

# don't write *that* book!

## EPISODE 48:

### “Writing Season Begins”

**Mike Michalowicz:** 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**.

Yeah, so I, I came in here like a hot mess, I raced past you in the steps, did I elbow you a little bit to get out of my way?

**AJ Harper:** No.

**Mike Michalowicz:** I feel like I'm, uh.

**AJ Harper:** I'm just really slow because it's 15,000 steps.

**Mike Michalowicz:** It's a lot of steps.

**AJ Harper:** I had to actually, there's a bathroom on the first. I got I texted you. It's like texting you from like five miles away.

**AJ Harper:** I was like, I'm not going to make it all the way to the top before I have to use the ladies' room. So I had to, I had to use the interim ladies' room.

**Mike Michalowicz:** I saw like a special on Nat Geo or something of these old silos they have for missiles out in the desert in the U. S. that go like twenty stories deep, and they're still maintaining them even though there's no missiles in them anymore for whatever reason.

Maybe one of them [00:01:00] is a museum and it kind of feels like this building because it's unsurprisingly deep. You walk up three. Big stories. I think it's like fifteen feet per story or maybe twenty. You can go down just as deep, and most people don't know.

**AJ Harper:** Oh, really?

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. So, if you ever have a chance, this side, I'm pointing out the window that goes behind our building.

Um, take your car around the side and you'll see how high this is. It's, yeah, it's hauntingly high.

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**AJ Harper:** I'm not going down there.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. I got the old office. I had that's now used, um, to our right here by our guides. There's three people in there is a big office, but that was my office.

**AJ Harper:** I love that office. It's beautiful.

It was such a good office It's beautiful.

**Mike Michalowicz:** It overlooks... You can see the New York City from there brick. Yes, gorgeous. Yeah When I the first time I moved in there is like I was great. I then drove around the building. It is a literal drop below. There's no structure below it. There's, I guess, obviously beams holding it up, but how the building was expanded.

It's this kind of hanging Chad of an office six stories [00:02:00] up.

**AJ Harper:** I think if I had known that I might have been nervous about visiting you. I'm nervous.

**Mike Michalowicz:** I'm nervous! And it's a historic building.

**AJ Harper:** Is it right under us now too?

**Mike Michalowicz:** Is it what?

**AJ Harper:** Are we under, are we on top of beams?

**Mike Michalowicz:** We're on top of, no, no, we're on top of a floor.

If we drop, there's a floor below us. It's just over there.

**AJ Harper:** Because you know, when you see those balconies, they just... Oh, forget it.

**Mike Michalowicz:** They give me the scares. They give me the scares.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah. All right. We're back.

**Mike Michalowicz:** We're back. I want to welcome my cohost, **AJ Harper**, the author of Write a Must-Read. My gosh, if you're a listener and you haven't read that book by now, um, shame, shame.

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It is such a well-written book, and the accolade I want to give you... I've spoken, speaking with Jesse, uh, at Page Two, and we're just doing some inaugural stuff. You're going to be involved in these meetings. But this was just for me to meet the team folks. You already know what they're like.

**AJ Harper:** Oh, yeah. I know

**Mike Michalowicz:** Each person's like, love AJ's work. I love AJ's consideration of the reader. I love the dialogue she had and her commitment to having an excellent book. So like when we discovered, which I don't know when this happened, but when we understood that you were working with AJ, we knew this is, this book was or is going to be excellent. So it's just, it's just nice accolades that you're receiving.

**AJ Harper:** Hey, thanks.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah, you're welcome.

**AJ Harper:** I want to give you some accolades now, too, but you know, I have to tell you a funny story. I wanted to give you accolades in person. You know what I'm going to say, right? So Cyndi Thomason is one of my favorite people ever. Profit First professional author of *Profit First for eCommerce* and also *Motherhood, Apple Pie and All That Happy Horseshit*.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yep.

**AJ Harper:** Love her so much. She texted me secret-secret. We're going to do this thing for Mike at ProfitCon honoring his contribution, his literary contribution. And all of these Profit First Derivative authors, some of whom you've worked with, will be there. Will you come up and say something like, yes, I'm gonna, I'm gonna rearrange.

I had to teach and have clients, and I said, "Can I be in your hotel room and teach?" We arranged it. She checked the WIFI. I was like, ready to go.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Oh my gosh.

**AJ Harper:** And then I had the, she said the 17th and it was the 16th.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Oh, yeah. She said from stage, uh, she goes, I'm so embarrassed that I messed this up.

AJ was gonna be here. I wish you were there

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**AJ Harper:** How was it?

**Mike Michalowicz:** Extraordinary? It was the first real celebration ever and--

**AJ Harper:** They made you the tree.

**Mike Michalowicz:** They made it.

**AJ Harper:** I saw the picture.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah, they made a tree out of metal. So the backstory is Cyndi was in London or in France, and--

**AJ Harper:** She saw that piece of art

**Mike Michalowicz:** Correct, where they were attaching books to it. So they made they remade this tree or replicated the tree out of metal and they took all of the Profit First Translations that they could find and we found 16 of the 2030 translations out there and put magnets on so of the cover and to put it up there English, of course, but Lebanese and Spanish and French, Italian, and then all the derivative books, and so very quickly this tree was covered.

**AJ Harper:** What did that feel like to see that?

**Mike Michalowicz:** Emotional. I know and I wish AJ was here because I wanted you up on stage.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah, I felt terrible. But anyway, I'm so glad that happened. But we spoke,

**Mike Michalowicz:** We spoke.

**AJ Harper:** Well, I texted you. I was like,

**Mike Michalowicz:** Voice text.

**AJ Harper:** I'm not deliberately ghosting you.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. Yeah. It was a great event.

**AJ Harper:** I'm so glad. I'm so glad.

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**Mike Michalowicz:** And it's running in parallel to us kicking off the writing season. So we wanted to—

**AJ Harper:** I mean, mine's kicked off.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** Kicked. Kicked.

**Mike Michalowicz:** It's kicked. It's in gear. And we want to talk about what we're going through in this experience so that our listeners can, um, kind of voyeuristically listen in and leverage and do some stuff. But I believe you wanted to kick off with some corrections.

**AJ Harper:** Oh yeah. Yeah. So we have a correction from Mackenzie who was kind enough to, uh, it's not even a correction. It was just an explanation.

**Mike Michalowicz:** That's super helpful.

**AJ Harper:** We mentioned, I can't remember which episode, apologies. We talked about different ways that you could put a note in the text when you need to come back to something and check the fact or maybe you don't know what you want to say there, so you're going to come back later.

And I mentioned TK, which I had, I had been told. Back in the day, it's because those consonants are rarely together in an English word. But here's what Mackenzie says. TK is a stand in for “to come” in journalism. And she says she was a daily newspaper journalist for 14 years and it was used in story budgets for the next day's paper.

A budget tells the print side as well as the night crew how many inches of space is needed for stories. So, TK was used in the budgets to list stories that were late breaking, usually with a designated inch count, and whatever assets to expect, such as photos or breakouts for sports, etc. Isn't that cool?

**Mike Michalowicz:** That's fantastic.

**AJ Harper:** So, now we know.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Now we know. Now we know. And I wonder if it also corresponds, by chance, with those letters naturally don't come together.

**AJ Harper:** I don't know. I mean, because you wouldn't be searching it in, if you were writing, if you were typing it. So, that's a word processing--

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**Mike Michalowicz:** That's a good point.

**AJ Harper:** --trick, but thanks Mackenzie.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** Thank you very much for listening.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. And we appreciate that any of our listeners that includes you listening in right now, if there's any insights you can share, any corrections you have for us, we do want to share those with our audience. You email us at hello at dwtbpodcast.com. Dude, I got to tell you one more thing. Uh, I saw Joey Coleman. He's the author of *Never Lose a Client Again* and *Never Lose a Customer Again*. And he was about to take stage at our event, is where he spoke. And he's like, Mike, now I didn't tell anyone about this podcast in that community, um, necessarily.

I didn't go, hey guys, you gotta listen to it. I planned to, but I neglected to.

**Mike Michalowicz:** He's like, dude, I love, Don't Write That Book.

**AJ Harper:** Aww.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah, I'm like, you listen to it? I'm like, how'd you find it? He's like, I was just searching. And I'm like, why didn't you tell me, Mike? I'm like, I should have told you. So it was nice to hear.

**AJ Harper:** That's nice. Uh, I've never actually met him in person, but I remember seeing him at Heroic Public Speaking Live. It was, I think the last one in Philly and he did this amazing keynote in which he used hundreds and hundreds of slides.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Oh my God.

**AJ Harper:** I was just like, dude, masterful.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. He, maybe he did the similar presentation when he wrapped.

**AJ Harper:** He, He did like 150 slides or something. His conclusion was, I just did 150 slides. He's like, we're going to recap it in two minutes. And he goes, he rolls through all the slides.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah, it was what, yeah, but that's his thing. Such a good presenter.

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**AJ Harper:** Yeah, I think he's great.

**Mike Michalowicz:** So we're in writing season now. And I want to give you the context that I use for writing season.

I'm curious if it's the same or similar to you. I believe there's an off season and on season, and this is something I use from sports. Uh, women's basketball is, is in the championship right now. We're, we're recording on September 24th or September 23rd or they're coming near the end of the women's basketball season, and they will go into off season.

Off season means you're not actively competing, but you are practicing. When I played sports in college, the off season, there was a little less demand on your schedule. Uh, and there was a little more building of the fundamentals. When you were on season, there was game prep. It was very specific to the game you had coming up.

And that's the analogy I use for us. The off season for me is just collecting ideas and thoughts for the general book writing. It's still writing, joining the sprints. I get back to that now. And then the on season is the concentration on the next big match, which is the book. Um, and for me, when I really start cranking, it's a lot more activity.

It's a lot more writing, uh, approaching three to four hours a day. For me, that's an extraordinary writing day and a more average off season would be about 45 minutes to an hour a day at a sprint.

**AJ Harper:** Of course you mean in a sports--

**Mike Michalowicz:** Right? Is that bro? Is that mean? Is that bro? I

**AJ Harper:** I mean, I don't want to be gender specific. It could be. I think it's just you. It's you. You like sports. Yeah. It works.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. Okay.

**AJ Harper:** Well, it sounds better than what I have always said, which is I'm actively writing, which is so boring. "I'm actively writing."

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. But you're always writing, aren't you?

**AJ Harper:** No.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Okay. Oh, interesting.

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**AJ Harper:** No. I mean, I think writers have... Writers feel a lot of guilt when they don't write every day because there's this, not everybody says this, but a lot of people say, write every day.

And I do think that when you are actively working on a project, hence the word actively, that you should be in a regular practice. But I don't, I'm not one of those people who thinks it has to be all the time. I think there's other things I'm doing to get ready to write, like thinking about things and exploring things and kicking stuff around.

So, no. I mean, I used to feel guilty about it, but considering how many books I've written, I don't think it's a problem.

**Mike Michalowicz:** And when you're in season, when it's the writing season, you said you are actively writing every day.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah, well, on weekdays.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Okay, is there a reason, is there a benefit to that?

**AJ Harper:** Well, it's because I figure out how to get a book done based on the math.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yes, you back calculate from the due date. I think there's also continuity though in thoughts.

**AJ Harper:** Yes, as we talked about before, you, you know, when you are actively writing, when you're in writing season, you're more likely to be able to get cool ideas, different downloads from the universe, connect the dots. I don't know, you just, it's a cohesive project and a lot of really cool things come to you that wouldn't come to you if you were putting a lot of time in between writing stints.

**Mike Michalowicz:** So a little update on, on what's going on and a reminder of the book we're working on is in the personal finance space. One of the major influences over working on this book is individuals who have read Profit First have deployed it in their business and we have tens of thousands of successful case studies, but there's hundreds of thousands of deployments.

We're approaching a million deployments as our best estimates. It's hard to tell because people read the book and they just, hmm. Those individuals have, in many cases, I believe turned their finance around their business, but not necessarily in their personal finances.

**AJ Harper:** Now don't say too much.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Wait, what do you mean?



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**AJ Harper:** I thought you weren't going to reveal too much about the book.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Am I revealing too much?

**AJ Harper:** I don't know.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Oh, I'm not going to share much more. I'm just saying that, that triggered the necessity for this book.

**AJ Harper:** Yes.

**Mike Michalowicz:** So here's what I found is that when someone, when they're— When someone, um, is successful in their business financially, meaning it's profitable, it's healthy, but they're sickly in their personal finances, it starts to leech off the business.

So the business is compromised. I've also found the reverse. And the reverse is commonly the start. I'm okay financially at home. I figured things out. I'm just getting by. Therefore, I want to start a business. The business is fiscally sick. It starts to leech off their home. Both have to be strong. So that was the trigger for writing a personal finance book.

Um, and then choosing the publishing path. Listen, we've had a great experience, I think, with Penguin and Portfolio. I was actively considering since the last two books. So prior to all in, does that get different?

**AJ Harper:** Yeah, I got different.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Back then, I was already considering an alternative path with hybrids. I ran the math in depth.

I actually used ChatGPT recently. I don't know if I told you this. I took my spreadsheet and said, "How accurate is this?" And you know, what's the mass nations and pull from public records and any information you can get on the compensation opportunities in traditional publishing versus hybrid versus self.

And the math came out to be pretty similar to what I had almost, yeah, very similar, not much error, which gave me more confidence. It came clear to me that if we didn't get, I called the Stephen King advance for get different, it didn't fiscally make sense. So it gave me fodder to go to Penguin with Get Different and say we, the Stephen King advance is the advance he got for his first mainstream published book, which was *Carrie*.

Um, and he actually, I think he originally self-published it and then went to a publishing platform, if I recall correctly, or got an advance for it when it went paperback, something to

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that effect, but it was a two-step process. So I figured out what the advance was. I said, that's the number and it correlated.

So I called it the Stephen King advance and we got it from Penguin, but *Get Different* to this point. Unfortunately, it's not performed to the advanced level, and I think that put concern in Penguin's eyes. Um, then we did all in, which I think is our best book ever. We did that on a profit share model with them.

Um, our first royalty is eight days away, just so you know,

**AJ Harper:** I have been waiting for this day.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Oh my God. Eight days from now.

**AJ Harper:** And we don't know what to expect because, uh, you kind of know,

**Mike Michalowicz:** I kind of know. Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** But you, but you aren't sure of the cutoff.

**Mike Michalowicz:** I'm not sure of the cutoff, exactly. So we need to explain that.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah. You should explain it.

**Mike Michalowicz:** So we've sold, I got to pull up the numbers. The last number that pops in my head is 16,000. So it's more than 16,000 units sold. We get a 50/50 share of the profits they generate. So a traditional royalty for a print book, we were getting \$3.50 cents a book. Now we're going to get, my estimate is five to six dollars, let's say 6 a book, almost double, but not quite.

But the cutoff date is... They go back in a period of time and say we measure sales, for example, from January 1st until, um, March 1st. Is it March? I thought it was June. I thought it was a six-month window because they only do it twice a year.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah, but they wouldn't be giving you the June money now.

The June money would come in next March.

**Mike Michalowicz:** So if it's March, then it's, then it's not January 1st. It's two months prior. It's a six-month window, the sliding window. So they cut out this time. So whatever that works out to, uh, October, November, let's just say October, November till March. Then they write the check for us today, September 31st

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**AJ Harper:** through March 1st, probably. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz:** So you get a window of time. Um, so there's this lagging, this lagging period. That's painful. So that book, the, we submitted that manuscript, All In, a year and a half ago.

**AJ Harper:** We started working on it way before that.

**Mike Michalowicz:** And worked on before that. Yeah. But a year and a half ago, it's like, here's the done thing. And you don't get nothing,

**AJ Harper:** Nothing, nothing, honey. Years.

**Mike Michalowicz:** And there was no advance.

**AJ Harper:** And there's no advance.

**Mike Michalowicz:** In this one, but it's higher return. So we've been waiting.

**AJ Harper:** I'm just like, what are we going to get?

**Mike Michalowicz:** I know. I know. So we'll know exactly. They'll give us an account.

**AJ Harper:** I mean, the Spring will be good.

**Mike Michalowicz:** The Spring will be good, but they'll give us an accounting for all of it, uh, with the report. And I got to go through it in detail because there's a hold back to, um, for shipped inventory and potential return. There's potential returns. Gosh, it's confusing. So fast forward to the new book. Uh, Page Two is the company we committed to. Um, by many factors, I think they are the authority in the industry.

We have an additional announcement, coming out with them at some future point, which is also very exciting. Um, but I'll tell you that kickoff meeting, AJ was remarkable.

**AJ Harper:** I told you.

**Mike Michalowicz:** The sales team lead showed up.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah, of course.

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**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. Right. So of course with, and I'm not bashing Penguin because this is true for all traditional.

**AJ Harper:** All.

**Mike Michalowicz:** The kickoff meeting for all traditional is your editor showing up.

And once you get closer to the marketing period, maybe the marketing lead shows up. This one, there was seven people from their teams and we'd like to introduce you to the entire team. Here's each person's role. Hey, what, Mike, what are ideas you have that we can start working on today and getting this book out there?

I'm like, "Today?" Awesome. Here's what I want. This is fantastic.

**AJ Harper:** You can also get to all of them. You know, it's not like a, it's not like anybody's in a secret corridor and you can't access them.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Partly I think it's their size. They are still a smaller publishing entity.

**AJ Harper:** I think it's their commitment to their, most of them are veterans of traditional publishing and they just want to do a better job.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. Excellent. Absolutely. Excellent. So I'm really thrilled, which now brings us to what I want to discuss for the meat of today is our writing updates and what we've got going on. Let's start off with interviews. That's where we, we start collecting really powerful stories and information and insights.

What's your thoughts about the interviews that we've been doing so far?

**AJ Harper:** Well, I will say, I think we are behind on the interviews.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. And why is that?

**AJ Harper:** Well, because by the time we're in writing season, we've typically already done 20, 25 interviews. I think we've done five or six.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah, sounds right.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah, so it's a little challenging because it shapes the content. So, sometimes it doesn't. Sometimes this is a great story and that's really what we're looking for in interviews. Sometimes people get this mixed up. They do an interview to try and get, a few good lines or insights. And we're looking for really good stories and we also get insights.

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**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** But the, the goal is a good story, not the insights. And I think you have to go into it with, do we have a good story? And you will automatically get money quotes, cool things that you learn. At any rate, I need more. To help shape the book. Because I work like, I want to see all my materials. I want to dump out all my crayons in the box.

And then I can kind of, I don't know, I see it. It's like, I see it.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** But I don't have all my crayons.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. That's frustrating.

**AJ Harper:** So that part's a little challenging right now, but I think I know I'm seeing, see my schedule, bump, bump, bump, all these interviews coming up. So I think we'll be able to kick it up.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. One of the challenges has been my travel agenda. We were talking about travel has been off the charts. It's probably the most I've ever traveled, uh, in a condensed period ever. Yeah. I got a million miles. I tell you this, like, I was on the airplane and they're like, Congratulations, we have a million miler on the flight.

**AJ Harper:** Were you looking around like, who's, who's the idiot?

**Mike Michalowicz:** Who's the idiot? I said, I felt sorry for them. And they go, Mr. Mike, Mike. I'm like, they can't pronounce my name. And it's gotta be me. And then, they pop a champagne, they pour champagne. They give you champagne. Yeah. And they expect people on the plane to applaud you.

And most people are like, it's the most embarrassing. Insult. And like congratulating me for spending money with them.

**AJ Harper:** We're working really, really hard.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Mike's a big spender with us. Congratulations on your efforts, Mike.

**AJ Harper:** So that's been a problem.

**Mike Michalowicz:** It's been a burden and Erin, this is interesting Erin, my scheduler and the personal assistant is defensive of protecting my time.

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And she's like, we can't book Fridays anymore for you. And so she follows this religiously, um, until I do an override. So you read, you said, Mike, we're doing interviews in December and we got the manuscript to do. And I'm like, yep, go back to Erin. Like, you got to just take up Fridays evenings. Talk, talk with AJ Saturdays.

**AJ Harper:** We got some blocks on Saturdays.

**Mike Michalowicz:** We've got to do. Um, we also had some stellar interviews, some stories of someone, uh, that has struggles with finances. Even though they were on a path, a very healthy fiscal path, they had a situation that presented itself and they went into a dark period financially and what they had to do to navigate that.

And I think those stories are powerful too, because we're getting all these, all these different stories about people in, in financial challenges and financial success at different stages. As opposed to, oh, you're in your twenties, you're going to struggle. You're in your thirties, you got your legs in forties.

Life is perfect. No, that's not the reality. And we need all these different perspectives and we're starting to get those stories.

**AJ Harper:** And those interviews are with people who are using the system that we're writing about in the book, which isn't really critical. But the cool thing is one of those interviews was with a guy who was talking about how the system helped him improve the relationship.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Oh, with his spouse.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah, and then you're the person who's running the program for you here. Rachel, we interviewed her to see how things are going and she mentioned some of that as well. Conflicts in relationships that are around money and that got me thinking. Oh, hey, let's interview a relationship slash marriage expert.

To talk about how money plays a part. And so, then I asked Maggie Reyes and I'm probably mispronouncing her last name. R E Y E S.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Reyes.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah. And she wrote, um, a really, um, exceptional book that has all these questions that you can ask your partner. And she, I think the program doesn't exist anymore in marriage MBA, but she works with couples and said, Hey, can you, I met just DM'ed her on Facebook and said, you want to, can you, can we interview you?

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Because I really like what she has to say. I've been following her for a while, and she said yes.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Oh, amazing.

**AJ Harper:** So that's one of our interviews coming up. And I mention this to everybody because this is what happens in the interviews. I'm listening to Rachel. I'm listening to this dude. And then we hang up and then Mike and I debrief.

And then I say, Hey, Mike, are you noticing this relationship stuff? And so then we have, that then becomes something we incorporate into the book. It's not the main focus, but it's important to acknowledge. Because it's part of the picture, it's part of the promise for sure that we maybe didn't consider. It also helps people, um, actually activate and do the thing we're asking them to do because they need to have a partner on board.

So, maybe, uh, who knows how it'll shake out, right? Like with *All In*, we did that really incredible interview with Rhodes Perry.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Oh, yeah.

**AJ Harper:** On belonging at work and creating an inclusive work environment, um, Rhodes Perry has written several books on this topic and is, um, used to work in the Obama administration and we ended up using two stories from Rhodes we didn't anticipate.

**Mike Michalowicz:** I think we used the softball baseball story.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah. And then also being at the Office of Management and Budget in the Obama administration. And we didn't know that going in.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** So you just don't know. And anyway, now that's shaped. Oh, let me look at this outline again and see where can we bring in some of this relationship stuff.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Uh, at risk of another corrections corner, I think Reyes means king in Spanish.

**AJ Harper:** It's Reyes. And I was just really-

**Mike Michalowicz:** Someone can correct us if that's correct. The yeah, here's what it's so interesting in interviews. I listen for something perhaps a little different. I call them the

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common thread. Do I hear something from one person and hear from another person perhaps in different words?

But the same threads when we were interviewing Rachel, she said some of these situations when it comes to a spouse and finances is that one person takes the parent role and the other, the child as like, Oh, that is really interesting. And she goes, "It's often crushing for both because one has to be the parent says, no, you can't know lollipop today."

And then one has to be the child asking parents' permission. And so it becomes this peculiar relationship where traditionally, I think in many marriages we want a balanced relationship and equal partnership. Um, there was other one, you know, they kind of boiled out different scenarios where one person uses it, hopefully not intentionally, but to kind of hide their own relationship with the other person, financial problems. So they're, they're the ones who are the least capable financially, but they take control of it because it's a way to cloak their financial mismanagement.

It was just an interesting insight and perspectives that came out of these interviews.

**AJ Harper:** So incidentally, the Maggie Reyes's book is highly rated. 3,800 reviews on Amazon, questions for couples' journal, 400 questions to enjoy, reflect and connect with your partner.

**Mike Michalowicz:** There you go.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah, so I'm excited for that interview.

**Mike Michalowicz:** How do you know an interview is not working out? Like, we've done certain interviews, And I'm like, no, no, this is no good. I have, I have a reason, but what's yours or indicator?

**AJ Harper:** Um, the number one reason would be if that person is trying to promote something and so they don't listen to, they're not even listening to you. And so they talk, they monologue and they'll go on for sometimes seven, eight minutes without allowing you to say anything. And they're promoting themselves and they're not of service in that moment.

That's number one. Number two is, and it's not their fault. Number two is not their fault. They just can't access the story. Yeah, yeah. They, no matter how, and I'm really good at asking questions to get at the story, but sometimes they just can't do it.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** And so you have to let it go. You just have to move on and say thank you. And I, you know, it's personal. Some people are nervous to talk about it. Some people have been



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trained by their culture or their families to not talk about things. I think a lot of people just don't know what you're looking for. So they get kind of confused, but, um, there's always someone who just can't give you the story, so you have to move on.

**Mike Michalowicz:** What's your technique? I agree with this top two. Those are exactly what I would have said. What's your technique for saving that valuable time and not continuing the interview? How do you cut bait?

**AJ Harper:** Oh, I just say this has been so helpful. Can we talk to you again if we have further questions?

**Mike Michalowicz:** Can you do that five minutes into an interview?

**AJ Harper:** No.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Oh.

**AJ Harper:** I mean, because I don't know for sure. 'Cause I will always try. And if I've pulled out everything from my bag of tricks and I still can't get it. Then, that's fine. But I've had stories come out of the blue 40 minutes into an interview and it was gold. Remember the guy, and he was in the Philippines, and he was with his family, and they were all lined up on the water watching the sunset.

I think this was for *Clockwork*.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Is this the story he told, or was this actually when we were interviewing him? Oh, the story he told.

**AJ Harper:** And, um, he took like a year off with his—

**Mike Michalowicz:** Oh, I do remember that. He was on a surfboard or something.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah, it took us a while to get that.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Oh my god, I can picture his face right now. He's got that fu-man-chu beard.

**AJ Harper:** Apologies if you're listening. But we didn't have good stories. We had great insights. Nigel. Yeah, we had great knowledge through the whole thing, but I didn't have a story yet.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Nigel.

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**AJ Harper:** That wonderful picture he painted.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yes.

**AJ Harper:** Came at like minute 40.

**Mike Michalowicz:** That was Nigel Bennett. He too has subsequently authored a book. Isn't that amazing? I, I found it a preemptive technique when we're scheduling interviews. Now I have Erin do this. She'll say, let's allocate an hour, but interviews sometimes can be as short as 10 minutes. So it gives us the out proactively and saying, Hey, this is the brief interview. We may come back to you. Let's cut bait.

**AJ Harper:** I mean, most people aren't going to be upset, but 10 minutes is too soon.

**Mike Michalowicz:** First time ever you did an interview intentionally absent me. I mean, you've done interviews without me and vice versa, but we designed this one because it was with my wife.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz:** I know nothing about this.

**AJ Harper:** She didn't talk to you about it?

**Mike Michalowicz:** No, she simply said, I think it went well, and then I was like, I can't talk now, and I hopped on a plane. So, I know nothing.

**AJ Harper:** Were you nervous about it?

**Mike Michalowicz:** No. Okay. No, I'm, I'm curious about it.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah. First of all, she's amazing.

**Mike Michalowicz:** She is.

**AJ Harper:** It's amazing how little time you have spent with my wife and I have spent with yours.

**Mike Michalowicz:** How little time or?

**AJ Harper:** How little.

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**Mike Michalowicz:** I know Polly from a few hugs here and there.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. We, I haven't had an intimate time with her.

**AJ Harper:** The only amount of time I've spent with Krista of any substance was when we were shooting that video at your house.

**Mike Michalowicz:** The one nut guy?

**AJ Harper:** Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Do you know that video has 150,000 views? One of them does.

**AJ Harper:** No, there's one where you guys were in the bed together.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. Me and the old guy.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. And Chris didn't. He swapped out the old guy.

**AJ Harper:** But I barely spoke to her because there was a whole film, like it was a whole group of people.

**Mike Michalowicz:** That was good.

**AJ Harper:** I haven't spent any, we have not had like a conversation.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Wow.

**AJ Harper:** Isn't that funny?

**Mike Michalowicz:** So what did you discover in the interview with her that you may use in particular?

**AJ Harper:** What I just, well first of all, I really admire her. I think she's um, super forthright and honest and um, kind.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

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**AJ Harper:** And I bonded with her because we had similar situations growing up, that was my sense, with respect to moving a lot because of financial insecurity. Oh, the thing that we have so in common is walking up to the cash register and needing to leave to the point where I don't even like to do the shopping. I have plenty of money, but I still do not like to go up to a cash register.

**Mike Michalowicz:** You feel that fear still.

**AJ Harper:** It's very damp. It's very it's okay now, but for a long time. I could barely even stand to go up to the cash register. Yeah, and then she said she had to walk away too. Oh my god I knew that and it just comes from not having enough money at the cash register, feeling shame around it. Things like, all I said to her was, you know, remember when they used to have the checks and they would pin them to the back of the register for the people you can't accept checks from?

And she knew immediately what I was talking about.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Oh my God.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah. Oh my God.

**Mike Michalowicz:** I didn't know they did that.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah. Because you weren't paying it because you didn't have to think about it.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** Right. And yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Isn't that so interesting?

**AJ Harper:** So we, you know, I was really excited to talk to her because for that reason, because we had a similar experience.

But what it taught me in the interview was how much we are, we really need to focus on the emotional component of personal finance. Just thinking about how our own experiences growing up influenced our decisions, and sometimes not in a healthy way. And I'm not saying we need to solve that issue, but I don't think we have enough in the book yet about emotionally what's going on and why you might not want to look at your finances, why you might walk away from a cash register and how that all feels.

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So. It was illuminating. Yeah, and it'll be great for the to give a counterpoint to your part of the story So I'll definitely use some of what she said in harmony with your own stuff your own perspective, but we've never really shared her perspective. We've shared a couple lines of dialogue from her like at a dinner you went to or something. We've never done that in a book before so I'm really excited to have that.

**Mike Michalowicz:** That's great. It's interesting This is how a book develops because it triggered an idea It's maybe we have a section or an element called instant awareness because I wonder we have to ask her, tangentially, this is what she experiences. She knows exactly what money is available for what purpose using the system that we're writing about. And therefore, she can walk in at any time before she walks in. Seconds before she goes to the cash register, she can look and know this is exactly what I can do and can't do.

And I don't think she had that before.

**AJ Harper:** No. She says the system was life changing for her.

**Mike Michalowicz:** It's interesting. Just this morning, she texted me and said, Oh, one of our counts is short. Can you check it out? You know, that dialogue before we used the system, we never had that dialogue. I just had to know or didn't know.

But now I got a teammate in this. Um, so that's, that's great.

**AJ Harper:** So that was an incredible conversation that like I said, I'm going to use story from that already, but it sparked a bigger idea about... We can't write this book and not talk about how we end up in this situation in terms of the emotions.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yes. Did, did she indicate, or have you ever experienced where you're doing interview and the person says, Oh, I shared something with you that I don't want shared in the book.

How do you navigate that if you do? Does that present itself?

**AJ Harper:** Well, she was, I, I offered it to her, I said, you know, we won't talk about any of this if you're uncomfortable. And she said, no, she's an open book, she said. But that's just how you do it, is you just, you let them know right up front that they're safe to talk to you.

And then if you, if they need you to delete the recording, you'll delete it. If they need you, you have to give them a completely safe space. This is why I recommend sometimes you don't always want to do it on zoom. because at least give them the option. I like using zoom, but some people are nervous to look you in the eye and tell you really deep stuff.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

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**AJ Harper:** So we have to have a backup option, like 1-800 conference call or something where you can record it and it can just be on the phone.

**Mike Michalowicz:** That's a good idea.

**AJ Harper:** Um, I actually think I got a lot of better stories back in the day when I was just using the phone.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Oh, maybe we have to return.

**AJ Harper:** We weren't looking at each other.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** And people cry with me a lot.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yes.

**AJ Harper:** You know, especially me. No. I mean, you just like on the podcast, I mean, no, I mean, it's harder to get sometimes the really deep stuff on Zoom.

**Mike Michalowicz:** And uh, one last question around this. I remember my, my brother-in-law, and I mean this as an experience as opposed to a judgment.

My wife has experienced extreme poverty like you have to. My wife has also experienced wealth. And I remember my brother-in-law, once my wife was doing something which was extraordinary and only accessible because of wealth. Uh, and he said, it must be nice and right. Very judgy. And she said it is nice. It was her response.

I was like, Oh, that's so interesting. She goes, Her past was too, there was shame around poverty and there was shame around wealth. Like either way, you're guilty. And she said, I had this realization that wealth is a vehicle, and I should encourage other people to be there. And if they're shaming me, there's, there's something I got to expose them to.

So she's kind of a punch you in the face type of gal. And so she, Alan said, must be nice. And she's like, yeah, it is nice. You should try it. And the irony,

**AJ Harper:** So, Jersey man...

**Mike Michalowicz:** But she didn't say those words. I'm adding, um, it's a little bit of a poetic license now. Um, but the funny thing is. They have the means to be, achieve the wealth that they desire.

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They don't have a money management system. And that's what she inspired him to have a conversation with me about, which he hasn't.

**AJ Harper:** Can I just say an aside about the interview?

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** Like that, that, your wife is like so Team Mike. She's so all in with you from day one and she told me, she told me that after you got together you quit your job.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** And like, she just knew it would be okay.

**Mike Michalowicz:** That's interesting too. Yeah. She has that trust.

**AJ Harper:** And you know what? I got to tell you, that's so rare. And you're a lucky duck.

**Mike Michalowicz:** I'm a lucky duck.

**AJ Harper:** I have a marriage like that too. It was just, it was just so lovely. Yeah, no, I mean, she's, yes, that's a great love you have.

**Mike Michalowicz:** She knew, she knew be okay. I assumed to be okay, which is definitely different. Mine was, uh, Won't it be okay?

**AJ Harper:** Right. She did talk about how you have different perspectives on that, but she just had like a heart, like a gut.

**Mike Michalowicz:** So, uh, let's move on to the marketing plan. So I had a conversation with, uh, Page Two, and they were talking about new strategies.

I want to give you kind of an old-world strategy that this isn't leveraged nearly enough. But Page Two is like, uh, yeah. When I went to Penguin, again, not picking, but this is just the reality of the experience. I said, I'd like to meet every single author that's with Portfolio. And there was like a pause, and they said, "Yeah, but which ones?"

I said, "Everyone." They said, "We have like 500." I said, yeah, yeah, yeah. And they're like, no. And then they said, we have to call each one and get permission. And I don't, it's so silly. They isolate authors. And I'm like, who wants to reach out to me? Like, have you had people reach out to me? Like, yeah, but you know, we have to get your permission first.

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Yeah. Like it's, it's DOA, like I've inquired about people, and it never even gets to them or there's such formality and weirdness around it, it won't happen. They've introduced me, I think, to maybe one other author over the time that inquired about me. Maybe I'm, maybe I'm inflating my ego here, but I assume more than one, maybe two or three would have benefited from an introduction, maybe even asked for it.

So whatever, long story. I went to Page Two, I said, uh, I'd like to connect with all the authors because as the tide... boat, the tide rises, so do all the boats, and they're like abso-freaking-lutely. I said, I don't want to just tell my book. I want to sell their books. And I, I want them to be complimentary.

And maybe we can go so far, so far as to intentionally integrate books in a really deliberate way. Right now, you and I will reference other books in our books because it's a good resource, but they're the only ones that I've read recently. And they're on top of mind. I'd like to go through a process of like, what are all the great books out there that support this and investigate and read those books, but deliberately.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah, that's the difference with them is their game.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Their game.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz:** So it's a very basic old strategy, but what's old is new again, here. So the other key strategies is I said, give me a list of all your authors that are complimentary to the entrepreneurial space and the money space. Um, the psycho relationship space, any of this stuff that can compliment the book and see if there's a dialogue we can have.

So I can just learn about them and them about me and see if we can support each other. And maybe what comes out of it is two authors, you know, outside of me are connected through this process and they support each other, but that's a win also. And you're like, yeah,

**AJ Harper:** I mean, it's so basic.

**Mike Michalowicz:** It's so freaking basic, but it's not used, not leveraged.

So that is actually going to be the core element. The second new strategy is we discovered it. Maybe I even referenced it in the last podcast. One company, now a second company that said the financial health of our organization is in direct correlation to the financial health of the individuals that make up the corporation.

Therefore, the employees that work here need to be financially sound. What I've discovered and they have shared indirectly is that increasing people's salaries while kind does not



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increase their financial acuity or strength and what comes in one hand goes out the other kind of thing. So they want to give people a financial education and a financial toolbox.

We just finished a deployment. Last week, last week, my plane landed back from Amsterdam. I was on a conference call that night, wrapping up this event. And, uh, the first beta group went through this and there's been financial transformation. The owner said, we got to roll. So that's all 900 people at our organization.

So that's going to be marketing strategy to is go to companies and say that the financial health of your individuals will equate to the financial health of your organization. Otherwise, you'll turn over and so forth. So we had a big debate, your first crushing win against me of many bulk buys. Yeah.

We're moving to bulk buys. I wonder, and this is just something we're considering is, uh, speak for books, meaning just buy books. Um, and I'll speak for your organization. Um, another thing that we're going to introduce because this is unique to also the page two is customized books. Phil Jones.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah, well, he's the king of custom, the king of customization.

**Mike Michalowicz:** And so we have an opportunity here to say for Duracell and I didn't have friendly picked on. They've reached out to us. Duracell, the battery maker is the Duracell handbook to. to employ wealth, whatever it may be. But we can customize the book.

**AJ Harper:** Yes.

**Mike Michalowicz:** And they can have 10,000 copies.

**AJ Harper:** Exactly.

**Mike Michalowicz:** And we can customize a chapter, an introduction and give them the system. That's what we're looking into now to see if, how we can do that, what the quantities are to make it happen.

**AJ Harper:** I'm so happy to hear this.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Do you know, I feel so picky right now. And maybe this is part of me, like the breakup syndrome. Like I got to say, confirm all the reasons in my head, why I broke up with them to, to give myself that confirmation.

But, um, we had an opportunity back in the day with, with Penguin, where it was a couple of thousand books. I think it was two or 3000 books that an organization wanted to buy. And all

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they asked for is can we put a sticker on the cover of the book, but as opposed to a sticker, just put an emblem on the dust cover.

**AJ Harper:** So just print dust covers. Easy thing for Penguin. Lost. That's ridiculous.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. So there was a bulk buyer person and it went to them and I called a week later. So what's going on in week three, the, or week four, the group said, we're, we booked the speaking gig. Is it happening? Oh, whatever. And it just faded to oblivion again, not picking them on Penguin, but there, there was... because other organizations, there's this big corporate grind.

It went through. And so. With this hybrid, we have a lot more potential flexibility.

**AJ Harper:** It's agility.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Agility, that's what it is. It's agility.

**AJ Harper:** They can, they can respond to things and get it done.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Um, so that's going to reach the expanded market. We have such an established presence with the entrepreneurial market to just try to break into a new market without leveraging what we really have at hand.

I think it would be a mistake.

**AJ Harper:** Correct.

**Mike Michalowicz:** The average reader of ours has a three-person organization. That's not that all of them are three, but that's the average. So many are one or two, some are five or six. There's a couple with a hundred or a thousand employees, but say three, three times our list of 165 or 170,000.

Now. You know, that's almost half a million bucks if every single one got, I'm just saying it's a much bigger market when you amplify it by three in this case.

**AJ Harper:** And if you go deep on the bulk buys and then do whatever else you can to make inroads with personal finance groups and so forth, you know, expanding in that direction and it's meant many facets to the plan.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yep. One thing I'm working on right now specifically is just building my network also of experts in the financial space. Uh. So, there's a, an author, Tiffany, who I'm in contact with and we just struck up a dialogue about this.

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**AJ Harper:** I think that's one of our interviews.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Alici? Tiffany Aliche?

**AJ Harper:** I saw Tiffany come through in the last couple days. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. So, it's Tiffany Aliche. She's an author out of Newark, New Jersey, and has written a book in this space, um, which is very complimentary. And, So I can't wait to interview her Just it's on the forefront of my mind. So Joey Coleman who we were speaking about he was at my event I said, hey, this is what I'm doing next.

He's like, oh I can totally line this up He's like this is a perfect compliment to what Ramit does You should be talking about Ramit. I'm like, yeah, you know what? Let me talk with Ramit. The right, at least when it comes to authors I believe the right, I'm putting air quotes around that, mentality is that if I sell books, it complements people's interest in that space and I'll sell more books.

Yes. So, and we'll meet the type guy gets it. If, if this book moves, it'll sell more of his book. So it is a selfish thing. The more people that read traction, the more people are interested in business efficiency and that helps clockwork and vice versa. Anything else you want to share on our updates?

**AJ Harper:** No, I mean, we're, we're in the thick of it now, but not the thick, thick of it.

**Mike Michalowicz:** No, it's coming. It's coming. And now I'm looking forward to flights. and writing like crazy. Uh, next week we're gonna talk about how to document the books you want to write next. So you can hit the ground running from the get go and not lose those ideas. I'll tell you how I'm doing. I got a teaser with used to called Evernote and now my new tool that I'm using that I love.

There's two. Uh, so we'll get into that and you have some stuff to share with tools specifically, by any chance?

**AJ Harper:** You could say that.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Okay. And very cool strategies. I'm also really curious to learn how you remember all these things because you pulled a story out about Nigel Bennett that goes back, you know, X number of books, but you'll also, we'll be talking and you'll say, Oh, that reminds me of a story that I heard of in the past that we can use now.

**AJ Harper:** Yes. I just think it's my brain. I don't have a hack.

**Mike Michalowicz:** You do.

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**AJ Harper:** But I have tools that I can share about documenting.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Okay.

**AJ Harper:** I think you have a, um, I think you have something you wanted to talk about, the writer's lab.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Oh, thank you. Yeah. So we are doing a workshop, uh, over two days.

It's about four or five hours a day. And, uh, really on the proposal phase, it's interesting as we started Pen With Purpose, we've got a few authors. Oh, I got exciting news about Edy.

**AJ Harper:** Okay.

**Mike Michalowicz:** But, um, as we've been working with authors, we have found that one of the big challenges is preparation of the proposal, really understanding it.

And I'll tell you the essence of it is you are educating an editor. You're giving the tools to the editor so they can pitch you internally. And I think a lot of authors think they're just pitching their book, but they're really, preparing the editor with the tools to do the pitch. So we're going to talk about writing a proposal the right way.

Um, we're gonna talk about marketing book. That's a lot of my experience. You are going to be a guest on there. You're going to share some things. You're going to talk about Top Three (Book) Workshop. I hope. How's the program going by the way?

**AJ Harper:** Great. I only do it once a year. And we're currently, we just, as of today, which is September 23rd, started Sprintapalooza, which is our four-week sprint in the middle of class where they write like the dickens.

So you better start showing up to sprints.

**Mike Michalowicz:** You gotta be at sprints. Do it.

**AJ Harper:** You, you, I thought you were doing it. Oh. Like it's six o'clock in the morning and you're still not here.

**Mike Michalowicz:** I have no excuse. Yeah. I, I'm back in, once I stop this travel insanity and I'm back on East Coast time, I will be there because it's part of my ritual that then go work out, play guitar for a little bit.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah. But it's, it's going well.

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**Mike Michalowicz:** Um, and the workshop, the Top Three, is it, is it at your vacation home?

**AJ Harper:** Top Three Book Workshop? No, it's on Zoom.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Okay. The whole thing's on Zoom.

**AJ Harper:** I'll tell you, I'll give you an update on the retreats in the next episode since this one's. Let's wrap it up.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Perfect. Okay. We'll get out of here.

So if you're interested in Writer's Lab, this is a two day, uh, experience that I'm hosting, but AJ will be there too. You can meet the team and you can get to work on that book. Email us at hello at info at DWTB podcast. com. But in the subject line, put writer's lab and then a day left from our team. We'll be able to identify quickly and get you all the resources and tools you need to, to sign on up.

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