know your people. You gotta have your author community in that space. You gotta be in the places where those readers hang out. It's a whole thing.

**Mike Michalowicz (38:58):**

You know what's so interesting with this? A-One garage and All In. All In, we talk about safety. You know, it's part of the FASO, the Faso model. There's physical safety, there's financial safety we talk about where people have to have financial security. If, if you are living and you've lived this way in your life, you experienced it, check by check where there's no money. That becomes this tunnel vision of survival. And we talk about the necessity for businesses. If you want your team to be all in, they have to have financial safety. They have to know how to manage your own money. So this is a natural transition from All In.

**AJ Harper (39:35):**

Yep. It's not like you're starting to write the Profit First cookbook <laugh>.

**Mike Michalowicz (39:38):**

That's right. That's right. So what's interesting is, I think it trans, there's three communities that are going to consume this. One is Profit First readers, business owners, the business owner. And then that's educating their team. That's what Tommy is doing. And then people that are seeking this out for themselves, individuals. So there's really three markets. And one I've quote unquote, easy access to or established access is probably the better choice of words. Entrepreneurs, the entrepreneurs trying to educate their team is educating those entrepreneurs that you can educate your team. And then this other market, which is the broadest market, is people are seeking this out for themselves.

**AJ Harper (40:12):**

Well, and I would also say corporate, you know, I think you can leverage the corporate relationships you're building now for All In, and you can leverage them for sure the same work you're doing for A-One. It's modeling that and put bringing that into other corporations.

**Mike Michalowicz (40:24):**

Oh, for sure. Yeah. For sure.

**AJ Harper (40:26):**

So it's not really it's departure, but it's makes very, very good sense as to where he's going.

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**Mike Michalowicz** ([40:31](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And you know, many other authors have done this successfully. I was, we were talking about Tim Ferriss last week, you know, he moved from The Four-Hour Work-week in entrepreneurial kind of angle into this life hacking guy.

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

Life hacks guy.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([40:45](#)):

Yeah. So you, you see these transitions from the entrepreneurial alone markets, these bigger, more expansive markets. So that's what's happening, that's what's coming out with this book. We'll have an update as we move along next time we do recording.

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

And that means, means we have to finish writing it this year.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([41:01](#)):

Yeah. We got to start hauling ass. Yeah. We're starting a little late. And I know you're going into vacation time and I am too. Yeah. But we gotta start rocking and rolling.

**AJ Harper** ([41:08](#)):

Dude. We're going to be up early, man,

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

Early morning. I love those. I love those early morning starts. How about you, you, you, uh, where's your next book stand?

**AJ Harper** ([41:17](#)):

So we did an episode, uh, which was actually emotional and challenging for me to, to do, to admit where I was trying to decide. It's called, "Is it a book?" is the episode. And I was trying to decide between three books. And up until probably about two weeks ago, I didn't know. So it was like that mystery went on for me. As a recap, I had a deal with Page Two to write a book about the process. I used to determine if a book is going to work or not. Test driving your content. And it's a class I teach. I actually don't, it's an evergreen class anybody can take. But, and I sometimes also teach it live, but regardless it's a really necessary book. I just was very bored and I just wasn't feeling like I, because you, you've got to be excited about the book.

**AJ Harper** ([42:10](#)):

To develop it, write it, edit it, and then market the heck out of it for years. Yes. So you better love it. And I just was feeling like, I don't think I can do this. Yeah. Then there was the book on my heart, which is

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about really helping authors stay in the game was, you know, soul stuff. Deep stuff. Mindset stuff. Which I feel strongly about writing, but I don't know if we need another voice in it or not. I don't know. I was really torn. I didn't quite, that's an expansion market for me. Yeah. Because it's not just prescriptive nonfiction, that's for any type of writer. Yeah. But I still feel a calling to do it. And then the third was loosely titled, *Please Sell Your Book*, which is my, you know, methodology for how you think about selling books.

**AJ Harper** ([42:58](#)):

And I had that one all outlined and the whole deal. But that concept I hadn't tested. I've been testing that concept incidentally. Um, and I, I'll keep doing it and I, I think, um, I, you know, there might be something there, but the whole idea was what do I write next? And it was this angsty feeling. And ultimately what I've decided is I'm not actually writing anything this year. (Interesting.) Any new, no. To clarify any new book this year. So my decision is door number four. So I had three doors. I chose the other door that, you know, wasn't, I didn't consider as an option. (Interesting.) And let me tell you why I'm not going to write this book. That's boring to me.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([43:51](#)):

Definitely not.

**AJ Harper** ([43:52](#)):

Again, I still think it's extremely valuable because I have a whole system for how do you test your content to see if it's going to work. But I already wrote that, did the class, so I'm not interested. But the mindset stuff is just calling me, calling me, calling me. Because mindset doesn't do it justice. But again, it's about how can I help authors stay in this, because they just quit left and right. And it's not just quitting by putting a book in the drawer. It's quitting by not by selling yourself short, by compromising on the content, by giving up on selling it. Uh, it's just, ugh, I'm super passionate about this. So what I've decided to do is instead of putting the pressure on myself to write a book, write a book right now, this year, I, that's what inspired me to do the Substack. So I said, you know what? I'm going to, I got all this stuff I want to write about and share. Let me put it in a newsletter form and just test the content, but also just be helpful. Let me just do it now. I don't, I don't want to wait 'til 2027 to help authors with this stuff. I can help them now.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([45:05](#)):

Yeah. Brilliant.

**AJ Harper** ([45:06](#)):

So the, you know, whatever. I'm just going to lean in really hard to write a must read and selling as much as I possibly can. Because I haven't sold as many books as I want to sell. So I'm going to lean into that. We're doing a paperback version of *Write a Must-Read* and comes out in May next year. (Oh, nice.) And, uh, that has its own little launch, you know? Nice. And then I might do some workbooks or journals or things that are helpful, but I'm not going to do the, it was a big relief. It's like, what? Okay, I don't need

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to necessarily have one right now this year. I will write that other book. I'm just, right now I'm going to write it in a newsletter forum and see what, see what works for people. Yeah. So now that book is now a Substack, write a must read for free.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([45:57](#)):

I love it.

**AJ Harper** ([45:57](#)):

And you know what? That's what I, that's good for me. I, this is what I love is let me just help you now kind of thing. So that's where I landed. And I think the book will eventually come, but I don't, I'm not putting any pressure on myself about when it needs to come. And there's something else that, uh, my friend Andrea Lee, she's a, do you know, you know Andrea right? I

**Mike Michalowicz** ([46:20](#)):

Know the name. Yep. I can't picture the face at the moment, but,

**AJ Harper** ([46:24](#)):

So I texted her, no, she texted me and she had listened to that episode. I think it's episode 25, where I say, is it a book? And I'm sharing all the angst about which book I should write. She texts me out of the blue and she says, I just listen to this episode and I just wanted to say thank you. Uh, because I felt very seen. Mm. Because I think there's a lot of people who are wrestling with these things, and you've got the heart decision and the business decision and the, there's all the strategy considerations and timing and what do I do and pressures from others and a bunch of opinions. And it can be a lot to try and figure out what to do. So she was thanking me. She said, I feel seen. And she said, and for the record, my vote is the novel. And I said, that wasn't one of the options. <laugh>. She's like, yeah, I know. <Laugh>

**Mike Michalowicz** ([47:11](#)):

That's amazing. Kudos Andrea.

**AJ Harper** ([47:14](#)):

So that is a thing, by the way, is I have been, had a novel I've been wanting to write for a really long time. Embarrassing more than 20 years.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([47:25](#)):

Wow. So my vote's the novel. That's great.

**AJ Harper** ([47:28](#)):

My vote is the novel. And I, I thought about, you know what, let me just be free. Let me just be free. Yeah. We don't always have to do the next book. We can tinker around and see what works and what doesn't. You know, James Clear, Atomic Habits. He pulled that he paid attention to what people

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responded to on his newsletter, his blog, and what was working. So I'll do that, I'll do that with the mindset stuff. But let me help now and maybe, maybe it'll be what Andrea says. Maybe it'll be this other thing that I didn't mention and wasn't considering, which is writing some fiction. But I think we have to let ourselves just step off the train. Just step off the train

**Mike Michalowicz** ([48:12](#)):

Way to honor thyself. I'm, uh, heading out to, uh, Colorado next Sunday to meet with Jeff Walker. He wrote a book called Launch. Yeah. He, he, he, he's a info marketer. Yeah. But

**AJ Harper** ([48:26](#)):

He's like, I know the name.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([48:28](#)):

He's such a good guy. He's such a good human. He just cares. So he sold over a million copies of that book and--

**AJ Harper** ([48:36](#)):

Really?

**Mike Michalowicz** ([48:37](#)):

Yeah. Or, or thereabouts. It's, it's high Six Figures. Okay. So I met with him. I said, how's your book doing? He's like, uh, I dunno.

**AJ Harper** ([48:45](#)):

He doesn't, he doesn't know. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([48:47](#)):

He doesn't pay attention. He goes, I, he goes, I go, you don't care. He goes, no, I care. He goes, I wrote that book because not everyone can afford my programs. Yes. And they need to know this stuff. Yes. He goes, it's everything I know in that book. He's like, I, I don't, he goes, I don't consider myself an author. Uh, I don't really care about how it does, I don't plan to write another book. I just had to do this. It just kind of remind me of your story of where's the heart really calling? And sometimes we got to take pause to listen. Because at the end of the day, it's about transformation. Uh, it's about being of service and I don't know. It's something.

**AJ Harper** ([49:24](#)):

It is. And here's, here's something I, I didn't plan to say today, but I think it's important when it's a book, when it starts to become that and you're creating for that end result, there's parameters. It has to do certain things. It has to, I mean, there's, there's room, there's room to play, but it's still in that container. And if you just let yourself talk, be free from the container, cool things can happen. So there's also a



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merit to what my choice is, which is no choice. Meaning that, well, it's not, it is a choice. (Yeah. Exactly). Not, not not too good in the container this year. I may very well change my mind for next year, but it doesn't mean you can't still create content of value. And I know that if I do end up writing a book on, for now, we'll just use the term mindset. It'll be better for the fact that I'm actually going to play around with this now. You know,

**Mike Michalowicz** ([50:27](#)):

I'm entering this next phase on our books together, uh, with a little bit trepidation. Because it's just, it's new again. But a lot of excitement because on the other side it's always like, wow, that was the right move or the right thing. Anything else you want to share before we wrap it up?

**AJ Harper** ([50:44](#)):

I think this is the most exciting time. I mean, it's, so think of all the risks that we took back in the day. Right. <laugh>

**Mike Michalowicz** ([50:51](#)):

I know,

**AJ Harper** ([50:52](#)):

You know, I'm, I've always, the reason I, one of the, well, there's many reasons why we're a good partnership, but a big reason is we both are committed to the long game. So we're not, we're not transactional, we're not shortsighted. We will stick it out.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([51:06](#)):

We will stick it out.

**AJ Harper** ([51:07](#)):

I mean, we are going to see royalties from All In this fall. I know.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([51:11](#)):

It's going to be nice, too.

**AJ Harper** ([51:12](#)):

We started that book two and a half years ago.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([51:15](#)):

Yeah.

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**AJ Harper** ([51:17](#)):

We haven't seen a dime

**Mike Michalowicz** ([51:19](#)):

Yet.

**AJ Harper** ([51:20](#)):

But that's the, I mean, we're, we knew that because we wanted the profit share. That's just an example of, okay, well it's going to be a minute, but it'll be better in the end. And it's also saying, all right, like, I really want to, I need to take you back because I don't know if you remember how despondent you were about Penguin passing on Profit First, and then the combination you got really excited because Lisa Damon wanted to represent you. Right. Seth Godin's agent. What's better than that? Correct. You were psyched. Like, okay, new day I got this killer agent. Yes. How cool am I? Yes, this can be great. We went to Art Cafe, we met her there because you know, she's over in Dobbs Ferry.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([52:00](#)):

That's right.

**AJ Harper** ([52:01](#)):

We went, I still remember we went there. She had us working on a proposal and how excited you were and then that didn't quite, wasn't quite a good fit. She's great, but just wasn't a good fit. And you weren't really concerned. You are like, but why isn't this shouldn't be like this? And I remember saying to you, Eff it, just eff it. Just publish it. Just, we know what to do. We'll just do it ourselves. Let's get it done. But you actually were in a dark place. I don't know if you--

**Mike Michalowicz** ([52:33](#)):

Yeah, I, I remember that vaguely.

**AJ Harper** ([52:35](#)):

And then we just went forward. But I think we forget the dark place. It was a place of unknown and uncertainty. Yeah. Because you were thought you were in with Penguin and then you were adrift.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([52:48](#)):

Yeah. I'm feeling 10. Uh, a taste of that again. I think. Yeah. I remember the, the Lisa Damone story, the subsequent call when she said, make them regret it. I know exactly where I was. I was at the Mountain Lakes Post Office. Uh, there was an American flag flapping in the wind, and I was able to get her on the phone. I spoke to her and that's when she said, I was looking at the flag. I'm like, okay. And I felt that surge of energy again, but I

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**AJ Harper** ([53:11](#)):

Don't, you know what, at the time, I think make them regret it was the energy you needed.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([53:17](#)):

It was, oh, it totally was.

**AJ Harper** ([53:18](#)):

But I don't think that's you anymore. No. I think now it's more about making something of value and changing lives. So what an exciting time.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([53:29](#)):

Yeah. It's, it is the right thing to do.

**AJ Harper** ([53:31](#)):

And honestly, I'm in an uncertain place too. Yeah. You know, it's not, I don't know how, yeah. This is all going to shake out for me. I have no idea. Making new stuff is hard. Yeah. And choosing new pathways and new readership, and I don't, you know, new types of books, all this stuff is very challenging. But that's art. And we don't use that word a lot with prescriptive, nonfiction. I think people recoil when you say art, because most people don't think of themselves as artists. But it is, and this is the part of the process that artists feel, which is, this is messy and murky and I don't know what's going to happen and I can only see two inches in front of me in this tunnel. And this is the best part.

**Mike Michalowicz** ([54:16](#)):

My gosh, thank you for sharing that. We're going to give updates as we do future episodes of what's going along. So you're going to follow the art and process. Thank you for listening to today's episode. What'd you guys think? Like we're always, not always, we're regularly giving insights into different aspects of the author journey, but this was kind of just a heart for heart, heart to heart, brain dump or heart dump. Tell us what you think. Should we do more of these less? I don't know. I want to hear. So email us at [hello@dwbpodcast.com](mailto:hello@dwbpodcast.com). Also, visit the website, [dw.tb.podcast.com](http://dw.tb.podcast.com) to get all the free materials we have there, uh, to sign up for our emails list and so forth. Thanks again for joining us for today's episode. We look forward to seeing you next week. And as always, don't write that book. Write the greatest book you can.