

# don't write *that* book!

## Episode 54:

### “Page One Desire”

**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. Okay. This is take two of episode 54. We are recording now.

**AJ Harper:** Okay.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Um, I took us down a rabbit hole. You voted today. Today is election day.

**AJ Harper:** Yes, I did.

**Mike Michalowicz:** And I wonder if there's, um, if there is a different form of engagement today, uh, than there is during the pre-election or post-election. I just wonder if there's a greater intensity or I don't know. I'm just curious.

Are you witnessing because I voted pre-election.

**AJ Harper:** Um, well, I live in a very small village, so there was maybe, I got there really early before they opened, and there were maybe 15 people ahead of me. It's probably pretty busy right now, but I live in a village of 6,000 people.

**Mike Michalowicz:** One thing I like is in A. J. Jacobs' book, uh, *The Year I Lived Constitutionally*, he talked about how they used to have election cakes, and they were served when you voted regardless of who you vote for you you get there was like a cake.

**AJ Harper:** Like a sheet cake, and you just get a little slab?

**Mike Michalowicz:** So, he made it the original recipe which had cloves in it, but he handed out. And there was interest and all 50 states had an election cake someone somewhere made an election cake.

**AJ Harper:** A big old cake?

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**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah, and he said some voters came there, and they were suspicious, like, 'Oh, this is representing a party,' which is called electioneering, you can't do that.

But, uh, he said, 'No, no, it's just to celebrate that you voted.' And some people said, Yes, I got into it. Um, and we're just celebrating the democracy. So, I thought that was interesting. I didn't see any election cakes when I voted.

**AJ Harper:** Oh, I feel like we should have election cakes.

**Mike Michalowicz:** I know, bring it back.

**AJ Harper:** Bring it back.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. Get out there.

**AJ Harper:** There should be like a, when you walk out, there should just be like a lemonade stand and cake.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** And just like lovely people smiling.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. I think regardless of your, anyone's political opinion, the turnout has been, at least in our area, extraordinary. The best I can remember in our—

**AJ Harper:** Civic engagement!

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. Good job. Everybody.

**AJ Harper:** Good job, America.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Good job. America All right. This is episode 54. We're gonna talk about page one desire. That's a big tease. First I want to introduce you, AJ harper my writing partner. We're into a book already and uh I appreciate your flexibility. So we'll talk about it a little later on, maybe this episode, some updates, but just, it's an iterative nature.

And, uh, you got stuff to me. You said you'd get to me Friday. You got to me Friday, woke up crack dawn Saturday, read through the whole thing, which is a, discipline of mine. Try not to edit. Just try to read and consume first and then think about it. And then came back with another idea. And I, I don't know. I just appreciate the iterative process.

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You embrace it.

**AJ Harper:** Oh, I'm always gonna, um, if you toss it to me, I'll always catch it.

**Mike Michalowicz:** I love it. I love it.

**AJ Harper:** Or I might throw it right back at you. No, but you know, it's fine. That's part of it.

**Mike Michalowicz:** I appreciate it.

**AJ Harper:** Okay, well, but I'd like to, you know, you are, you are Mike Michalowicz.

[They both laugh]

**AJ Harper:** You know, something punchy to hear a little punch.

We're both punchy today. Um, yes. Author of many, many books on entrepreneurship on a mission to eradicate entrepreneurial poverty. I think we haven't said that in a while.

**Mike Michalowicz:** I don't think we have.

**AJ Harper:** For those people who might just be the first-time listeners. They should know that that's your mission.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Thank you

**AJ Harper:** Yeah,

**Mike Michalowicz:** I appreciate that. Okay, so let's get into it. Typically, I start off with a little story, but you had a good one here about page one Desire.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah, I thought a good way to illustrate what I'm talking about is to talk about a couple books on my shelf

**Mike Michalowicz:** Okay.

**AJ Harper:** Okay. Well actually one book on my shelf.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Okay.

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**AJ Harper:** So I've had a lifetime battle with weight loss and now obesity.

And you would think that you would find a bunch of weight loss books on my shelf. I've bought them, but I haven't finished them. And then I've tossed them out, you know, donated them or whatever, except for one. And it's because when I read these other books, I don't see myself. I don't see the thing I want.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Oh, that's so interesting.

**AJ Harper:** I see, what I see instead are a lot of, um, examples of people who want to lose 20 pounds and fit into a dress and don't feel like they're, you know, sexy selves anymore. And I start reading this, you know, you can even hear it in my voice. Um, I, you know, I try to stay in it because I think maybe there's a nugget.

You don't want people to buy your book because maybe there's a nugget. You know? (Yeah.) We have to, we have to get our readers to read the whole book. Otherwise, the transformation isn't really possible. So if I'm getting it, I'm like, okay, maybe, maybe there's something in here that will help me. But then in the first chapter, if I feel like, Ugh, it's for these like, you know, people who just like gain some baby weight.

It's not for me, who's had a, you know, has a deeper desire than losing weight. Because if you've struggled with it your whole life, you obviously have a medical issue, you know, like your genes or how your body works, in addition to some, maybe some other things. It's complicated. It's not as simple as, a few new habits.

So those books I put aside, but there's one book on my shelf that will never leave my shelf and it's called *The Obesity Code* and it's by Dr. Fung. And it's actually pretty technical, but I felt very seen. Because he's talking about people who want something else, not just to lose weight, to be, but to be free, to be free from that chaotic mind and from the constant stress about why can't you solve this problem?

So it's gonna stay on my shelf because it speaks to me and what I want and that's what I call a page one desire. Meaning what do I want when I open the book on page one? Dr. Fung wants other things for me, right? Dr. Fung wants me to be healthy. Dr. Fung wants me to live a long life, right? Change my habits, change this but I want to... He has to connect with what I want for me to feel like, okay, I'm going to read this.

And that's only one part of it. Core message is another part, promise is another part. But that page one desire is something that we tend to miss because we make assumptions.

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**Mike Michalowicz:** You said two words that landed with me. It's complicated. Meaning your circumstance is unique to you. And I'm saying this for any reader that goes into a book.

It's not simply the to/from, I want to lose weight, I have baby fat or whatever it is. There's a lot more emotion, behavioral, physical, all these different elements. So I want to explore that. The second thing you said, I want to be seen. So complicated and seen both stood out. On page one, can both those elements be addressed or does it have to come in a sequence? Understanding the complications being seen? Is that one of the same? What's your thoughts?

**AJ Harper:** I think I said I want to be free

**Mike Michalowicz:** I think you said that too, but I did hear—

**AJ Harper:** Well, all readers want to be seen on the first page. So the way that I can be seen is if the if the author articulates in some fashion my page one desire That's part of it. There's also pain, but today we're talking about desire.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Okay.

**AJ Harper:** If the, if the author gets the desire part wrong, then I am less likely to want to finish the book. Because that's part, that's part of how you figure out who your reader is. Your reader is a combination of what they want and what they perceive stands in the way.

And the impact of those things. And that's your reader, period.

**Mike Michalowicz:** You shared in that story, you said, you know, some of these books are, I want to look pretty in the dress. That's a page one desire, it sounds like, for certain people.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz:** What's the page one desire of *The Obesity Code*? How do you see it?

**AJ Harper:** Well, I, it's, it resonated with me because it was about having a lifelong struggle.

Okay. So, and a desire to be free from that.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Okay, I gotcha. And when you say page one, is it literally physically page one?

**AJ Harper:** I mean, sometimes it depends on what your design elements are. And you know, if your interior page designer only lets you have two paragraphs on the first page, that could be tough,

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**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** You know, basically.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. Yeah. So get the message out quickly.

**AJ Harper:** The connection, the point, the reason I call it page one is because it's less about, is it actually on the physical page one and more about, do you know what your reader wants going into the book?

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** Or are you making assumptions about it? And more often what I see with authors is that they express what they want for the reader.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Interesting.

**AJ Harper:** And they don't always line up and it doesn't matter what you want for the reader. But in a previous episode we did a call to greatness breakdown That's you know, you can share what you want for the reader, but you've got to connect first.

**Mike Michalowicz:** I may have shared this on a different episode. John Jantz came and presented so I've been investing in companies and we'd bring in outside speakers. John Jantz came he supposedly is the guy who created the "no, like and trust" concept and wrote about it in *Duct Tape Marketing*, uh, prior to his other work, too.

It was profound because there was like 10 of us in the room and he sits down and says, there's something more important than these three combined. He goes, it's relatability. And now he was talking about in regards to marketing and selling, people need to see that you can understand, you get them and they get you, which kind of speaks to this page one desire.

**AJ Harper:** It's one component of it.

**Mike Michalowicz:** So the question, of course, is how do I figure out what my reader's page one desire is?

**AJ Harper:** Well, you ask, is number one. I mean, if you don't know your reader well, so I know my readers. Well, my readers are other authors.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah,

**AJ Harper:** You know, your readers well.

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**Mike Michalowicz:** yeah.

**AJ Harper:** You've been writing for them for a long time. And you talk to them every day.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah

**AJ Harper:** But if you didn't have that you could just ask, you know, you can do very bluntly: What are what's the thing you want most? And then give a time period say in the next three months or the next 12 months? Then you're gonna get what's most pressing if you were to say 10 years, right? You're not going to get the thing that's really urgent for them. And it's the urgent thing that makes them buy the book, right? So with some sort of time period. Or you could ask in terms of relationship to the problem or topic, right? Or situation. What's one thing you would really love to change in your marriage?

What's one thing you would really love to change in your friendship circle? Um, in your relationship with God, in your, um, interior home design, like, what do you want your, you know, what's the thing you want most? And then look for patterns, try to get at least twenty people to respond, could be in a social media post, could be through your mailing list.

If you want, you could do a quick survey, really, really short, to try and get answers. And then you look for patterns and how people talk about it. And you start to use their language and see what they're saying they want, instead of making assumptions about what you think they want.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Is there a way to peel back the onion? You're talking about maybe relationships. I want to have a better relationship with my spouse. So there's the desire. But then really behind that is I want to have a better relationship with myself because that actually triggers a better relationship with my wife.

**AJ Harper:** But they don't know that what you're doing. See, you just did it?

**Mike Michalowicz:** Okay.

**AJ Harper:** That that's what authors do.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. They say, here's what you actually need.

**AJ Harper:** This you've confused. What's what really needs to happen. They confuse what you should want with what the reader will say they want.

**Mike Michalowicz:** so the page one desire is what they're saying they want they have to feel seen in them

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**AJ Harper:** It's their language. It's what they think even if you are secretly thinking, of course, you want that. That's not the thing.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah,

**AJ Harper:** But you like can you imagine if you were just say that of course you I know you want that But that's not why we're here. So I'm gonna tell you what you should want.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** And that's actually what we're doing. We don't mean to. But it's, it's not that we're such egocentric people, authors, humans, it's just hard to train yourself to, you know, what I call “reader first.” It's hard to keep them top of mind. You have to almost just can just continually redirect, redirect, redirect, because you just did it.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Mm. And so, okay, so you ask customers, but you could, let me interrupt.

I'm sorry. Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** So what you could do is if they said, I want a better relationship with my spouse, you could then ask for more specifics, right? So what would that look like for you? Right? Because maybe that's what, that's what they're saying, but what they really, what they really want that they maybe haven't articulated, Is, uh, I just want it to be easy again. Right? Or, I just want to feel that spark. Or, I miss, um, this or that. Right? I just, I don't, I wish we had better communication. And then, so you ask those deeper questions, and then you look for patterns, but in what they say, not what you think. Um, and what they say.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Do you mean tactical techniques? Like, do you, you record the session and write it down? Do you use an AI to simulate what people are saying to you?

**AJ Harper:** Well, I mean, you could use AI in this... Okay. So let's break it down. If you do an ask, it should just put it on social media in places where you think readers are probably your readers are hanging out. And if you are a person who doesn't use social, ask someone in your life who does to post it for you.

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

**AJ Harper:** You know, you don't have to say, Oh, I'm not on Facebook. That's okay. Some one of your friends is and ask them to just do it. And it's just a simple questions catalog that have them put the response in comments or invite them to private message you because you'll get more responses if you give them that option.

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Some people don't want it public, you know, they don't want to reveal the thing they want or the pain they're in. So give them that option. You could also make it really anonymous by just doing a little short poll and they're free. And you can put that on social media or send to your mailing list. So that's a step one way to do it.

Another way is you could use AI and you could ask AI— With respect to the relationship one with respect to marriages. What do most people in a long-term relationship want? You know, what's something that they wish that they could fix, what's something that they miss, you know, you could ask those type of questions, different prompts for AI, and it will get, it will gather results for you and give you language.

But you can also, um, you can look at national polls, you know, they're always doing them. 25 percent of married individuals say, like, these polls exist, so AI will pick some of that up. You could ask AI for the polls. And then you can get some of that language too. Um, marketing focus groups, like, you don't even have to do it yourself. You can just go see what data collectors have already grabbed. But if you want to, you could do a focus group. And that's kind of what you were Intimating. Gather them on Zoom. Record it. Get a bunch of people. If it's a sensitive topic, then you might do them one on one, but that can be time consuming.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. Yeah. And groups, though, groupthink can come about.

**AJ Harper:** That's true, but, um, it's also good. Because if a person says, you know what I want? I just want to feel, um, I just want to feel easy again with my spouse, or I just want to feel that spark of our first relationship or, um, and then in the chat and zoom people, yes, yes, yes. You know, exclamation points, cosign me too. That's confirmation. So it doesn't, I don't think you have to worry too much about groupthink.

**Mike Michalowicz:** There's a really cool brainstorm technique I use, which would apply here is whoever is seeking the knowledge, asks the group, but then turns their, this isn't a physical space, turns their back to the group, face the corner, just take notes so that the conversations can drift and you can extract.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah. I've seen you do that.

**Mike Michalowicz:** It's really effective.

**AJ Harper:** in mastermind.

**Mike Michalowicz:** In mastermind. Yeah.

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**AJ Harper:** So you could do it in that way too. Um, but there's so many ways you can gather, try to get at least twenty responses because you don't want too few responses or you can't establish patterns.

**Mike Michalowicz:** So page one desire what I'm hearing is this is what the reader says they want or feels they want without peeling back the onion. This is what they're saying.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah, it has to be the thing that drives them to pick up the book.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah, you have to be able to articulate this

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah, we didn't I don't know if we did this episode or we just share this knowledge like people ask Well when people evaluate a book, where'd they look front flip to the back read the flap copy, skim the outline.

Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** It's just a study done about this. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz:** And this is a, this is an interesting part of a book evaluation. You know, they'll leaf through a few pages and evaluate if they want it. And page one is massive for the selling of the book, too.

**AJ Harper:** But you see, I don't think you think of it as page one desire, but when we work together, we're always thinking of it and you usually end up with a title that expresses it.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. That's a great point. So what are some of the ways the readers, that you can demonstrate that you get them. You understand them? Is it just saying the facts, man?

**AJ Harper:** You could, you could do a direct address and you know, where you could just speak directly to the reader, articulate what they want, show them that you understand it. That's cool.

You could do a narrative where you demonstrate through story, your own or someone else's, the mirror to that page one desire. So if we went back to, say, *The Obesity Code*, and I don't

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have it in front of me, so I don't remember what's on page one. But if I were writing a book for me, I would maybe then, and I wanted to do, use narrative, I would use a story from my own life or from, uh, another person who had struggled with obesity that demonstrated what they want.

Where that person in the story articulated what they want. So you let the protagonist of the story articulate the page one desire. Does that make sense?

**Mike Michalowicz:** It does.

**AJ Harper:** So that's one way.

**Mike Michalowicz:** It does. Uh, if you remember *Profit First* when you talked about Debbie Horovitch, but I don't really know if that's page one desire.

**AJ Harper:** That's pain. That's because you start with, you start with pain.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. But, but is the page one desire there the, the outcome? Yeah. Um,

**AJ Harper:** Yeah, it's later in the, um, in the introduction.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. Okay. Yeah. Okay. Uh, any other ways to demonstrate that you understand?

**AJ Harper:** Talking about your own and as long as it mirrors theirs.

And so maybe it's not yours now, but it was, was, was once upon a time. I did that. I did that in my book because I have a promise open and it's about, um, wanting to write a book that moves people so much that they can't wait to read it. to do anything with you, show up for you, hand them your book. Your book is, um, the, the real desire was actually demonstrated in the story where I talk about a person who handed *The War of Art* to Steve Pressfield and it was just beat up.

It was a mess and it was an expanded and it was underlined and dog eared and it was gorgeous. It's gorgeous. Like this art. That's my reader's page one desire. And I wrote about someone else, as it truly happened, sliding it over to Steve and asking him to sign it.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. You were there at that event when that happened.

It's interesting. I've had that experience myself now, and I never really understood it until you explained it with that detail of, you know, the, the worn, the mark, a mess. And I've had that with a few books clockwork actually, most recently, and someone's like, this changed my life.

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I was speaking at an event and this group came because I was, some individuals came because I was speaking there.

And you can tell the Uber fans because they're gifted a book by the, the event sponsor, the exact same book. And they're like, they reject it.

**AJ Harper:** Because they want theirs.

**Mike Michalowicz:** They want theirs with all the marks. And I said, please autograph this one. And now when I see that, I'm like, oh my God. That's exactly what AJ was talking about.

**AJ Harper:** Yes.

**Mike Michalowicz:** So, my sense is that Page One Desire, you can paint the picture so well that when you actually experience tastes of that, you reflect back on that book. Yeah. What you shared.

**AJ Harper:** And in that case, it was in a story, and it was a very meta story, because also in addition to that picture of the book, was me getting on, me buying a ticket, um, to go to see Steve Pressfield, with no concern for what it cost. No concern for my, didn't even look at my calendar.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Didn't talk to his spouse.

**AJ Harper:** Didn't talk to my spouse. Was like, F it, whatever. I'm, I'm doing this thing out of my love for him.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** So it was meta. It was a story within a story of what people want. People want that book, their own book to mean so much to someone that they would, it would be a giant mess when they hand it over.

And they want people to buy stuff from them and follow them without question. So, it's, and did I, did I know that when I wrote it? Yes, I did. And it was all to articulate page one desire.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Um, what's...

**AJ Harper:** There's another way though.

**Mike Michalowicz:** What, what is it?

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**AJ Harper:** You could do a fantasy.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Talk to me.

**AJ Harper:** So maybe you don't have a story or you just don't want to use it there because maybe you have another, you want to use it somewhere else in the book.

You could depict page one desire in a fantasy scenario of what it could be like.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Okay.

**AJ Harper:** You could articulate that desire. Imagine if, what if..?

**Mike Michalowicz:** Okay.

**AJ Harper:** So you could paint, you could, you could paint your own AI version of this is, this is potentially your future. I see. This is what you want.

**Mike Michalowicz:** I'm almost done reading *Working Genius* by Pat Lencioni or Lencioni.

I always mess up. I think it's Lencioni. And, uh, he does fables. This is the first book he's done where it's part fable, part narrative, not narrative, uh, but part just prescriptive and in it he opens up with a scene, the, the perfect, this guy's working for the perfect company, but it.

Transitions on for more money and then everything falls apart. So the page one desires working for this perfect company. Is that another way of doing it? So it's a fable. It's fantasy.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah. Is that what the character wants? I mean, does the reader want that?

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah, the reader wants to work in their zone of genius.

They want to have joy. The worker, the reader wants joy while they work through their work. Um, and then he says this line that's really good is, of course, I forgot it now that work basically work is an opportunity for self-expression, um, as opposed to Work is a task. Um, labor shouldn't be laborious. It should be an expression.

So you see this, this reader set the, the fable, the, the, the protagonist has the perfect scene and within two pages it goes to crap. And so that's a page one desire. You set the vision and then you show the counterpoint.

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**AJ Harper:** And it's mostly when, you know, I wanted to talk about page one desire, mostly so authors wouldn't miss it.

You know, because we can paint a picture of the promise and still somehow miss the thing that they really want I don't know when it when people, when I work with students we tend to have a problem with the fundamentals when it comes to promise because we're kind of... It's, when they first draft it it's almost like it's just these are all the things that I benefits of the book and What I think I'm gonna give you and what I really want for you, but the reader is completely missing Because they would say, I want something else.

So, that's why I really want to talk about it today because I just think, mostly because we're out of touch with it. You have to be able to articulate it. It's just the main takeaway today.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah, so let's go through that difference, because it was interesting when we share that scenario about spouses. Uh, I want to have an easy relationship, for example.

I said, yeah, yeah, but the thing is you really want. How does the author distinguish what the reader wants and what we want the reader to want?

**AJ Harper:** We can't, you can want all you want, but that doesn't mean that they're going to do it.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** Well, I think you can articulate what you want for them.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Mm-Hmm.

**AJ Harper:** And you can try and move them toward that over the course of the book, but it's pretty hard to move people to that right away. And the main point of the beginning of your book is connection, period.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Oh, that's, that's one. Be underlined.

**AJ Harper:** That's, that's it. Yeah. You can, you know, because you've read books where you've opened it, you're a few lines in and you're like, oh dang.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Or connected. Yeah. Yeah. One of the two.

**AJ Harper:** And you, you're, you know, you're an author, so you may be willing to give them a longer chance. Okay. Let me see. What else? You know, maybe they just had a rough

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start, but the average reader isn't going to do that. So you know, what are those opening lines? What's that first page like? What's that first chapter like?

If you don't have them by the end of the chapter, if they really don't feel like, I don't think this book isn't for me. That's because it what their life was not articulated. Their life was not on the page.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. I think of keynote speakers and the ones that seem to be engaging is they so quickly relate and engage the audience as part of the story. And the ones that don't. This seemed like to be credential throwers, like I've done this and I've done that, like trying to almost qualify themselves to give the speech, but you're so disconnected. You don't care.

So if they feel like blowhards and the other ones who share a story that we all can relate to in the audience and say, yes, that explains the situation. I'll give you an example with the Profit First keynote, which is not in the book. I'll open, I'll say, I'm gonna start off with a question here.

I just want to see your candor. Have you ever been lied to by someone that loves you and cares for you? Raise your hands. And then I said, have you ever been that person that you've lied to somebody that says a little bit of a joke? And I, yeah. And I said, I think I found ground zero for this, like the starting point for it. And it's the tooth fairy.

And why the reason I go and I go into the tooth fairy and I make a joke out of it. I acted out because it's relatable. It's relatable. Most people have experienced a tooth fairy, the story, or growing up as a kid, your parent, maybe you've done this. And so I'll say, now think about the absurdity of this, is you and I, AJ, we grew up in the stranger danger generation.

And we're told don't have contact with any strangers because, you know, it's, it's

**AJ Harper:** Except also don't come home until after dark.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Absurdity of that. It's like, yeah, yeah. I don't want to see you.

**AJ Harper:** I don't want to see you, but don't talk to strangers. No one should see you.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. So what I explain is, uh, I turned, you know, six years old.

I'm in kindergarten. My first tooth is going and my mom says, you know, that whole stranger danger thing is true except for one stranger. There's this woman who in the middle of the night while you're sleeping crawls into bed with you.

**AJ Harper:** Right.

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**Mike Michalowicz:** And I said, and she takes a body part from you and then leaves you hush money so you don't talk about it.

And I go think, you know, think about the absurdity. And I said, there's a loved one that is telling you a story because they think it's in your best interest. But we all know now it's a fable. And so first of all, I want to do the relatability because most people can relate to that. Then that breaks the bridge for when I talk about Profit First, where your trusted accountant says profit is not consideration until the end of the year,

**AJ Harper:** Right, that's the fable.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. They think that's in your best interest. But I'm here to say it's a tooth fairy story.

**AJ Harper:** So what you've done there is use a really funny analogy to help people understand the problem. In terms of misinformation about profit. That is however, while, brilliant. I'd love to, by the way, I've never seen you do profit first.

Oh, isn't that funny?

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

**AJ Harper:** I've never seen you do a, actually, I don't think I've seen you do a speech. I've seen you, I've, your eyes are so huge.

**Mike Michalowicz:** I didn't realize that. Really?

**AJ Harper:** No, truly. I've seen you open. I've seen you do like open for like just like five minutes or 10 minutes or. We have done a couple events together, actually several.

I've seen you do a couple things at Profit Com, but not the real full on deal. So hook me up.

**Mike Michalowicz:** I got to hook you up.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah. But what you just described is brilliant. So good and not about page one desire.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Interesting. So,

**AJ Harper:** Because there's their desires not in there at all.

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**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. So let's talk about that. So I know some speakers speaking like that, it hooks the audience and they say, this, I relate to this guy.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah. That's relatability. It's also, uh, one of the ways that it is relatable is that you're using a common experience and then laughter as recognition.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yep.

**AJ Harper:** And that's a very, very powerful tool with speaking. That said, it's not page one.

**Mike Michalowicz:** So share the difference. How would a book hook? I know you have an example here in the notes.

**AJ Harper:** I, well, I gave, told you how I hooked them with the, my own book.

**Mike Michalowicz:** But you have Terry Cole's book.

**AJ Harper:** Well, Oh, I wanted to share how you can share what you want for them as well. That's a separate thing. It's in my notes.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Okay. That's breaking from the page one desire of what they want to what you want for them.

**AJ Harper:** So I wanted to bring up Terry Cole's book. I was at Jen Kem's event and I was speaking in the city. Jen Kem is the author of the forthcoming book, *Unicorn Team*, which comes out in March. She's an alum of my workshop and brilliant. On the third day of the event, there was a mastermind. I'm part of that mastermind.

And, uh, Jen brought Terry Cole who wrote *Boundary Boss*, uh, to come and share some about her new book. And her new book is called *Too Much*, a guide to breaking the cycle of high functioning codependency, which is her term high functioning codependency. So picture an entire room of people like me, all women pretty successful in this mastermind And within two minutes of talking about her book, She had all of us with our hands over our faces, one with her head down on the table hiding because she had so called us out.

She had so called us out for high functioning codependency. So she's written the book for people like me who would never say, I'm not, I'm not codependent. Look at my, I'm as independent. I'm this, I get it done. Right? But she's talking about something else where you're too quick to say yes. Too quick to help.

Too quick to solve the problem. Too quick to be flexible. Right for high functioning people who would never think they had a problem because their life is going well, right?

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**Mike Michalowicz:** Interesting.

**AJ Harper:** The reason I mentioned it is because so that was all pain that she had us in two minutes She had us all like oh my god.

Yeah. Yeah stop reading my diary and but what she did was Talk about her page one, what she wants for us. And she did it in the dedication. So you can be sure. I don't always take the free books people give me. I says, I had to admit this. I'm a weirdo, even though I'm an author and I teach authorship and how to do this. Sometimes I leave the free book in the hotel.

**Mike Michalowicz:** You're not a weirdo.

**AJ Harper:** I'm not?

**Mike Michalowicz:** Same thing.

**AJ Harper:** I feel like they're sacred, but I feel bad. I just, I don't want to read that. I can't add one more book that I'm probably not going to read.

**Mike Michalowicz:** When someone gives you a book with the, without you, there's no, um, currency exchange. It is not a gift. It is a marketing piece. When, when you pay for it, when you make an investment, you're invested in somehow when you ask for it, it's something. But when it's inserted into your hands, it becomes a marketing piece.

**AJ Harper:** Except I took this one. Not only that, I was reading it while she was talking.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Okay.

**AJ Harper:** And then, it was so funny, there were people to the right and left of me, and they were kind of like, I caught them like looking at me, and then one of them reached over and said, I'm watching to see what you think of the book by watching your face because I know what you do for a living. (Wow.) And I was like, whoa, okay, I can't even just read a book in peace.

But I took it home and I even took it up to the Berkshires. I've taken it every, it's the book I'm reading right now.

**Mike Michalowicz:** What's in the dedication?

**AJ Harper:** The dedication has page one desire and what Terry Cole wants for them. So it has page one desire for the author, for the reader and what the author wants. And it was right there before page one.

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It's before, it's pre-page one. It says this. "It is my deepest desire that the insights shared within the pages of this book will lead to your recovery from the need to do and be everything for everyone, as well as profound self-acceptance and inner peace." So the page one desire for her readership, which is me, by the way, and all the women in that room, is recovery from the need to do and be everything.

That's the page one desire. Um, although we might not use the word recovery, she uses that's her word, but we might say we don't want to do that, do that anymore. Her wish, her desire for us, what she wants for us, and what she wants us to want for ourselves is self-acceptance and inner peace.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Interesting. Really well packaged.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah. And that's in the dedication. Talk about nutshell.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Does the reader, so we got, we got nailed on page one. As they learn and go through this journey with you, reading your book, does their desire, page one desire, turn to a page two desire?

**AJ Harper:** Yeah, that's funny. Um, It evolves, you know?

**Mike Michalowicz:** Did you say devolves or evolves?

**AJ Harper:** Evolves. It evolves because they start to see themselves differently. And sometimes we don't let ourselves want things, you know? Especially women, I will make that generalization. Sometimes we don't let ourselves want things. And then as we read the book, do the things, become more capable, become more aware, release this or that, whatever, whatever we're doing, maybe we could want something else.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Nice.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Um, anything else on this subject before?

**AJ Harper:** No, just to reiterate, don't assume you know.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah, that's the big one. Um, let's give some updates on our work together.

**AJ Harper:** Let's do it.

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**Mike Michalowicz:** We are one month and three weeks away from the deadline. You sent over the introduction. What's interesting about this process is, one thing I'm trying to do is, I used to start reading within the first line, just gave my thoughts.

It becomes very slow, but I also don't understand the full context, so I'm trying to be disciplined of reading the entire—

**AJ Harper:** Wait.

**Mike Michalowicz:** What?

**AJ Harper:** I have to interrupt you. This is new. Okay.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Knew what?

**AJ Harper:** This discipline of yours.

**Mike Michalowicz:** This is very difficult. Yeah,

**AJ Harper:** Because you usually I see comments like this “Something something something we should change that and then four paragraphs later.

Oh, I see you already did that.”

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Never mind. Yeah, never mind so How am I doing this as I you said on Friday? I woke up early Saturday printed it out. Actually, I printed it out Friday night, but whatever. I printed. And so this way, I sit with a cup of coffee, uh, and I'm out and I, by default, don't bring even a pen because I know that's so my habit. And this way I can just read it.

Then I go back and start, start, uh, making suggestions. And one thing as, as I was reading this particular one, true to what we discussed, is I have this awareness that employees of a company or people that are salaried, maybe don't even consider themselves employees, don't see themselves as entrepreneurs. They see entrepreneurs as outsiders. They see entrepreneurs as someone that they aren't, can't be, don't get them. It's a, it's a great crevasse between the two. Is that the right word? Is it pronounced crevasse?

**AJ Harper:** [laughs] Go on.

**Mike Michalowicz:** So what they do, so what they do, uh, so what I wanted to do was, was there some kind of relatable, uh, story where I can show that something was not made for them, but actually serves them.

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And so. We just iterated on that. And what I love that I came back to, I said, Oh, you know, there was a time I was pilfering beer from my father. And I'm like, there may be, there's something there. And you're like, no, definitely not. And then I'm like, Oh, you're right. Oh, baking soda. So I use baking soda to, to maintain, we have a hot tub thing to maintain use baking soda and actually makes the water clear and cleaner than any other product.

But I pull it from our baking cabinet because my wife and I, we make bread. We use baking soda. You can use instead of yeast. And like, my God, the, the, this is, was intended originally for this and translates to that. So I thought it's just interesting that we're iterating that way.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to be so giggly about it.

**Mike Michalowicz:** No, that's fine. What, what, what hit the funny bone?

**AJ Harper:** Well, that you wanted to use an example of stealing beer from your dad.

**Mike Michalowicz:** I just thought there might be a story there.

**AJ Harper:** It's not. I mean there is, but maybe for something else. For something else,

**Mike Michalowicz:** yeah.

**AJ Harper:** Maybe not for the very first thing your new readership learns about you.

**Mike Michalowicz:** No, definitely not.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah. Um, you know, the introduction is tough because you have to, you have to also express your credentials and so your credentials don't matter to your new readers, but you still have all your old readers. So this is the fine line we're walking, which is bringing your existing devoted fan base forward and adding to it.

And then walking that line of what the intro needs to do, because the intro has a big job. So, the puzzle, the puzzle is hard.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** With intro and chapter one. Those are the hardest right now. Because it is, um, there are multiple jobs that those two pieces do. Plus, now we're adding this extra layer of, Additional readership.

So, to be clear, we're not writing to multiple readers. That's not what I'm saying. We know who the reader is, but some of them might come from your existing readership, and some of

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them might come be brand new, is all I'm saying. So, while I'm really loving working on it, that is the little pickle that we're just, and it's not even, it's like, um, I bet it's like tuning a guitar.

I've never played guitar, but it's like, just, you've got to get this, like, right, you've got to get that note, you know, and it's not quite or maybe a piano.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah, yeah, that's a good analogy right now. Yeah, because you get what's called discordance.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah, exactly. So we don't want that discordance, which is actually in keeping with our theme today, where a reader feels like, I think I even wrote in my notes.

It's kind of like when you turn on the radio and you expect to hear one type? It's like you're like a country person and you have your station and then all of a sudden it's just doing like hip hop people. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

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

**Mike Michalowicz:** It's jarring.

**AJ Harper:** It's jarring or a wrong note in a song. So, um, but that's editing. So I'm not too worried about it, but it's interesting working on the front end.

**Mike Michalowicz:** My analogy. This is kind of how we iterate. So you talked about Uh, the music's jarring is when you, you're drinking something like, Oh, this is coffee or something. And you drink it and it's actually tea or something. And just, it throws you off, you know, and it's, if you knew what's coming, it tastes great.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz:** But we have expectation and it's different.

**AJ Harper:** And it might be, I'm just thinking this now while we're talking, it might be that we need to do, uh, something on in the intro first, before we even mention anything to do with you. So let me, I'm going to think about that. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz:** I like that. But what are you thinking?

**AJ Harper:** Like the, just very, just relatable, um,

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**Mike Michalowicz:** regarding money.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah. And I, you know, I'm going to ask you something that I haven't asked you, but I'm going to ask you now on the podcast. We always do pain.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** That's your thing.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** Is it still your thing?

**Mike Michalowicz:** Oh, maybe not. Right. Maybe not.

**AJ Harper:** 'Cause we did pain versus promise. I, I, I just want you to think about it.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** Because I, in chapter one, I've written a pain story.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** But, I also have a promise story at the end, and I can flip it.

**Mike Michalowicz:** You know what's interesting about the desire of the reader? What I hear is, I just don't want to worry about money. As opposed to, I want to be rich.

**AJ Harper:** Okay, so ahhh!

**Mike Michalowicz:** Many books make this—

**AJ Harper:** Mmm! Can I try it?

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** I want to try flipping it.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Let's flip it.

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**AJ Harper:** I want you to change it up. Let's flip it. Because we have done Payne for 10 books, or maybe 11, I don't even know anymore. Let me flip it. I'm getting excited because I'm going to lead with, I'll just tell you this quote because I don't want everybody to know what we're doing, but, um, I'm going to lead with the wedding story instead of, it's currently at the end.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Oh, I love that.

**AJ Harper:** I'm going to lead with it and then I'm going to back in to the mailbox story. Okay.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Ohh! There you go.

**AJ Harper:** Like it's a flashback.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Oh, oh! This just got real!

**AJ Harper:** Pain flashback. Okay. Instead of opening that way, let's try it. Let's see if you like it. We can always flip it back.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yep. Okay. I know exactly what you're saying. Um, okay. Next episode, we're going to talk about planning for the year ahead. This broadcasts...

**AJ Harper:** Early December.

**Mike Michalowicz:** 2025.

**AJ Harper:** Well, no, I think it's soon.

**Mike Michalowicz:** It's soon.

**AJ Harper:** So because we're a little behind.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah

**AJ Harper:** Meaning we don't have a bunch of banked episodes.

**Mike Michalowicz:** No, we don't, so next week. We'll talk about planning the year ahead. What's 2025 gonna look like for you in the terms of being an author?

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