

# don't write *that* book!

## EPISODE 37:

### “The Great Endorsement Debate”

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. And we are rolling in studio with my friend AJ. AJ. We've done some crazy stuff together. So here is my introduction of you. This literally came in the mail today, and I want you to look at who this was shipped to.

AJ Harper ([00:31](#)):

He's handing me an Amazon, looks like an Amazon box.

Mike Michalowicz ([00:34](#)):

I think it's Amazon package. I'm not sure who came,

AJ Harper ([00:35](#)):

Who was it shipped to? <laugh>.

Mike Michalowicz ([00:39](#)):

Is that awesome? I still get packages that arrive today.

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

It says Carly Simon from Mike Michalowicz. What's in it?

Mike Michalowicz ([00:47](#)):

I don't know. You can open it up. Can I open it? Of course you may. Okay. So here's my endorsement view. While you open it up, you are, did I say this before? You're probably one of the funniest people. I know what you really are. You can land a joke and you're, your sense of humor is very dry. It is spot on.

AJ Harper ([01:08](#)):

Protein. Did you order this?

Mike Michalowicz ([01:08](#)):

No, I didn't. No, no. Okay. If you come. So that's the trick. So anything that comes,

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

Oh, this is very relevant for today. That's what I thought. Do, you didn't even know you were, you, did you know that when you brought, you knew we were doing endorsements today?

Mike Michalowicz ([01:21](#)):

I knew we were doing endorsements today. That's not why I brought this up. It's literally just arrived this morning.

AJ Harper ([01:25](#)):

That's so funny. The Carly Simon joke, by the way, is, um, this Pumpkin Plan, right? It was pumpkin

Mike Michalowicz ([01:31](#)):

Plan.

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

Yeah. If you all look in the pumpkin plan at the dedication <laugh>,

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

Right? It says it's...

AJ Harper ([01:39](#)):

To Carly Simon.

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

You think this book is about you, don't you? <laugh>, don't you? I mailed it to Carly Simon. She rejected it. Uh, receiver denied or whatever. It was like a stamp from the post office. So she, and I get it. I guess she probably gets a lot of unsolicited communication. But I would say, um, every, so on our website, it says, if you wanna mail something to Mike, mail it to Carly Simon. So there's two things. One thing is this person followed the instruction set. So kudos to them. Most people don't get the gag anymore because it's kind of aging out. And, um, it's a great way for me to differentiate: Is it coming from me personally or not? The funny thing is, if someone sends something to Carly Simon, I will look at this because they're acknowledging it's unsolicited. If someone sends something directly to me and I open up, it's not who I know. I get frustrated and--

AJ Harper ([02:29](#)):

Yeah, we'll talk about more that, more about that later.

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

All right. So my introduction to you is best sense of humor.

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AJ Harper ([02:35](#)):

I'm surprised to hear you say that.

Mike Michalowicz ([02:36](#)):

Oh, literally. I think I have like a list of like top five funniest people. (Really?) Yeah. You might be number four or five. John Malitino, my college roommate freshman year is the funniest human on this planet. Okay. Um, a couple other people that can really get me going.

AJ Harper ([02:53](#)):

I don't... Really? I don't hear that.

Mike Michalowicz ([02:56](#)):

<laugh> You're... Most go for quantity. <laugh>. You go for quality <laugh>. Okay. Like, you'll drop one, like the little f-bomb you did earlier before we started recording. I, I did, I did delete it. But, um, just your commentary afterwards is always so funny.

AJ Harper ([03:15](#)):

Okay. That makes me really, I, I want to be funny. So that is, (oh, you are) I feel very excited about this. Thank you. I'll take it. I'm very, the thing I'm most proud of is how I can make my wife laugh every day.

Mike Michalowicz ([03:28](#)):

Oh, yeah.

AJ Harper ([03:29](#)):

I mean,

Mike Michalowicz ([03:29](#)):

Always unique ways.

AJ Harper ([03:30](#)):

Yeah. I, I can every day. And I think it's one of the keys to marriage.

Mike Michalowicz ([03:35](#)):

Amen.

AJ Harper ([03:36](#)):

I mean, you have to be able to laugh at all the things. Everything. Yeah. And if you're able to make a person laugh, then there's trust and closeness. And, because you can't really, you're not gonna get anybody to laugh if they're mad at you. No. You're not gonna get anybody to laugh if there's tension or

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disdain or any of those things. (No.) So if you can make a spouse laugh after 26 years of marriage, that's what our, that's our anniversary this month. 26 years.

Mike Michalowicz ([04:02](#)):

We had 27 yesterday.

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

I know. We're neck and neck.

Mike Michalowicz ([04:06](#)):

You will, you'll never pass us.

AJ Harper ([04:07](#)):

<laugh>Never. Never.

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

No.

AJ Harper ([04:09](#)):

No. because you're devoted to your wife.

Mike Michalowicz ([04:11](#)):

Yeah. Oh, yeah. Right. If you, if you quit a marriage, if you quit, yeah.

AJ Harper ([04:14](#)):

Neither of us are gonna quit. No, I'm not quitting. We're in it for the long haul.

Mike Michalowicz ([04:17](#)):

I'm not quitting. She may quit me, but I ain't quitting.

AJ Harper ([04:18](#)):

She's not quitting you.

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

I don't think so.

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AJ Harper ([04:20](#)):

You're a lucky duck though. I'm, I'm gonna introduce you that way. Okay. You have a gorgeous wife for one thing. Yeah. Most people don't probably know that. And, and you are totally devoted. I, that's one of the things I love about you.

Mike Michalowicz ([04:34](#)):

Thank you. Yeah.

AJ Harper ([04:37](#)):

I love to see the two of you having adventures now.

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

That I think has been the best part of our marriage is there's a, I was about to say rekindling, but we never had a honeymoon phase. We had children, you know, I adopted my, my first son and we never had a honeymoon phase. We had kids since the second we were married. And so now all the kids are adults now. It's like, hey.

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

Yeah. It's fun. Right? I want to say that's another thing is, uh, how I knew you were such a good guy was I did not know you adopted your first, your first child. Oh, yeah. You never mentioned it for probably eight or nine years.

Mike Michalowicz ([05:17](#)):

Oh, really? Yeah.

AJ Harper ([05:17](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. No, I love that. Because it's no distinction for you.

Mike Michalowicz ([05:21](#)):

Oh. No. No distinction whatsoever. Yeah. Sometimes I, he's my favorite by far.

AJ Harper ([05:25](#)):

But you should <laugh> by far. Okay. But I will tell you that we have just talked about qualities. I should also say Mike is the author of many business books, including, and also a children's book, all about money, business and such. And, uh, great speaker.

Mike Michalowicz ([05:42](#)):

Thank you.

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AJ Harper ([05:44](#)):

Lots of, lots of successful businesses.

Mike Michalowicz ([05:47](#)):

We're gonna talk about a, um, a new book, not this episode, but in a few episodes. Well, we're in --

AJ Harper ([05:53](#)):

That, we're working, we're in, we're finally in it.

Mike Michalowicz ([05:54](#)):

We're in it, we're finally in it. And I even brought paperwork that we can talk about on air. Um, I do wanna shout out to our listeners real quick and then we'll kick into the subject today, which is about endorsements. How do you get great endorsements? And we're gonna debate it. Um, I see certain values, you see other values. And let's see what comes out of this. I get reader feedback, listener feedback now from our show with ongoing and growing regularity. So just shout out to our listeners.

AJ Harper ([06:24](#)):

A special shout out to our binge watch binge listeners. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz ([06:27](#)):

You psychos.

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

Yeah. I hear, I hear a, I hear that a lot.

Mike Michalowicz ([06:31](#)):

It's, it's important to us. because it fuels the show. And I think we discussed at a certain point, like, Hey, is it worth continuing? Like, is there enough content and are people receiving enough benefit? For me, if nothing else, it's just cathartic talking about books.

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

It's a blast. And now you've gotten to a point by the way that, um, if I wanna talk to you about something, you say save it for the podcast.

Mike Michalowicz ([06:52](#)):

Right? Right. We were talking yesterday and or two days ago on the phone, and we're in the middle of something important about this project. We're working on the new book, and I'm like, save it. Save it. That's juicy stuff. Um,

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AJ Harper ([07:08](#)):

All right. Endorsements. Okay. You don't think, can I set it up?

Mike Michalowicz ([07:11](#)):

You Set it up. Oh, yeah. Yep.

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

You don't think that they make you get them and you'll keep getting them. But you don't think that they make a measurable difference in sales. And I think they do. Although I can't prove it.

Mike Michalowicz ([07:25](#)):

Yeah. And I can't prove mine either. Okay.

AJ Harper ([07:27](#)):

So neither of us have evidence. (Yeah.) We're just gonna debate <laugh>. Yeah. Without evidence. Let's go. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz ([07:32](#)):

It's, it's pure conjecture. It's how I, okay.

AJ Harper ([07:34](#)):

What's your stance?

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

Okay. Uh, okay. My stance before the story. So my stance is this, that endorsements, it's a form. It's a form of, it's satisfying the ego. Um, they are so readily available, meaning-- I take it back. I take it back. And this is probably

AJ Harper ([07:57](#)):

That's your perspective.

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

Yeah, that's my perspective. They're so readily available, uh, from many authors that they lose their credibility. You'll see certain endorsements over and over again. At the same point, I, when it comes to purchasing books, have never looked at the endorsement, because I know the game. And we'll talk about that, that I put no value in it, except for, oh, these authors know each other. If, if anything, sometimes a negative association saying, oh, so and so endorsed it, they're probably getting a little money on the side or something. Money. Yeah. That's not necessarily the case. It happens too. What? Yeah. Through imprints. Through imprints.

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AJ Harper ([08:31](#)):

Wait a minute.

Mike Michalowicz ([08:34](#)):

So say

AJ Harper ([08:34](#)):

I, 20 years in this business, I've never heard of money exchanging hands for an endorsement.

Mike Michalowicz ([08:40](#)):

Not, not necessarily directly, but if I have an imprint called Mike's Imprint within with Penguin, and you, uh, are my an author in an imprint, I'll endorse your book. And I'm also getting a percentage of the royalties of the book.

AJ Harper ([08:54](#)):

Okay. Okay.

Mike Michalowicz ([08:55](#)):

So it's not Yeah.

AJ Harper ([08:55](#)):

Yeah. Okay.

Mike Michalowicz ([08:56](#)):

That--It's not trade. It's not like anyone.

AJ Harper ([08:57](#)):

Okay. I thought you were saying like, I'll give, I, gimme 500.

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

I bet you it's happened.

AJ Harper ([09:03](#)):

Really?

Mike Michalowicz ([09:04](#)):

I bet you, I bet you.



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AJ Harper ([09:06](#)):

All right. Well, maybe.

Mike Michalowicz ([09:07](#)):

How, that's how Instagram, you know, runs, is influencer talks about your product. You've got to pay.

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

I think it's mostly just favors, but, okay. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz ([09:17](#)):

I would say it's, it's mostly favors a hundred percent. And a few times it's an integral, I've actually read the book endorsement, but that is such a minority. And that's the other thing about endorsements, is that person is unlikely they've read the book at all. Maybe skimmed it. That's the, that's all I do when I do an endorsement is just do a skim through.

AJ Harper ([09:35](#)):

Yeah. But, okay. I'm, I'm gonna let you, I'm, I'm gonna let you stay on your, I'm sorry, I'm interrupting your, your stance.

Mike Michalowicz ([09:40](#)):

Yeah. So my stance is, as a consumer, it doesn't influence my purchases. It can sometimes have a negative association. I think that most of them are there. False endorsements are just someone who is doing a favor for someone else. Um, and yeah. Therefore, I don't think it amplifies sales. What's, what's your stance?

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

Okay. So I just think this is, I think this is your unique position as a successful author. I don't think it's, you represent most of the buying public.

Mike Michalowicz ([10:13](#)):

That's absolutely

AJ Harper ([10:14](#)):

True. So, because you can see behind the curtain that's s for you. Yeah. But I wanna remind you that you actually have had authors that have read your entire book and given you an endorsement.

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

That's true too.

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AJ Harper ([10:25](#)):

Like The Pumpkin Plan everybody on the back of that book, uh, read it.

Mike Michalowicz ([10:31](#)):

Do you... Really?

AJ Harper ([10:31](#)):

Maybe not. Yeah. You don't remember.

Mike Michalowicz ([10:34](#)):

I, oh, I remember. We're gonna have to discuss this story in a minute. I don't think they read it. I don't think any of them read

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

It. Well, you had conversations with them.

Mike Michalowicz ([10:40](#)):

I did. I did. But, and

AJ Harper ([10:41](#)):

You, okay. Well, all right. We'll talk about that. Um, I know for a fact that, uh, the endorsements I got were legit.

Mike Michalowicz ([10:52](#)):

Do you think Steven Pressfield read your entire book?

AJ Harper ([10:53](#)):

I know for, I, I've got that story. I know for a fact he did.

Mike Michalowicz ([10:58](#)):

Mother. That's amazing.

AJ Harper ([10:58](#)):

Because he wouldn't have done it otherwise. That was a condition.

Mike Michalowicz ([11:02](#)):

He is such a marquee endorsement. because how many books does he endorse in his?

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AJ Harper ([11:07](#)):

I have no, I don't, I keep track. I don't keep track.

Mike Michalowicz ([11:08](#)):

Yeah. I bet you very, very few.

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

Okay. Well, my, here's my stance. I think that the general public don't, they don't think about it. Like you think about it. Yeah. And I don't think they're even really tracking if the same person's giving an endorsement to so and so, or so and so you're just in this very small world, so you're seeing these people and you're making, you know, assumptions, educated assumptions about what happened to get that endorsement. But some people really do read the books.

Mike Michalowicz ([11:41](#)):

Yes.

AJ Harper ([11:42](#)):

And sometimes they read an abstract of the books. You know, sometimes it's like the Cliff Notes version. I actually don't think there's anything wrong with that. I think, you know, I've definitely, as a <laugh>, as a ghost, I have ghosted endorsements for sure. And those people didn't read. Absolutely. They just slapped it on. But I also know people who do. So it just kind of depends. The average consumer can't really determine if a person read it or not. But I think it's really beneficial if you're getting endorsements from authors that your potential readers love or hold in high esteem. Especially if you're a new author. And I'm gonna tell a little anecdote. I've shared this with some of the authors in my community. When I had my publishing house, which I co-founded with two other people. We had this up and coming author, Julian Winters. And you actually--

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

I, I've read some of his books. Yeah. Some, some of it.

AJ Harper ([12:40](#)):

Yeah. So he's New York Times bestselling author. Yeah. <laugh>. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz ([12:43](#)):

Amazing.

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

I, he had a, a book running with Lions. And we, we, um, I brought it out of the, I acquired it, and it was his first book. And I remember we, he was in edits and, and he said, what do I do while I'm waiting for the edits? And I said, well, I want you to make a list of all the people that you really want to help support

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your book. Even just your pie in the sky. Just your pie in the sky. That's okay. And I said, who would that be? And he said, Becky. Albert.

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

It just popped right up. He knew it. Yeah.

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

Um, so she wrote, uh, the book that became the movie. Love Simon, uh, Simon. Oh God, I'm embarrassed. I'm gonna lose my gay card now. <laugh>. Um, Simon and the,

Mike Michalowicz ([13:29](#)):

Those are the comments that are so funny.

AJ Harper ([13:33](#)):

Simon and the homo sapiens. Oh, crap. I have to look. I have Okay, Simon and the Homo Sapiens agenda. Forgive me, my people, if you're listening, just forgive me. I'm not turning in my toaster. Um, anyway, he loved this book and the movie was, happened to be coming out while this was happening. And I said, just reach out. What could happen? You won't die. She'll ignore you. Or say, or say no. Those are the two things that are, and none of those things will hurt you physically. And you won't be crushed. And to Julian's credit, he did it. I can't even tell you how many times I asked an author to do that. And they didn't. He's probably the only one who did. And he, uh, he went out, he formed a genuine relationship. He did it in a really genuine way. They, she actually started championing his book. And even though she had had an embargo, meaning she had to stop doing endorsements according to her publisher, because they don't want people to do them too much.

Mike Michalowicz ([14:33](#)):

Oh, interesting. A publisher will squash that.

AJ Harper ([14:35](#)):

Yeah. Or an agent. Yeah. It kind of depends. She got an exception because she felt so strongly about Running With Lions. Yep. We slapped that puppy Right on the cover

Mike Michalowicz ([14:47](#)):

Front Cover?

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

Front cover. Nice. Because we knew her readers would love Running With Lions, and that she had a devoted fan base. So, I'm so fast forward. We're at Book Expo at the Javits, biggest book event in North America, now, killed by pandemic, but at the time, biggest deal Running with Lions is facing on the outside. And you, as I, I saw it happen as these teenagers. This is a young adult book, by the way. These

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teenagers are walking by, they see Becky Albert's name on the cover, and stop in their tracks. Oh. Becky endorsed this. I'm not kidding. I watched it happen. I was just sitting quietly at the table and they just, like, all of a sudden there was just like a swarm of teenagers buying, *Running With Lions*. So that's one anecdote, but I tell you it does. I think it might depend on the genre too. I think it's very influential in fiction. Yeah. But I also think if you've got an untested author and they see an author they love on the cover, especially into to what you're saying, especially an author who maybe doesn't review that often, that does get people's attention.

Mike Michalowicz ([16:06](#)):

And that's, that's why I want to emphasize now, the variable you shared was, it was on the front cover. I think I've only done that once or maybe, maybe twice. Yours is Steven Pressfield you, is he on the front cover? I think he is. (Oh, hell yeah.) Yeah. So for me, Simon Sinek, who had an embargo, wouldn't endorse. We can share the secret of how I got his endorsement, but he endorsed me, um, with the most beautiful thing, just as a person and for the book front cover. And I bet you that's true. That probably sell books, sold books. because Simon said, okay,

AJ Harper ([16:39](#)):

Interesting. So you're, you're thinking, yeah. Okay.

Mike Michalowicz ([16:43](#)):

I'm thinking there's some endorsements maybe now, but I think you've won the two debates in a row. (Okay.) There's some certain endorsements. I'm two that I have received that are significant.

AJ Harper ([16:52](#)):

I'm two for two.

Mike Michalowicz ([16:53](#)):

<laugh>. You are two for two. Let me share my story. You got, you nailed the title, right? It was Simon and the homo sapiens. What was it?

AJ Harper ([17:02](#)):

I'm, I'm gonna look it up while you start telling this. I'll tell the story up. Greatest story ever. It's my favorite ghostwriting thing I ever did.

Mike Michalowicz ([17:08](#)):

So it was, was it really?

AJ Harper ([17:11](#)):

It is my absolute hands down favorite ghostwriting story. Anything I've ever ghostwritten will never,

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Mike Michalowicz ([17:18](#)):

Never top this.

AJ Harper ([17:19](#)):

Top it.

Mike Michalowicz ([17:20](#)):

Yeah. It was the most fun too. I actually get chills you saying that. because I think you introduced the name Gerta <laugh>. I think that was my mother's friend, Gerta. So I wanted for The Pumpkin Plan to get endorsements of what I saw as the marquee and still do authors in the entrepreneurial space. So it was Guy Kawasaki, it was Michael Gerber, Seth Godin, Bob Berg, there may have been a couple others. JJ Ramberg was one. And, uh, who was a was a host for a TV show for entrepreneurship at the time. And, uh, we, we decided to reach out to these folks. As I tell this story, I'll tell you what not to do. I get an email, I think every day. I know I got one yesterday of people saying, will you endorse my book? That is the worst way to seek an endorsement. It's not unique.

AJ Harper ([18:08](#)):

I have an, I have a worse way.

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

What's worse than that?

AJ Harper ([18:10](#)):

Send the book in the mail without asking.

Mike Michalowicz ([18:12](#)):

Oh, okay. That is worse. <laugh>. I got a stack of those. And I hate to say it enters the recycle bin, but it's the reality. They come in like, this book came in today. Well, it just happened. They come in constantly. Come in constantly. So they go into the recycle bin, um, they get donated. The second worst way is email. And I get people, like, I emailed you, uh, six months ago. Why? You know, why didn't you respond

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

<laugh> Oh no.

Mike Michalowicz ([18:36](#)):

And they're like, angry at me. I'm like, a, I don't monitor my email. My assistant does. B you have to stand out and be unique. So I appreciate that from the beginning. I don't email someone unless I have a strong relationship. And there'll probably be a text then. because I'll call their cell say, Hey, can I ask a favor? But I didn't know any of these folks. So we plot a plan, we get do something so unique and so true to the brand.

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AJ Harper ([18:59](#)):

I can still see us brainstorming this in the, in the cookie factory.

Mike Michalowicz ([19:03](#)):

In the Cookie Factory.

AJ Harper ([19:04](#)):

Yeah. Just for, just for context, everybody, this was Mike's first traditional publishing deal. And you were still hardly anyone knew who you were.

Mike Michalowicz ([19:12](#)):

No one knew. Yeah. I had Toilet Paper Entrepreneur. Uh, that was it. David Molder was our editor to start the savoring smell of cookies, which becomes obnoxious at a certain point, because that's all you smell throughout the factory all day.

AJ Harper ([19:24](#)):

We're basically in a sauna.

Mike Michalowicz ([19:25](#)):

And so high. It was like 90 degrees up there. And we're sitting in that gross conference room. And I, I don't know who generated the idea. It was a collaboration.

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

Yeah, it was. I I don't know. It was both of us.

Mike Michalowicz ([19:35](#)):

It was both of us. And the idea is we're gonna mail letters to these authors from my mother on my behalf, because I'm too cowardice to ask for an endorsement. So my mother's trying to help me out.

AJ Harper ([19:48](#)):

I-- Ghost writing for your mom. Again, highlight of my life.

Mike Michalowicz ([19:52](#)):

My mother's German, like off the boat German heavy accent. Yes. Um, she loves to talk about her children. She even endorsed the book. We'll talk about that. That was the, that's probably the, the best performing endorsement was the one for my mother on The Pumpkin Plan. Um, and I'm sure this was your idea. We said we gotta include a gift. My mother makes pretty good pumpkin bread. It was pretty killer.

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AJ Harper ([20:18](#)):

Well, actually, that came later.

Mike Michalowicz ([20:21](#)):

Didn't we send the letter with the pumpkin bread? Or was it two stages?

AJ Harper ([20:24](#)):

I it was two stages. So you don't wanna send food. Please don't send food in the mail.

Mike Michalowicz ([20:30](#)):

So we sent just the letter, got the acknowledgement and then the book (Yes.) With the pumpkin bread?

AJ Harper ([20:33](#)):

That's right. <laugh>. That's right. We did first. Oh, we include pictures. We did. So what we did was we sent, we sent a letter. Um, I ghost, I I pretended to be Mike's mom. Yeah. And I wrote letters to Guy Kawasaki, Michael Gerber, Seth Godin, et cetera. Yeah. And they were all tailored. They were not a form letter at all. And based in the, the gig was the, or the, the joke was she didn't quite know who they were.

Mike Michalowicz ([21:03](#)):

Right, right. <Laugh>

AJ Harper ([21:03](#)):

She, so that was what made it funny. Yeah. So for Guy Kawasaki, it was, um, dear Mr. Kawasaki, something, something I, you know, I really, I think it, I'm so impressed with your motorcycles. <laugh>. (Yeah. Right, right.) Also, I don't want my son to ride wrong. Right.

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

They're dangerous. Yeah. They're dangerous. I don't endorse it. Yeah.

AJ Harper ([21:23](#)):

But I, yeah, I'm impressed with your business acumen. Yeah. And then it was great. Here, I enclo, what did you say about I enclose a picture.

Mike Michalowicz ([21:31](#)):

Yeah. And here's the pictures of my handsome son. Here's the picture ones. And we picked the dorky,

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

We picked the worst pictures of Mike



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Mike Michalowicz ([21:36](#)):

When I was 13 and like, just skinny and dorky. We put like two or three pictures in. Or maybe it was just one. She, she even, you even drifted on the message off to her friend Gerta, which I thought was so funny.

AJ Harper ([21:48](#)):

Yes. We, we went, we let her ramble on about Gerta <laugh>. It was

Mike Michalowicz ([21:50](#)):

This, it's this massively long letter.

AJ Harper ([21:54](#)):

And then for, uh, let's see. Oh, I can't remember.

Mike Michalowicz ([21:58](#)):

Michael Gerber

AJ Harper ([21:58](#)):

Is an one. Gerber Michael Gerber. Oh, that was when we brought up, uh, the Gerber baby.

Mike Michalowicz ([22:02](#)):

Yeah. I've used your product, his heart, your

AJ Harper ([22:05](#)):

Gerber baby food. I only use Gerber <laugh>

Mike Michalowicz ([22:08](#)):

Is that brilliant. <laugh>.

AJ Harper ([22:11](#)):

<laugh>.

Mike Michalowicz ([22:12](#)):

How ridiculous that for Gerber. Then we got, uh, Kawasaki. Oh God. I don't know how we, what we did unique for Godin and Berg.

AJ Harper ([22:21](#)):

# don't write *that* book!

Oh, I, you know what it was, I think for Seth Godin, as we mentioned, I heard that you have your, that you have a gluten allergy. (Oh. You kind of lean into it.) And I make a really good pumpkin bread, which I can also make gluten

Mike Michalowicz ([22:34](#)):

Free. Gluten

AJ Harper ([22:35](#)):

Free. I think So. Something that

Mike Michalowicz ([22:37](#)):

Jeff, copies

AJ Harper ([22:37](#)):

Of these

Mike Michalowicz ([22:38](#)):

Letters. I gotta look.

AJ Harper ([22:39](#)):

Oh my gosh. I want them frame them.

Mike Michalowicz ([22:41](#)):

Yeah. I got to look.

AJ Harper ([22:42](#)):

They are my favorite thing ever.

Mike Michalowicz ([22:44](#)):

They were so well written.

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

We, and we almost pissed ourselves trying to come up with these ideas. Yeah. I, it was pure gleam. I could still see myself typing away just pure glee.

Mike Michalowicz ([22:54](#)):

Yeah. And, uh, the response rate was a hundred percent.

# don't write *that* book!

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

A hundred percent. And also, by the way, we got your mom's permission, so

Mike Michalowicz ([23:00](#)):

Of course we did. Yeah. Yeah. So she just knew that we were sending out letters on her behalf. Well, she said, whatever. And I said, I'm gonna need you to make some pumpkin bread. And she's like, absolutely. So then everyone responds.

AJ Harper ([23:10](#)):

Everyone responded.

Mike Michalowicz ([23:11](#)):

Please send me your son's book, please.

AJ Harper ([23:13](#)):

By the way, by the way, everybody, these were ha these were letters. These were not emails. Yeah.

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

Oh yeah. They were Right, right. Letters that delivered in the mail. Uh, we then sent out a, a, a pumpkin bread in dry ice with the book on top. And another letter from my mother thanking them.

AJ Harper ([23:30](#)):

We wrapped them all the pumpkin bed and cran. We had this whole assembly line going, we wrapped the pumpkin bread in the Saran Wrap. Put the book. I can, I can... I was part of that assembly line.

Mike Michalowicz ([23:39](#)):

We mailed it from her. The return address was her actual home address. Everyone, everyone responded to her. Uh, Bob Berg, Guy Kawasaki, um, maybe Gerber. I know Bob Berg. And Guy Kawasaki both sent her their books in return and handwritten letter saying, we're wishing the best for your son, uh, et cetera, et cetera. And I,

AJ Harper ([24:07](#)):

You gonna get in trouble for this. because now it's on the podcast.

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

Yeah. No, I mean, trouble from who? Bob Berg <laugh>. Now I'm friends with half the folks except for Seth Godin. We'll talk about that. Yeah. He hates me. I'm off his, I'm off his,

AJ Harper ([24:20](#)):

# don't write *that* book!

I don't think he hates you. No, I think he has a strict policy. Yeah.

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

Yeah.

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

We can talk about it. But you did actually get the attention of his agent, Lisa Dimona, who then (because of that!) Who wanted to represent you.

Mike Michalowicz ([24:32](#)):

Yeah. I got an agent who wanted represent me. It was. Yeah. It was remarkable. And, uh, I remember Molder, or maybe we moved onto new editor at that point, but they called and said, how'd you get all these endorsements? Like they were blown away by such quality endorsements, particularly from a first time author with a mate, with a main publisher.

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

I did The takeaway there. First of all, favorite, one of my favorite stories ever. The takeaway there is you have to do something unexpected.

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

Yeah. Totally unexpected and,

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

And respectful though. because we wouldn't have sent the, if they didn't respond, we weren't gonna do anything crazy after that.

Mike Michalowicz ([25:06](#)):

Oh no. Yeah. No. And, you know, they were honest about the gag. So I didn't call up Seth Code and say, oh, by the way, that was all, all me in the first place. If there someone inquired, I would say, oh, that was me. The inquiries never went further. So we just let the gag die on the vine. But it was funny.

AJ Harper ([25:21](#)):

But also your mom was in on it, so it's not,

Mike Michalowicz ([25:23](#)):

And she was in on it. Yeah. Yeah.

# don't write *that* book!

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

It's not like we made up a person, don't go to someone's house. Don't do things that make, would make them uncomfortable. (No, never.) But try, but try and be out a little bit out there.

Mike Michalowicz ([25:32](#)):

The vast majority of requests I get, I, I told you, I would say 99% are via email or someone asking someone I know, Hey, do me a favor and ask Mike for me. I wish I'd get the pumpkin bread. I wish someone would make the extraordinary effort. Honestly, though, today, how I get endorsements now is the network is established enough. I've started an authors group. We meet up annually. There's about 50 authors now. And there're, you know, some really marquee names in there. Uh, I've built relationships where now it's like, Hey, can you do me a favor? And, and that's it.

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

There's 50 people in that group now. Yeah. I'm not in that group.

Mike Michalowicz ([26:11](#)):

Yeah. You, the, the qualifier is a million books sold.

AJ Harper ([26:14](#)):

You have to have a million books sold to be in the group.

Mike Michalowicz ([26:16](#)):

In your collection. Yeah.

AJ Harper ([26:18](#)):

Oh, I never knew that.

Mike Michalowicz ([26:19](#)):

Yeah. There are certain, occasionally there's exceptions. Yeah. So, you know, it's me, Don Miller, um, James Clear, Ryan Holiday, um, Chris Galbo we're all like the founding group. John Gordon, who's actually the rock star, you know, who just joined this guy named Adam Wallace. He's, you never heard of the name the guy's?

AJ Harper ([26:37](#)):

I haven't heard the name.

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

The guy sold more books than anyone Collective. He's probably out there with Colleen Hoover.

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

Who's his, what's his genre?

Mike Michalowicz ([26:43](#)):

Children's books.

AJ Harper ([26:44](#)):

Oh,

Mike Michalowicz ([26:44](#)):

Okay. And he wrote a book called How to Catch a, and then it's like, leprechaun, How to Catch a Unicorn, How to Catch Santa Claus. And, uh, his books just sell like mad. Huh. Like, mad Australian guy. He's flying up for the event. Oh,

AJ Harper ([26:59](#)):

That's cool.

Mike Michalowicz ([26:59](#)):

So I just leveraged that predominantly.

AJ Harper ([27:02](#)):

Well, so that's your privilege now.

Mike Michalowicz ([27:04](#)):

Yes. I'll give one more story. And I know it's a little story rich, but I hope people are getting ideas from this. And then we'll go into tactics. Simon Sinek, I can't remember which book was, I think it was Clockwork. I wanted to get an endorsement from Simon Sinek. So I call in the favor. Well, I can't even get a response. Nothing back from him. We share the same publisher. I asked the publisher, I said, Hey, can you just put me in touch with Simon? I wanna ask him. And they said, no, no, no. There's an embargo. Like we, we, we wanna protect Simon. So, um, what I did, and every author should do this is your career will go decades. I met with Simon when I was writing the Toilet Paper Entrepreneur, and he was writing his first book, Start With Why, which was called The Golden Circle at the time.

Mike Michalowicz ([27:47](#)):

And he and I met at his studio in New York City, and we worked together on our books, marketing concepts and stuff, probably for three different, or four different sessions. Over a couple months, he and I were walking, he was walking to Pitch the day he was pitching, um, start with Y and we were finishing up Toilet paper entrepreneur. We're leaving New York. We're at the corner of some street and some avenue. And he looks at me, he goes, Hey, why don't we just make sure we always have each other's back. Whenever you get a speaking gig, Mike, just throw it my way. Whenever I get one, I'll throw one

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your way too. We can cover each other. And then, and this is a true story, he looks at me, he goes, I'm off to pitch my book. I'm like, dude, how are you gonna get a mainstream deal? Like, you ain't gonna get a deal? He's like, it's my purpose. I have to. And it didn't make even sense to me then, but it, he was, it was his why. And I'm telling it's a true story.

AJ Harper ([28:39](#)):

He's walking the talk.

Mike Michalowicz ([28:40](#)):

And he left and he famously did his pitch to Penguin. Maybe we'll talk about that one one day, how he got the deal. Um, I have a video, and this is what you have to do. I have a video of us when we were in our sessions together, you know, like, like pre TikTok, like a TikTok video. Hey, Simon. Just, we're we're doing books. Go New authors. So I sent that video to his assistant, said, Hey, Simon and I made like a blood oath a long time ago. Here's a video. I thought he'd get a kick out of it. Um, would love to talk to him if he's willing to do an endorsement minutes later, Simon would love to endorse your book. Yeah. And then got the endorsement of the century of the century. So, uh, I'm forever indebted to him. Okay. Well, there's one more story. How'd you get Stephen Pressfield's endorsement?

AJ Harper ([29:27](#)):

That, that would be my endorsement of the century? Yeah,

Mike Michalowicz ([29:30](#)):

Totally.

AJ Harper ([29:30](#)):

For context, Stephen Pressfield is, he's famous for writing The Legend of Bagger Vance. He's written some incredible, um, uh, novels about, uh, ancient battles. And, and I, I haven't read those books because it's not my jam. But what I have read is this book called The War of Art. And other books on creativity. The War of Art, single-handedly saved my writing career. And I would argue my sanity, and I'm internally indebted to him. So everyone knows this. I talk about it incessantly. I'm sure I've sold thousands of his books by myself. And, uh, I really wanted his endorsement. But to me, it seemed like a pie in the sky thing. So I decided to take my own advice. That's the thing is I have students, so I can't be in the corner and be afraid to try. You know? (Yes.) So what I did was, I, I knew I wanted to endorse eventually, but I also knew that I wanted to talk to him about a certain concept that I had learned from him.

AJ Harper ([30:33](#)):

In my book, I talk about going to his one and only speaking event in Nashville for, there was 35 people in the room, and I was one of them. And he said, this totally blow your mind thing about, um, the epiphany in the hero's journey. And I, I wish I, it was such a huge deal that I remember looking around the room thinking like, does any, did anybody realize that he just dropped that bomb?

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

Do you mind sharing what the bomb was?

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

Yeah. So he talked about how, and if you aren't familiar with the Hero's journey, you can look it up. I also tell this, I actually do talk about this in my book, by the way, if you, if you wanna look at that for a reference. So we've always been taught that the epiphany moment is when, um, the hero gets this sort of like divine wisdom and then can move forward.

AJ Harper ([31:25](#)):

This is, this is towards the end of the hero's journey. And he said, "It's not, it's when the veil is lifted, it's not divine wisdom. It's coming down to earth wisdom. It's when you realize that, uh, maybe you don't, maybe you've been deluding yourself." . And so it's this critical time when, um, you have to decide if you're gonna move forward or not. And he used this analogy to Rocky Balboa in the movie Rocky, who has this moment where he does realizes, despite everything he's been trying to do to beat Apollo Creed, he can't beat him doing what he was doing. And then he realizes he could at least stay up in the ring. Right. Because that's what he was, he's based on an actual boxer that was called the bleeder, who could keep, could stay up. Yeah. It's like, okay, that I can do.

AJ Harper ([32:19](#)):

But the veil, the veil lifts, and he realizes he's been deluding himself. Interesting. So he has been deluding himself, but what he does have is he can stay up in the ring. And I got chills when he was saying this. I was like, oh, holy crap. I've been thinking of this all wrong. This is not some new information about, this is about saying, oh, I, I'm wrong about me, but there's also this other truth about me that I can take forward into battle. And so I, I wanted to pick his brain about it, because not only was I blown away by it, but his editor, who was standing in the back of the room, his longtime editor was so flabbergasted. He reentered the front of the room. He's like, wait a minute. What did you just say?

Mike Michalowicz ([33:08](#)):

<laugh>

AJ Harper ([33:08](#)):

Yeah. So

Mike Michalowicz ([33:09](#)):

That's news to, that is a new story to me. I did not know that.

AJ Harper ([33:12](#)):

Anyway, fast forward, it's like, you know what? I wanna ask him about this. So what I did was I sent him an email, and then I remembered that in the, so this, this is the tip. Pay attention to the people you want



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to endorse. That's so smart. Don't just say, here's my list. Let me do something wacky and send them a letter from my mom. Actually pay attention to what they say and what they're interested in and, and note things. And at that event, he said, he's, uh, the, there actually, at that event, a woman had, and I tell this story too in my book, had asked him to sign her book. And, um, then I said, um, to him, I quit my job because of your book. It was all I could get out. It's all I could stammer out <laugh>. I was so excited to be in his presence. And he said, I'm always, people always tell me that. And I'm afraid they went broke

Mike Michalowicz ([34:09](#)):

<laugh>.

AJ Harper ([34:10](#)):

And I didn't know how to answer. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Because I was, I only had the one line. I quit my job, you know, like that's all I had. Yeah. So, in my email to him on the subject line, I wrote, I did not go broke after reading your book.

Mike Michalowicz ([34:25](#)):

Oh that's great.

AJ Harper ([34:26](#)):

Right? So that got his attention. And then, and then in the email I said, I was at this event and you said this thing about the epiphany. And it totally blew my mind. And I've been wanting to ask you ever since, now I'm writing a book, could I have 15 minutes of your time? And I think it's because he even said, oh, I don't even remember saying that. Which just totally blew my mind. (Interesting. Yeah.) But he wanted to talk to me because he didn't remember saying it. Do you see what I'm saying? Yeah. So I didn't just say, can I talk to you about this vague topic? I was like, this very specific, because he's a craft guy. He loves to talk about writing. So if I can get him to talk about something he loves to talk about, we did an interview. I was very respectful of his time. He explained things to me. I used it in the book. And then I tried to get my courage up many months later when it was time to get an endorsement. And I, um, said, okay, I'm gonna, what's the best way? I'm gonna record a video?

Mike Michalowicz ([35:23](#)):

Oh. So smart. Different, different.

AJ Harper ([35:26](#)):

So by my eighth try.

Mike Michalowicz ([35:30](#)):

Good.

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AJ Harper ([35:31](#)):

I was like, I, I, I was a, I can't even... Listen to me now! That's how I was. I even in the middle of it broke down and said, I'm so nervous. I forgot what I was gonna say next. I said, but I can't do take number nine. So you're getting this video. You say that in the video that you saw. Yeah. That's legit. That was not an act. I was just like, I can't do this one more time. I'm gonna vomit. So, because I was so nervous. Yeah. And I just asked him if he would consider it. He emailed, I sent it, walked away <laugh>. Yeah, yeah. Yeah. And within hours he had emailed me back. He's like, yes, on one I will, I will consider it if, but you, I don't read digital. You have to send me a galley and I need it by this time.

AJ Harper ([36:22](#)):

And I was like, no problem. Yeah. Except there was a problem. <laugh> My publisher wasn't ready to do galleys yet. Yeah. So for everybody listening, it's a bound typeset version of your book. So, um, it's also you know, the terms are not interchangeable, but sometimes people call them advanced reader copies. I-- thank goodness I was a publisher because when I messaged my publisher, they said, we can't do it. I said, that's fine. Send me this file of my cover. Send me this file of my interior page design. I got it. I called this guy I know <laugh> in Wisconsin (Wow.) Who used to print for us. And I said, you have got to do me a favor. I need one galley. Yeah. Said just one. I said, do I need one? And I needed to be in Malibu in 48 hours. (Yeah.) And he's like, okay, we're doing it.

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

Amazing.

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

I told them why they stopped what they were printing, and they were like, we're doing it, we're doing it for aj. And they, they asked me \$142 because of the overnight. And I got that thing to Malibu that's un in 48 hours. (That's unbelievable.) And eventually he said, yeah, I, he read it. And he said, yeah, I'll endorse your book.

Mike Michalowicz ([37:41](#)):

That's such a great story.

AJ Harper ([37:42](#)):

Yeah. And I, when he, when I got the email that he would endorse it, I was sitting in the Lowe's parking lot waiting for the guy to come out and put a microwave. I was in curbside pickup, please tell me you're crying, sobbing. I was sobbing and the poor kid is like 18 or something. (That's amazing.) He's like, ma'am, you know, can I see, see your code? And he sees me crying and he's doesn't know. because he is a kid is Yeah. I don't know what's up <laugh>. You know, for, I said, it's okay. It's good tears.

Mike Michalowicz ([38:10](#)):

Like the microwave won't fit the cab.

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AJ Harper ([38:12](#)):

Just put the microwave in the back. It won't fit in my cab <laugh>. But that, you know, uh, some people have really noticed that endorsement. I will be frank. I, it was, my publisher was thrilled. They said it goes on the cover. Um, but I think also there's something that happens to an author when they decide to do that for themselves.

Mike Michalowicz ([38:34](#)):

Yes. That's, that's, that's it!

AJ Harper ([38:36](#)):

And you know what? That's it. That's the, I'm just re Yeah. We have to do it for that reason. Yeah. We have to do it for ourselves.

Mike Michalowicz ([38:44](#)):

Correct. That I think is what sells books. Because it brings about a belief in yourself. A courage. Yeah. A heightened level of courage. Um, by the way, if any of our listeners have not read, Write a Must-Read, you must read Write a Must-Read. So please get a copy of that book is on Amazon now. Plus you'll see Steven Pressfield's endorsement. All right. Why don't we go into some of the best practice.

AJ Harper ([39:06](#)):

Let's just go through some quick, quick best practices. Okay.

Mike Michalowicz ([39:08](#)):

When, when do you ask for a endorsement?

AJ Harper ([39:11](#)):

So I personally feel if you know someone really well, if they're your buddy, you can ask early. But if you don't know them, you've gotta have that, the book typeset version, I think, ready to go. You could send a PDF of the word version if they want it.

Mike Michalowicz ([39:28](#)):

It's part of the cover design. So you cannot finalize the cover design without the endorsements.

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

No, you can't. That's true.

Mike Michalowicz ([39:33](#)):

And spacing and so forth. Um, yes. I just wanna and confirm that approach. I'll approach buddies, um, sometimes six months prior to publishing date. Um, so usually the manuscript is mostly done because if

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the manuscript isn't completely done or close to it, you can't do ghost writing of endorsements, which some people want. And we'll, we'll talk about that in a second.

AJ Harper ([39:58](#)):

But imagine if I tried to get Steve Pressfield's, uh, endorsement, but my book wasn't done. Oh. And he had said I needed 48 hours. I would've missed my chance. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz ([40:09](#)):

Yeah. So it, it's folks, you know, you can go earlier. It's gotta be ready to go. Um, who should you ask for it?

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

It should be people that your readers hold in high esteem Yeah. That they love. Um, and if not, if you can't get them, you could also do people that they would respect. Like, um, it could be also everyday Joe's. Then if you can't get anybody, it could be people that they would respect because, um, you worked with them or something and you could put it, you just have to make it really clear that in the attributes so that where it says the name and then if they're a published author or whatever, instead you could put client who I took from X to Z. Or I mean, that's one option, but for the most part, you're looking for notable people that your readership would know. Or somebody that honestly has the, uh, the letters PhD, doctor. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz ([41:09](#)):

Yeah. Mass credentials. I'll give you a little hack. If you already have a book, you can go onto Amazon, click on your author page on Amazon, and then it says, I don't, they update constantly, but it used to at least say, and probably still does, other authors, readers are following or are checking out. So you get the list of all these authors and you'll discover folks you don't know if you don't have a book or an author page on Amazon yet, look at the comps you wrote up. So when you're writing your proposal, you know, the, the book comps, look at those author pages, not the book, but the author page for those books on Amazon. It lists all the other comp authors. So how do you go about it?

AJ Harper ([41:48](#)):

Well, we've shared some wacky ideas and some not so wacky ideas today.

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

So I'll say, don't send emails saying, will you endorse my book?

AJ Harper ([41:56](#)):

No. Do something different.

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Mike Michalowicz ([41:58](#)):

Do something different. And do something that acknowledges and, and serves the ego of the recipient.

AJ Harper ([42:03](#)):

I I also feel like you, I always tell my students, let, if you wanna someone to endorse your book next year, start paying attention to them now in a genuine way and be useful and valuable to them. Start a relationship. By the way, interviews are a great way to build that rapport.

Mike Michalowicz ([42:19](#)):

Yeah. That's a good way.

AJ Harper ([42:21](#)):

You know, and I don't mean hour-long interviews that are a big drain on their time. I mean, something like I just described, which is very specific and is something they would genuinely want to talk about because maybe they don't get to talk about it that often.

Mike Michalowicz ([42:34](#)):

I, um, have people email me. It's so generic. It, uh, this is not for an endorsement that it'll say, it'll start off by saying, I stumbled across your website and I do so and so, so and so. Do you wanna talk stumbled across my website? Meaning you never intended to go there. Uh, you happen to, to come across something, um, that you weren't interested in and now you're trying to solicit me. It's like, it starts off with offensiveness and goes worse. I see this happen with endorsements. Say, Hey, I heard of your books. Uh, would you endorse my book? I'm like, Um, here's the irony, aj I will endorse anyone's book who makes an effort to get my attention. because I, I believe every author should be supported. If they feel it supports them, I will do it. I'm not embargoed yet for my publisher about endorsing. So--

AJ Harper ([43:21](#)):

That could happen at any time. Just listeners.

Mike Michalowicz ([43:23](#)):

it could, but I will do it for anybody. But gosh, you gotta make an effort. And, and email to me is the most frustrating. I, you and I actually have some conversations.

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

You're, you're not even gonna see it.

Mike Michalowicz ([43:33](#)):

I don't, I don't, you and I have had conversations where people approach you say, Hey, would Mike endorse my book?

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AJ Harper ([43:37](#)):

They push me all the time to get you to do it.

Mike Michalowicz ([43:38](#)):

So I come back to you, I say, yes, but just make him make something. An extraordinary effort. Yes. We're friends. I'll do anything if they ask you, I'll do it. Of course. But I want them to make an effort.

AJ Harper ([43:48](#)):

You wanna be, you wanna be dazzled.

Mike Michalowicz ([43:50](#)):

I wanna be dazzled.

AJ Harper ([43:51](#)):

Dazzle me!

Mike Michalowicz ([43:52](#)):

Yeah. Dazzle me! <Laugh>. It doesn't have to be expensive. Just make a video. Send a video or something.

AJ Harper ([43:56](#)):

A video would, you would be thrilled to get a video. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz ([43:58](#)):

Never!

AJ Harper ([44:00](#)):

Keep your clo-- keep clothes on people.

Mike Michalowicz ([44:02](#)):

Uh, you already said this. Sending a book cold.

AJ Harper ([44:05](#)):

Don't ever do that.

Mike Michalowicz ([44:06](#)):

So, so whoever sent me this book, cold, let's open this up. I'm not gonna read the top because I don't wanna embarrass this--

# don't write *that* book!

AJ Harper ([44:10](#)):

Don't, don't, don't do that. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz ([44:12](#)):

I just wanna see what it says.

AJ Harper ([44:13](#)):

Does it even have a note?

Mike Michalowicz ([44:15](#)):

There is a packing slip. Oh, this is a very common way to get endorsements. Is a packing slip. <laugh>, uh, Draft digital is the source, uh, the title. Uh, it does this quantity one shipped to me.

AJ Harper ([44:31](#)):

No note?

Mike Michalowicz ([44:32](#)):

Yeah. So you know what this is, this is probably not an endorsement seeking, this is probably a book. They're trying to amplify sales,

AJ Harper ([44:38](#)):

Which isn't that you're not what? You're not gonna talk about it.

Mike Michalowicz ([44:42](#)):

I'm not gonna talk about it and what they're trying to do. Yeah. It looks like this is a finished book. So what this person's trying to do is, I bet you they say, you know, we have thousands and thousands of orders. They bought the book themselves. They mailed it to me. And I wonder if they say, you know, and these wildly, these people that we know are buying the book, like, Mike McMichalowicz bought a book. I wonder. I don't know that will sadly.

AJ Harper ([45:04](#)):

So, no, you know, unfortunately that effort is, it's a mystery as to what they want.

Mike Michalowicz ([45:09](#)):

It's a mystery.

AJ Harper ([45:10](#)):

There's nothing, there's, there's nothing in there to even ask you anything.

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

No, I, I bet you they're just trying to get their numbers up on books

AJ Harper ([45:15](#)):

But don't send people books.

Mike Michalowicz ([45:16](#)):

Unsolicited

AJ Harper ([45:18](#)):

Incidentally, Steve Pressfield has another book, which is great. I'm about to curse, but it's called, the title of it is No one wants to Read Your Shit. Yeah. And that's a great book. (A great book.) And I'm gonna tell you great title. I don't wanna read anybody's either. Yeah. So when people tell me I'm working on a book, would you, can I, can I get your thoughts? No, no. That's what people pay me to do.

Mike Michalowicz ([45:39](#)):

<laugh>. Yeah. Yeah. How many endorsements, uh, do you think are, are good for a book?

AJ Harper ([45:46](#)):

I would like a person who, uh, I would like you to have say minimum four. Yeah. And you could then, if, depending on the format, if you're gonna have a hardcover, then you can have them on the back. If you have a paperback, you could do one on the cover, maybe one or two on the back. You can always put more in the interior. But nobody's impressed with six pages of endorsements on the interior of your book.

Mike Michalowicz ([46:12](#)):

Yeah. I I've seen those. It doesn't deter me. The internal endorsements, when you see page's page, I saw one guy do it, and it was always different CEOs and executives. And actually that was impressive. I was like, wow. It's a lot of CEOs that the person knows. Um, you can have too many endorsements on the back. Like where it's, it, it starts taking up the valuable real estate (Yes.) Of the book, uh, summary and, and other elements.

AJ Harper ([46:36](#)):

It's better to have good endorsements than Yeah. Have a

Mike Michalowicz ([46:38](#)):

Few great ones. Yeah. Is



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AJ Harper ([46:39](#)):

The way to go. Absolutely.

Mike Michalowicz ([46:41](#)):

How do you choose which endorsement? Endorsement, um, goes where, like the sequencing of them,

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

The most important one goes on the cover. On the front cover? (Yes.) The, the rest go

Mike Michalowicz ([46:51](#)):

If you even do a front cover one.

AJ Harper ([46:53](#)):

Yeah. I'm, if you got a great person (front cover) put them, put them, put them right there. Yeah. Absolutely. And the rest is put in a hierarchy best one on the top.

Mike Michalowicz ([47:05](#)):

So I have a little different opinion there, but first with the front cover, I would invite you to make sure it's succinct. So work with that endorser. Oh yeah. If you have a long quote on your cover, it's not thumbnail-able

AJ Harper ([47:16](#)):

Well, you're not gonna do that now. I mean, so this, the press field quote is actually an excerpt of the Yeah. Test of the, that's the endorsement. That's way to do it. That's the way to do. And the full endorsement is in, in the interior. That's, so we just, we just took part of it out.

Mike Michalowicz ([47:29](#)):

That's the way to do it. Yeah. On the back I would suggest the first position is the best. Yes. The last position is the second best third is second, four. And you kind of go toward the middle. Yeah, because the i the scanning, so that's the sequencing I would do. (Got it.) Um, but, but how long, uh, we talked about the endorsements.

AJ Harper ([47:51](#)):

I mean, one to two sentences. One is, one is preferred.

Mike Michalowicz ([47:55](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. I, I a hundred percent agree.

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AJ Harper ([47:57](#)):

And not a lot of co we don't need a lot of, and, and, and

Mike Michalowicz ([48:00](#)):

Yeah. Less is more.

AJ Harper ([48:01](#)):

Just be very succinct.

Mike Michalowicz ([48:02](#)):

Less is more. Should they reference the author's name or book title in the endorsement? Is that necessary?

AJ Harper ([48:07](#)):

Sure, they can, it's not necessary, but there's to be some, they should be talking about something. So it could be in his debut title, Mike Michalowicz, blah, blah, blah, or in this, this book, blah, blah, blah. It could just be this book. But I think it's, it's more organic than that.

Mike Michalowicz ([48:26](#)):

Okay. Yeah. Let me give you two examples. If I wrote, Harper writes another amazing book is the endorsement versus

AJ Harper ([48:33](#)):

That would not be a good endorsement.

Mike Michalowicz ([48:34](#)):

I know, I know. And the other one is another amazing book. Is it with the Harper is better?

AJ Harper ([48:41](#)):

Um, not necessarily.

Mike Michalowicz ([48:44](#)):

Okay. Okay. I was just curious.

AJ Harper ([48:47](#)):

And those, by the way, are words you can pull out of an endorsement easily to get it tighter. Yeah.

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

Yeah. Do you get permission from the author if you modify their endorsement or take out an excerpt? Yes. Did you have to ask Steven Pressfield to say, Hey, we'd like to get a little piece Oh,

AJ Harper ([49:00](#)):

For the, for the pullout? No, you don't need a permission for that.

Mike Michalowicz ([49:03](#)):

Okay. But if you're gonna modify it?

AJ Harper ([49:04](#)):

Yes.

Mike Michalowicz ([49:04](#)):

Then you have to. Okay. Yes.

AJ Harper ([49:06](#)):

And I would, let me just say, if you pull out the book title, they don't, that you don't have to get permission for. But if you change other words... Makes sense?

Mike Michalowicz ([49:15](#)):

Yeah, that makes sense. Yeah, that makes sense. Ghost writing endorsements used

AJ Harper ([49:18](#)):

To do it all the time. Still do

Mike Michalowicz ([49:20](#)):

It.

AJ Harper ([49:20](#)):

Oh, I used to, I used to, uh, produce these sheets. That would be 10. Yeah. Endorsements. Yeah, potential endorsements. Or five.

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

So I'll tell you exactly what I ask authors to do. If I agree to consider endorsing their book, I will say, send me the manuscript. I will not read the entire manuscript. I do not have the time. I will skim it. Um, sometimes I'll just take like a section and I'll read the section, the entire section to get an understanding for their tonality and stuff. Then I'll skim the book. I'll read, oh, and I'll read the outline. Then I'll say, give me at least one, sometimes two or three ghost endorsements. Ideally what you want. Um, because I

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don't want to invest the time in the negotiation. Sometimes I send back an endorsement and they say, oh, thank you so much, but I was really hoping to get so and so. Would you be willing to reconsider how you endorse the book? And I'm like, ah. So now I'm like, just tell me up upfront. Give me the ghost endorsement. I say, I will change it to my own language. Or I may not use it at all, but I wanna know where you're going. Yeah. And that's been so helpful.

AJ Harper ([50:21](#)):

Yeah. I've done, I think there's nothing wrong in giving them suggestions in that way. And I'll also say that I think, think it's helpful if you put together an abstract, like a Cliff Notes version. It takes a little bit of time, but it's the summary for your book. And then it's detailed chapter descriptions.

Mike Michalowicz ([50:39](#)):

Oh my god. I would love that.

AJ Harper ([50:41](#)):

Okay. So, and then you get it in a beautifully designed PDF. And then you might also, if you want, include the introduction, if you're happy with the introduction. because that's short to read. And if they read the introduction, they can get the basic gist. Yeah. Or the chapter one. But those, those expanded chapter descriptions. This is something that, uh, we did, I did with, uh, Jeffrey Shaw for his book Lingo because he was used, he needed to get on podcasts. And the book, the galley wasn't ready.

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

So smart.

AJ Harper ([51:11](#)):

And actually as it turned out, it was a boon for him because the podcast hosts were like, thank you so much, because I don't have time to read the whole book, but now I have a really good sense of the book because I wrote this detailed.

Mike Michalowicz ([51:24](#)):

Oh, so smart. I, I'm gonna start doing that.

AJ Harper ([51:27](#)):

I did that for my book and I have a lot of my students have done it as well.

Mike Michalowicz ([51:30](#)):

Oh, I haven't. I'm gonna start doing that. Um, anything else you can do with endorsements beyond?

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AJ Harper ([51:36](#)):

Yeah. I mean, once you get them, put them, make graphics, use them and use them on your website. Yep. Um, reference them all the time. <laugh>

Mike Michalowicz ([51:45](#)):

We used it. Exactly. We used it on our website. We made social media graphics. So when the book was launched, we said, look what Simon Sinek said. We've Yeah. We've packaged it, it's referenced in articles. So someone interview article and say, you know, endorsed by Simon Sinek.

AJ Harper ([51:58](#)):

If you have a cell sheet that you're trying to get out to bookstores and so forth, you can put the endorsements there.

Mike Michalowicz ([52:04](#)):

Yeah. So lemme tell you about the big endorsement stake with Seth Godin. We teased that earlier. So Seth Godin endorsed, um, I think, well, he didn't endorse Pumpkin Plant.

AJ Harper ([52:14](#)):

It was Pumpkin Plan.

Mike Michalowicz ([52:14](#)):

Was there another book after that? I thought there was another.

AJ Harper ([52:17](#)):

No, I, no. No, I don't think so.

Mike Michalowicz ([52:19](#)):

We wrote Get Different, and then I wanted to get his endorsement because he is the godfather of marketing, and this was our book on marketing. And I sent, I asked permission. He said, yes, send me a copy of the book. And I sent him that plus a link to our website. We designed on our website. We had Seth Godin along with other authors on there and doing generic endorsements like, you know, not generic, generic endorsements, but it says like, books Love Mike, people, authors who love Mike's books. and said Seth, Seth Godin's endorsement. Seth writes back, he says, I, it just simply said, I did not give you permission to use that endorsement outside of the Pumpkin Plan. Uh, I will no longer, I will not endorse your book. I wrote an apolo I handwritten apology letter to him and said, this is, I am so sorry.

Mike Michalowicz ([53:07](#)):

I, I'm the one who approved the website design and did not consider, uh, the agreement we had. Please accept my most deep apology. You'll never, I will never ask for your endorsement again. That's not, you know, justified. And, uh, sent it to him. I never heard back. I know he got it, mailed it to I, I know his

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personal address, mailed it right to him, so I'm sure he is received it. I don't know if he decided to open it or not. So it's a egg on my face for not tracking these endorsements and the agreement. (Yeah.) With him. I just had the endorsement, so I used it. Didn't modify it, didn't change it, but I used it.

AJ Harper ([53:42](#)):

Because he a lot, he has strict rules, but a lot of authors don't.

Mike Michalowicz ([53:45](#)):

Right. And in his defense, because I've experienced this too, there's a lot of people who make fake endorsements. Yeah. And I've seen pictures of Seth Godin endorsing books. I'm like, I'm surprised he endorsed that book. I wonder how it's associated with it. And, um, I bet you they were fakes. I've had fakes of me. I've seen pictures of myself. You know, Mike McCalowicz, it says So and so. I'm like, that's not true. It's, I'd never, I don't even know what that is. Any you have to seek, thank God for publishers. They have a legal department would seek out how to enforce this and, and get it taken down. Anything else you wanna share about endorsements,

AJ Harper ([54:18](#)):

Just go for it. That's, that's what I wanted. That's the essence. Yeah. Uh, we're talk, we're talking strategy, we're talking all this stuff. But honestly, just do it though. Just remember the story about Julian Winters. Totally. Nobody knew him. Nobody knew him yet. And he just went for it in a genuine way. And incidentally, it's love, uh, Simon Versus the Homosexual Agenda go. So don't come from me. Um, but yeah, <laugh>, that, that, uh, that is my favorite example of just do it because, um, that actually also by the way, opened up an entire world, a community of really successful authors for that author.

Mike Michalowicz ([55:01](#)):

I was meeting with one of our authors, so Pinned With Purpose. We are, we now have eight authors and we have some others we're considering. And, uh, I was meeting with one of our authors and I, we were talking about endorsements. I said, uh, it's in the grief space. I said, you know, who are the ideal endorsements? Brene Brown. And that's come up many times with other authors.

AJ Harper ([55:19](#)):

It always comes up.

Mike Michalowicz ([55:20](#)):

Yeah. I'm like, okay. I said, what are you gonna do? That's so extraordinary that Brene Brown is willing to pay attention to you for the one millisecond and consider reading your manuscript. And is your manuscript so extraordinary and so digestible? You maybe a summary or something that she's willing to consider, uh, a uh, an endorsement. And so that's the conversation. I think a lot of people pick the name and they say, I'm gonna send an email. Doesn't respond. Clearly not interested you. You're never even getting their attention in the first place.

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AJ Harper ([55:52](#)):

But go for it. Just, just,

Mike Michalowicz ([55:54](#)):

You gotta go for it.

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

Don't, don't say I can't, don't say that's not possible. Just do

Mike Michalowicz ([55:58](#)):

It. If you get rejected, it simply means you care enough to make the effort. (Yes.) And it starts building confidence even through rejection. Yes. Yes. All right, we gotta get out of here. Next week we're gonna talk about how we schedule and plan the next book. We are actively in process. We agreed on the phone. That's when I'm like, stop talking. We agreed to have some of the conversations live, so it's gonna be kind of... Some of the live dynamics that we'd normally schedule on the phone. And you're gonna get some insights into the book. Uh, we'll have to beep out confidential stuff. Or just not do it.

AJ Harper ([56:27](#)):

Which just, which is basically we're gonna talk about how we decide to plan out our time specifically. Yeah, yeah. Um, because now we, now we've started.

Mike Michalowicz ([56:35](#)):

Yeah. Now that we have a deal, how are we going about it? Thank you for listening in. We wanna invite you to go to our website. It's [dwtbpodcast.com](http://dwtbpodcast.com). You gotta read AJ's book, *Write a Must-Read*. It's on Amazon. If you don't have it, please get a copy right now. I'm telling you, it will transform your life. If you wanna learn about how we're representing authors, it's called *Penned With Purpose*. Also, you can email AJ and me. We are getting lots of emails now. I texted one yesterday from a pretty popular author who's listening to our show. You can email us at [hello@dwbpodcast.com](mailto:hello@dwbpodcast.com). Thanks again for joining us for today's episode. We're looking forward to seeing you next week. And as always, don't write that book. Write the greatest book you can.