

# don't write *that* book!

## Episode 55

### “Planning the Year Ahead”

**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 A. J. Harper. This is episode 55, we're going to talk about planning the year ahead as an author.

I'm joined in studio with A. J. Harper, my co-writer, co-host, co can you be co-friends? That sounds actually, Co-friends.

**AJ Harper:** Co-friends. We've agreed to be friends.

**Mike Michalowicz:** One thing I did once is we had an author we were working with, with penned with purpose and they said, we're, she goes, I really just want a bestie in this industry.

So we got one of those chains. It was a heart and said, besties and sent half to her. Um, I always hog the introduction of you first. So now I want you to take it, take the lead and then I'll reciprocate.

**AJ Harper:** There's this, um, I think if we have, we have like our place, We have a place we love to go, we've been doing it for many years, it's called Art Café in Nyack, so whenever we're gonna get together, should we meet at our place?

It's Art Café. And we have our table, it's the round table in the corner, it's hard to get it, it's usually busy, but we've written many books at that table. And in fact, sometimes I'm at Art Café with people who know you. And I say, by the way, That's where Mike sits. That's where Mike sits. No, we write books here.

Well, you know, we get started on them. But there's this, um, very distinct memory that I have. And we were actually sitting outside on the patio and we ordered hummus. And you said, Oh my gosh, this is the best hummus ever. My wife would love this. And so we ate our hummus and then you ordered to go hummus to bring to her.

And I just, I'll never forget that because I thought, I know it seems like a small thing, but a lot of people don't make gestures like that. And I think you're a very thoughtful person, especially when it comes to your family.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Thank you.

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**AJ Harper:** Yeah. So that just, I never forgot that.

**Mike Michalowicz:** So. I'll reciprocate, uh, in regards to our cafe, there's a thoughtfulness that you have that's so much more considerate and deeper than most or anyone I know.

I said, you know, we're sitting in our cafe at that round table once, and this may be, this may actually be wrong, but I look out the window because you can look out that little window there.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz:** I think it faces the library.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah. And it has all the Ivy over there. Yes. And the stone. That's beautiful.

**Mike Michalowicz:** And I'm like, Oh, A.

J. does this deliberately. Oh, maybe it's a subconscious thing, but I'm like, we're, we're facing an institution of knowledge creating something to contribute to it. I'm like, this isn't just happenstance. It's deliberate thought. And I noticed that in a lot of things you have, it's, it's like, oh, there's a reason behind the reason.

**AJ Harper:** Yes.

**Mike Michalowicz:** That's remarkable. Because I think most people don't do that.

**AJ Harper:** I definitely did suggest Art Cafe the first time because of its proximity To the Niagara Public Library, which is a Carnegie Library. Where we also wrote, we also started Pumpkin Plan there.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Pumpkin Plan there, with that weird dude in the room with us. He should get some attribution.

**AJ Harper:** He should, weird dude.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Weird dude. Those trips to Nyack, you know, we've, we've, done retreats. We had the bear incident where we had that bear swimming in the pond. We—

**AJ Harper:** The teenager, the bear teenager.

**Mike Michalowicz:** The bear teenager, we had the situation where we stayed in...

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**AJ Harper:** Scary basement.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Scary basement, but there's chains from the ceilings and everything to going to like a biker camp. I went to that biker place.

**AJ Harper:** There was the one with the dolls in the bedroom. Oh, we've done a lot of, we've made some bad choices.

**Mike Michalowicz:** But there's something special about Nyack, your hometown. We've been to the bakery and so forth, but there's something special about the Art Cafe. It's like, Oh, this is going to be an amazing book.

And they always are, but there's something special about that. And, uh, playing into the theme of today's topic of playing the year ahead, we're meeting there the day after Thanksgiving. We're going to meet there early.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah. Because that's what we do. We're on, everyone else is on a break

**Mike Michalowicz:** And we're rolling.

**AJ Harper:** We're rolling.

**Mike Michalowicz:** What time does the Art Cafe open?

**AJ Harper:** I got to check. We might, we might have to meet some, we might have to sit outside and wait for it to open.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Oh, that'd be brilliant to sit there in the shivering cold.

**AJ Harper:** That's fine. I'm from Minnesota. I can handle it. Besides, which is almost going to be 80 degrees here today.

**Mike Michalowicz:** All right. So let's talk about annual planning. I don't know if you know this, I'm sure you do, or if you've seen it, when you visit my office here in Boonton or at my home, my home office, um, I have an intention sheet for the year. (I've seen it.) Okay. I've done it every year. I'll actually pull it up. for the last five to six years.

Um, my oldest, I'm pulling up. They have one record that I started photographing them in 2017. So that's, that's, uh, six years ago, seven years ago, I started photographing them and I've just pulled up the one for 2017. I highlight it when it's accomplished. The intention to. for *Profit First* says, uh, the *Profit First* book will continually rank 2,000 or better on Amazon.

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And then I wrote, I'm writing some notes about it, which I can't see, it's kind of zoomed out, but it's highlighted. It says, I will land a book deal with Penguin for over 150, 000 for an advance, which we did, uh, that in 2017. But what's interesting about these intentions is I was reading. Oh, I can't remember the book.

I can picture it almost, but I can't remember the book. But basically the concept is there's this person who does these extreme sports, but they determined it's only extreme if you can be successful 50 percent of the time. If you fail 50 percent of the time, you're now walking the line of what's extreme.

So some of these crazy extreme sports, I'm putting air quotes around it, is to carry a 50 pound rock, uh, for a hundred meters. Underwater. So you swim and you got to carry it. You got to put down, you got to come out, get air. And you got to repeat this process over and over again. And you got to do it within a certain timeframe.

Like these are, but this guy considers extreme sports and he goes, if I'm successful more than 50 percent of the time, it's not extreme enough. So I was like, Oh, that's an interesting, not for me, but the sports, but interesting framing for life's intentions. So I pulled up my 2018, 2019 and 2023, 2024, uh, 2018 clockwork will sell over 50, 000.

Print copies in 2018 did not get highlighted. So set a goal, did not achieve it. Probably first will surpass a thousand reviews. It did happen. Probably first surpasses 750 weekly, uh, print sales. Um, crush that. Um, let me see. I'm just looking for one.

**AJ Harper:** It's interesting because there's, they're all specific outcomes, not necessarily like,

**Mike Michalowicz:** I need it to be smart.

You know, specific, measurable. The new book, *Ascension*, this is what it says, or “Other Name”, I put in parentheses, thank God, it became *Fix This Next*, is the best book we've ever written. It will define the entrepreneurial journey and be a mandatory read for the next hundred years.

**AJ Harper:** You don't mess around.

**Mike Michalowicz:** I don't screw around. That book is not a mandatory read, unfortunately. And it's, you know, I wonder if it's because of marketing, because the book is the starting point. I really do believe in it. Um, another one. All this is 2023. *All In* will be positioned for a 10,000-unit launch during the first two weeks. Hardcover did not achieve that.

Uh, it'll be an industry defining book. It's not. And it's such a shame.

**AJ Harper:** Well, not yet. You have to give that it just came out this year.

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**Mike Michalowicz:** It came out this year. It is such a good book.

**AJ Harper:** It takes a minute for industry defining to happen.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah, I guess. That's a challenge I have. This, uh, anxiousness. Just like, let's get it done. Pen With Purpose will be serving eight active authors, that's, I think we're serving six. Recurring revenue from books will be 500,000 in royalties annually. And we're, what was the royalties this last, I think it was like 175,000. So we're about, uh, maybe 350,000 this year. So it's woefully low. short in that regard.

**AJ Harper:** I know why.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Why is that?

**AJ Harper:** Because *All In* came out. We didn't have an advance. *All In* came out in January. We only have two months of recorded sales that we get paid for that we got paid for in October. So that's one of the main reasons.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Okay. Yeah. I got it. I kind of look at it. Did I send you the full royalty sheet for it?

**AJ Harper:** No. In fact, I don't get those anymore.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Oh, I'll send it to you. We got to go through it. I don't really. I've been kind of buzzing around with other things and not focusing on that. I got it. Now I said this is 2023 *Clockwork* will be a top 5,000 Amazon ranking consistently. Not even close. It's between 35 and 40. It's, I'm frustrated because the rewrite is so stinking good. Um, there was a question here is, uh, will we utilize AI in preparation of the next book?

**Mike Michalowicz:** It's interesting for an intention. I put a question out there and we really have not it's good for research, but that's about it. Um, I will host a tv show 2023.

Interestingly, Friday. I'm gonna find out if I'm hosting a tv show. Was it interesting about some of these intentions to is like I didn't put work toward it. I didn't like start calling tv shows. I wanted to be on it and we're gonna talk about that a little bit. How that didn't serve me. This one sought me out.

Um, and then 2024, a couple more things and we'll, we'll continue on. Interesting. Clearly I want a TV show. So I'll have a top performing TV show or streaming show. Um, we'll, we'll create the model, sell your business this year. So that's a book we started working on and I'll have the model done this year for 2024.

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**AJ Harper:** We can't, can't write it until you can prove it.

**Mike Michalowicz:** And the model is not done. Um, the, manuscript for the new book working titles cash confidence. We're not using a title, but I just wanted alliteration. So I knew what I was talking about, but cash confidence will be done, uh, December 31st. And so now we're, we're up against those dates and we're committed to our contractually—

**AJ Harper:** Technically not the deadline.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Well, it's a couple of days after, right?

**AJ Harper:** They're not even in back in the office, but we'll be done.

**Mike Michalowicz:** You know what I'm saying? Yeah. Um, so I wanted to share was this, those are the intentions. I put out there and that's how I structure. I'm wondering when you plan the year ahead, do you have a different model?

**AJ Harper:** Um, Yeah, I mean, I'm thinking about... I start from a place of “what do I want to experience?” and “What do I want my life to be like?” because I am going to oh I'm if I just sit with the goals like that, then I'm going to do too much.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Like over exhaustion?

**AJ Harper:** Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Interesting.

**AJ Harper:** And you know, I've long felt like you needed to go to one book every two years, but you have been on this track where you need to keep writing new things.

And I have a theory that if you release one book every two years, it will give you the chance to really make sure it has legs for marketing. Because I feel like you're trapped in a cycle of just more, more, more. And may have missed some opportunities to really get the strong foundation under some of the books.

**Mike Michalowicz:** I think you're right. I have this belief that a great, it's funny, I even teach against this, that a great book will sell itself, that it will get traction, but that's not the case, necessarily. Sometimes it happens that a great book, the work gets out, but if you don't put the effort behind it, the potential is lost. It's so unlikely.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah, I mean there's a lot of timing and luck involved, too.

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**Mike Michalowicz:** For sure.

**AJ Harper:** For sure. But I really think you would also be happier. I'm just throwing it out there. I know we didn't plan to have this type of conversation. But I think you would also feel happier if you weren't in the grind.

**Mike Michalowicz:** In the race. Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** And you could, because one of the things that's so great about you is that you think about how you think about marketing and getting things in front of people in ways other people don't. And how are you going to have space to think about that?

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. Without, yeah. Always producing,

**AJ Harper:** Always producing.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** And in addition to all the other stuff you're doing.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** So just, just something for you to think about.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. That's, I love that. Um, I, I think setting these intentions for me has been extraordinary because it's also a way to reflect on what's working, what's not working. I, this intentions, I only shared some of the books, business book stuff, um, on there, I put experiences with my family.

**AJ Harper:** Mm hmm.

**Mike Michalowicz:** I mean, I guess my kids would have to measure what they feel, but I feel very closely connected with my wife and my children because I put intentions out there to do certain things.

And one of the things maybe we've talked about in the air is, um, every year I do one trip with one of my kids on a destination or activity that they desire to be fully present. I don't know if I ever told you this. I hired, um, Anthony Robbins. This is back like 20, 20 years ago, maybe more 25 years ago, my oldest son Tyler was maybe five years old.

And I hire a coach saying I want to be connected with my, I really want to build a strong bond with my son. And he said, well, what's your son like to do? And I'm like, well, yeah, it's

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video games and stuff. I'm like, but, but I enjoy sports. Like, how do I get into sports? And he's like, no, no, no. Says the coach.

He goes in, immerse in what they're interested in. You be present for them. I don't know why it was such a hard pill for me to swallow, Mike, but that's not how it works. But in retrospect, that was exactly how it works.

**AJ Harper:** Well, wait a minute. Where does Tony Robbins come in?

**Mike Michalowicz:** I went to a Tony Robbins event and he says, you can hire my coaches for personal life.

**AJ Harper:** Okay.

**Mike Michalowicz:** There was some dude on the phone I was talking to and that's what he said is immerse yourself in what they want and you'll be more present. Fast forward at my house in our basement. I set up a, kind of like a sports memorabilia, but with it is my children's memorabilia. What was a significant part of their life?

My daughter, she's really into rock climbing. So we have a pair of her climbing shoes up there. My son Tyler, he says, Oh, one of the greatest moments of my life was, um, there was this thing called Diablo. It's a video game that I started immersing myself in playing with him. He's like, I'll never forget dad, me and you.

And I was like, Oh my God. Yeah. When we set these intentions. I can go back at the end of the year and measure against it and say, Oh, what's working, what's not working. And I, I, that back then I wasn't documenting, but I reflected back on that Anthony Robbins thing saying, Oh, that works. Immerse yourself with the kids.

And when I do it with these books, I look back and say, Oh, that works. Do more of that.

**AJ Harper:** When I said experience, I meant more like, um, when I'm thinking of my year, I'm thinking about Um, almost not a theme, but kind of a theme, but just what's a thing that I, I want to be really focused on for the whole year in terms of experiencing professionally is what I mean. Do you put a feeling to it?

**Mike Michalowicz:** How you want to feel?

**AJ Harper:** I, maybe. I don't really articulate it, but, you know, next year I'm biting the bullet and just, um, going for being even more out front. And I think I'm doing that. I'm sitting here on a podcast.



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**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**AJ Harper:** Um, but I really actually have been holding back. And holding back on, you know, my own voice and some change I'd like to see in the industry and so forth. And so, um, you know, that's, I'm kind of building my year around that and what matters to me. And then I also have those metrics that you just talked about. But I, I can't really get behind just one of those.

It has to fit with, does this work for me? Is this taking me where I want to go and how I want to grow as a person professionally?

**Mike Michalowicz:** It does make sense.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah. Like I knew this year I'm building this, a building year literally and figuratively building our property, but also I made a lot of stuff this year.

There's a made a lot of stuff. So including still making it. So we're working on your book and, um, and just thinking about next year, just. Being more out, being more visible so that I can help make some change. But then I have a whole set of plans for the year as well, but it has to kind of fit into that sort of my focus for the year. Focus is probably the best word.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah, I like that. Yeah. I like that.

**AJ Harper:** Versus a theme.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah, my, yeah, interesting, interesting. Um, In regards to 2025, you know, what's, what's the prep going in? So I'll, I'll share some stuff.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah. Let's hear what you're going to do for 2025.

**Mike Michalowicz:** What's interesting is once there's many books in circulation, we have a responsibility for marketing those books.

So that's an ongoing process. The it's clear, I mean, this will change again, but it's clear what moves books is education, um, in little sound bits through social media. Um, We looked back at this year and the number one way we move books, when I say we, Andrea's on our team, is TikTok. It's TikTok. I don't even, it's funny.

I don't want to accept that that's the case. We had one particular video that we created that we can attribute to 500 Unit sales in one week of Profit First.

**AJ Harper:** We did that whole episode on Amazon versus Tik Tok.

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

**AJ Harper:** Yeah. But you're still that. So now because of that data, you've got a plan for 2025 that involves Tik Tok.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. We're also finding as of the videos we've produced, the ones that get the most viewership is me keynoting. And that's this, it's pieces from it.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah. You said we just splicing.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Splicing. So we have the new book keynote kind of prepped. I'm delivering the first one January. January 7th. I think it is right after the new year a keynote on I've already done virtual ones I'm doing the first live one. So we're putting those early on.

**AJ Harper:** Okay, and the book comes out a year after that.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yep

**AJ Harper:** So you're doing a bunch of keynotes all next year on the new book and video, taking footage and you're going to splice that up to build readership on that topic,

**Mike Michalowicz:** right? the other thing is interesting is early indications are We can move To when we had that debate about mass, you know bulk sales is that?

Corporations of a certain size want their employees to be financially enabled and that they'll buy the book So we're pursuing those opportunities.

**AJ Harper:** In advance?

**Mike Michalowicz:** In advance.

**AJ Harper:** Smart.

**Mike Michalowicz:** The, the last thing is other people, influencers in a space, uh, other authors in particular still move a ton of books. So a relationship with a guy like Ramit Sethi or, or, um, whatever. There's quite a few. Uh, we spoke with, uh, Tiffany Alici. Yeah. She's great. She's amazing.

**AJ Harper:** I love her so much.

**Mike Michalowicz:** One of my favorite interviews we did. She was such a good storyteller.

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**AJ Harper:** Yes.

**Mike Michalowicz:** So let me tell you how Tiffany Aliche came about. So Tiffany's book, maybe you can look it up real quick. I think it's, I want, I think it's good with money is the title.

**AJ Harper:** I think that's it. I'll confirm it.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. So I met her through the author group I started at Don Miller's place and I didn't know Tiffany, but she was invited through or suggested through another author there. Uh, she happens to be a New Jersey resident. And stylistically, how she presents herself is very similar to me so there's an instant affinity I have toward her. One thing we did is we interviewed her because we want some of her ideas for the book. We want to highlight and feature her book. Is it good with money? It's

**AJ Harper:** It's *Get Good with Money*.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Good with money. Yeah, my bad so, *Get Good with Money*, and her storytelling was exceptional. Self-deprecating Showing her own journey of struggle. Funny. So funny and very fun, but insightful. Yeah. Yeah and deep.

**AJ Harper:** I mean... No, she's a rock star.

**Mike Michalowicz:** So that is part of the marketing plan is to have an authentic relationship to be a supporter. An example Tiffany and then when it's appropriate to ask her which we wanted to support this book, but to ask for that by actively supporting her book, *Get Good With Money*.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah, and her book's doing really well.

**Mike Michalowicz:** It's, yeah, it's a great book. Yeah. It's a great book. Um, in regards to the, the backlist, one thing that for 2025 we're going to do is more direct asks, one for one exchanges with authors, uh, in, in promoting each other's books. I want to get the Frequently Bought Together box in, um, Amazon.

So, Dan Martell, *Buy Back Your Time*, his book is selling extremely well. He's also with Penguin, had a dialogue with him on November 14th, so a little before 2025, so a week from today when we're recording this, we're a little bit over, uh, he's going to be announcing his list. You gotta get *Profit First*. It's the compliment to buy back your time.

We're going to say you gotta get buy back your time. It's a compliment to buy first. So we just—

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**AJ Harper:** Direct tit for tat kind of thing.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. Yeah. But we identify as these books already are working in concert. There's people buying both books and they do work in concert. So what books are already working in concert and then push the word out aggressively on that.

We're still going to continue that webinar series. That's been very effective where I bring in two other authors and we talk about topic collectively and ask the audience to buy. But this is back to a more fundamental level, just a direct recommendation for something that I truly believe in. And that author. Julie believes it.

**AJ Harper:** Can I ask, how much time do you think you're going to spend in 2025 focused on backlist versus focused on the new book coming out?

**Mike Michalowicz:** I think it's going to be 75 percent backlist. Wow. Maybe 8 percent backlist. I mean, as we get closer to the launch, then it starts,

**AJ Harper:** Yeah, that ramps up.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Ramps up on that.

So like,

**AJ Harper:** what do you think? October, November, the book comes out in January. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz:** I mean, that's, that's when we'll get really aggressive, but the foundational work is now.

**AJ Harper:** Is now. Yeah,

**Mike Michalowicz:** It's having that content out there capturing that that community. Um, the easier lift for us is to get entrepreneurs by for their employees as opposed to having this market become aware of us independent of the business.

**AJ Harper:** But don't you think at this point you need a publicist?

**Mike Michalowicz:** You feel like you're trapping me. What do you mean? I don't. You're trapping me. Counsel, don't you think?

**AJ Harper:** No, it just occurred to me that I don't think you needed it when you were writing just for entrepreneurs. Right. But I think you need it now. You really do.

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You need to get some media coverage and broadcast media too. You really do.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** I don't think it necessarily moves a lot of books to you. Um, to be on, say, The Today Show, unless somebody, you know, you're helping someone profoundly. But I don't know. I feel like it might be something to look into.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. That's something that Page Two will, I'll have a conversation with them, see what they say.

**AJ Harper:** they'll do some, but you might want to think about getting some, even for just the like a three-month or four-month runway.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. Yeah. One of the questions is we, and we were talking about last episode or maybe this episode, this, I'm conflating these, but the concept of releasing a book every year.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah. So we just mentioned on this episode or

**Mike Michalowicz:** was that last

**AJ Harper:** episode? It was fine about 10 minutes ago. Oh God. I'm losing my mind. Just so we're clear. Yeah. Um, yeah, it was me challenging you. I want us to see if maybe you might want to switch up your process.

**Mike Michalowicz:** One of the challenges I have with setting those intentions of 25 books, for example, is adhering to it, even if it's not serving me to stick with it because I said I would, but I may have an out.

Uh, it may be five books a year because it's not me, it's through the imprint. We just, I can't share the names or details. We have our first author coming on board, um, I know who it is to the imprint. Yeah. But I don't want to share that. Uh, and we have another quote, major author, a very recognized name who may be making the leap from traditional publishing to hybrid. So we're talking with her, I'll share it to her, um, uh, as early as tomorrow on and exploring this.

**AJ Harper:** So, but let's talk about you and your catalog, your body of work. Do you want to do a book? We haven't even, y'all, we have not discussed this, the two of us. You are coming to my place in May, which typically we would use that time to work on a new book.

So are we going to work on a new book?

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**Mike Michalowicz:** Well, here's what I want to come to the table with. I have other book concepts.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah. We've had some, we've had on the back burner.

**Mike Michalowicz:** We have some that we've, yeah, we, we fleshed out one pretty far too.

**AJ Harper:** Yes.

**Mike Michalowicz:** I want to go through those and then we have a hearty conversation around timing. Is it right now? Do I have the experience deploying these things that it's appropriate?

**AJ Harper:** Yeah. So that brings me to, uh, well, before let me come, we can come back to that. I want to know, are there any other big changes you're doing in your planning for next year that things that you aren't going to do anymore?

Like just, are you simplifying? Are you downshifting? Are you, because you have been on a mad dash this fall.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. So. This is Mad Dash, travel-wise.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz:** I just, yesterday, AJ, I call it, I volunteer for the town here on, I'm on a board and I said, I can't do it. I said, I'm compromising you guys. I'm compromised myself.

So there's a board meeting tomorrow at seven o'clock at night that I had to rush over to, but I can't go unprepared. So I'm actually leaving that and I'm in a mastermind group that I've approached them saying, I got to leave because I'm hurting the group. So that's, those are, there's these. Things I, I benefit from in the, in the emotion it gives me, but I'm not able to be fully present.

So I'm leaving those. One thing I am bringing back that I abandoned. last year and a half is podcast appearances. So I do Thursday podcasts. I was doing like five or 10 a day, appearances on other people's shows. We ran an analysis. We couldn't find a correlative effect. But, and this is be careful about cause and effect, but since we stopped appearing on many podcasts, I've been doing, maybe this past year, I did one a week.

Back then I was doing, you know, ten a week. There has been a drop in book sales. By about overall 20 percent down across the board on all books.

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**AJ Harper:** That's no joke.

**Mike Michalowicz:** That's no joke. I gotta be careful of a correlative effect. Our comps, Traction by Gina Wickman, E Myth by Michael Gerber, they're all down in sales based upon our analysis.

I haven't done the book scan, but we're just, when we look periodically, it's like, oh, they're all down. So is podcasting affecting that or not? But we're going back. My speaking agent. The company's called go leeward. So actually, if you need a speaking agent, it's go leeward dot com. They're very selective, so I can't promise anything.

Um, chances are it won't, they won't select you cause they're exclusive to a few authors, but you never know. Um, said your, uh, uh, inquiries is down and what they identified was that The inquiries that we had in the prior years that said, Oh, I heard Mike on a podcast are nonexistent.

**AJ Harper:** Oh, you've got to get back on the podcast.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yes. That's what we're assuming. So it's already starting this Thursday. I got 10 lined up. Uh, so that's something. Yeah. That's a change. Um, we are, Andrea is really, we, we devoted a good six months a year on Tik Tok and we, we finally are. A couple hits and we it's not figuring it out. I think it's just the quantity game, so we're gonna double down on that.

Um, and then we're gonna see, I'm gonna know this Friday. If this TV show goes that that's a big enough shift that we want to put energy there. Um, It's through a fast channel. There's guaranteed 10 million impressions. It's in a nonsocial media channel, but it's in a different form of consumption, which is, you know, Netflix and streaming and so forth.

So we just have to have space for those things. If that goes, we got to shift and leverage around that. That's our intention.

**AJ Harper:** Okay. If you want to do a new book with me next year, You better get it ready today.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** No, no. I'm just saying I learned I can't really do it during when I'm teaching my workshop.

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**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** It's too hard.

**Mike Michalowicz:** It's too much.

**AJ Harper:** It used to be easier.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. Um. That workshop still goes for another three weeks?

**AJ Harper:** Yeah. I have three weeks left. Oh my gosh. It's so good. Everyone is just amazing. They're so amazing and I love doing it and I don't want the, I want to just be in that mode. I just want to be in that mode, which means you and I need to finish probably by August, at least just a first draft.

Beause I can edit, I can edit during workshop. It's getting that first draft done is always my giant... That's always the hardest for me. Editing is a breeze for me. And I can do it fast. The other part I can't do fast. Because it's just too much thinking. So if realistically just saying that gives us the May, June, July.

It's not a lot of time. Which would mean we should meet in the new year to talk about if you want to do it.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. And maybe it's a pass for next year.

**AJ Harper:** Maybe.

**Mike Michalowicz:** This new book is, is, is so important. They're, they're all so important.

**AJ Harper:** Or, or, you know what we could do? It's just slow down the process.

**Mike Michalowicz:** That's true too.

**AJ Harper:** We could get it all ready. We could, because one thing that I wish we had had this time was all our interviews in the bag.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** Before I was writing. Right now this is awkward for me.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah, yeah.



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**AJ Harper:** You know what we could do? We could use that time in May when you're coming up to my property on the island.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** Bang it out. Maybe even a couple of them.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** Different outlines. Load up on interviews so that everything's lined up.

**Mike Michalowicz:** And

**AJ Harper:** then maybe just, I just don't start working on it until

**Mike Michalowicz:** that's interesting

**AJ Harper:** because then we would have all the groundwork done. And I don't want to be too delayed if you decide, yes, I want to go.

Beause that's kind of your MO is like, I changed my mind and we're going, we're doing it tomorrow. Let's go. But if we had some time to really tinker with and see, ooh, let's have these interviews and they aren't all like, I think this week we have like six on one day, which is hard for us. So, what about that for a strategy?

That's interesting. So that we try and get enough ground under us. Yeah. So that we could go on a book, maybe even two.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** We could pick one. And we can go on it, but then maybe I don't have to have, be doing interviews and writing. During workshop.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah, that's interesting. You know, this, we started this investment group called prosper group.

And, uh, we had 14 companies. We're at 10 now for, it was not a fit. And we decided of these 10, the majority now are experiencing rapid, healthy turnarounds. And it's been a very short period. How to get it, you know, so there may be a story there. Two, but these things need more time to flesh out. I don't want to be premature about it.

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**AJ Harper:** Well, you have time to think about it, but let me plant the seed because that, that would be a good way to set us up for success.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Let's talk about your plans for 2025.

**AJ Harper:** Well, like I said, I'm focused on more visibility and I'm going, my book will be out in paperback in August, which incidentally is its own launch.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Maybe... I always said we should dedicate an episode to it. And I was listening to one of our episodes a while ago, and then I don't know if we've, we've designated that concept, whatever paperback, but that may be an interesting topic. Why, why paperback?

**AJ Harper:** I can tell you it's because so initially uh, Macmillan wanted it to be in paperback because then we can get a lower price point, and we can sell more units.

But I felt really strongly, and you actually pushed me on it, that it should be hardcover. So then I said, you know what, let's, let's get it out in hardcover and then in a few years we'll do paperback and then that'll give it a push. So if it's selling kind of decent, a paperback can push it over to sell even more because now it's at a more doable price point.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Interesting.

**AJ Harper:** So, it comes out in August, the cover's done, all that, and then I'm adding a little bit to the front of it, but it's basically the same book, adding just a little bit, and so we're gonna do a prop we're doing a proper launch for it, because the thing about it's frontlist again.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Mm hmm.

**AJ Harper:** Right? So when that's your window with your sales team, if you have a, um, trade distribution and you've got to take advantage of it

**Mike Michalowicz:** because the sales team needs to put on shelves again or whatever.

**AJ Harper:** And you've got to do your part. You have to try and get pre-orders. You got to push. It gives me a chance to go back to all the podcasts because my book came out in 2022. So this will be 2025 good timing. And it also gives me a chance to do a lot of things that I couldn't get done with my launch prior.

Because my personal life was really hard then. There's just a lot of stuff going on. So things have, knock on wood, calmed down a little bit. So I can, I can go for it. I have a bigger team. So that's big on my agenda and that falls in line with the visibility piece. I want to do more work with my intellectual property.

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So I've got editor certification finally coming out next year. And then a lot of writing. I just want to do a lot of writing. for me, trying to affect some change, trying to inspire, trying to shift mindsets.

**Mike Michalowicz:** What is the editor cert? What's that?

**AJ Harper:** Um, you know, editors typically don't have, um, official training, like a course, you know, there's, there are a couple of them, but, um, it's mostly learning as you go and apprenticeship model.

Of course, there's people who get degrees and there's our degrees in publishing and so forth and English degrees, but, um, There's a very specific method I use, as you know, to edit a prescriptive nonfiction book, and it's my own methodology. So I'm certifying editors in my methodology.

**Mike Michalowicz:** That's great. That's so great.

**AJ Harper:** And I need it because I need a bigger pool of people to refer people to, but then I can also help out authors who need, need editors who understand that process.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Clear. What else you got on your agenda?

**AJ Harper:** Um, I write one of mine is to write a new book with you. And that's been on my agenda since 2008. So, um, and then.

Like I said, expand the platform, but a lot of it is, so you've got all this stuff, right? And I always tell people, you have to stop thinking about authorship like it's a staircase. I'm going to do this step, and then I'll do this step, and then I'll do this step. But it's a multi lane highway. Multi-lane highway.

You've got developing a book idea. You've got testing it. You've got writing. You've got editing Going for your publishing deal marketing reader engagement building platform and they're all different lanes Connecting networking author community and you have to go in and out of the lanes. It's not like You know, one step at a time, and then you leave the step behind, and it's not like I'll do this.

And then I do that. It's more like, let me do this for a little minute, and then I'll slide over to this other lane. So, you know, I plan my year thinking about how much time am I going to spend on each of these lanes? And I don't always line up perfectly, but it's helpful to me to think like that. That's why I asked you how, what percentage are you going to do backlist versus this book?

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What, how, how much time are we going to spend on a new book? 'Cause I'm always thinking about how much time am I in these lanes and is this even realistic?

**Mike Michalowicz:** Interesting.

**AJ Harper:** And that's what, so, you know, that's why I do that annual authorship planning workshop, which I'm doing on December 10th initially. And, uh, you can go to [ajharper.com](#)

if you want to sign up. It's a four-hour workshop where you I'll be talking strategy and how to think about all those lanes based on what you want to get done in 2025 for authorship.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Okay, so let's just recap that. That's December 10th. Is that what you said?

**AJ Harper:** December 10th. It's from 12 to 4 Eastern and it's a workshop where we sit down and plan it out.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Okay. It's going to be amazing. This I don't know when this broadcast but it's probably just a few days away from when this broadcast so a few weeks away, so you go to [AJ Harper comm design](#).

**AJ Harper:** Yep, and you can just sign up right there.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Cool. Okay, cool And that's what that plays into your one of your moves

**AJ Harper:** I mean one of the things I do is I I share what my actual plan is when I do this Yes, I do this every year and I say this is what I'm doing.

**Mike Michalowicz:** That's so super cool.

**AJ Harper:** And then I give a calendar and little workbook.

**Mike Michalowicz:** You know, I find I have that intention sheet. And I put it like an old typewriter font and I actually insert, I have an old typewriter at home and when here, that's where I display them. Um, you can get them so easily on Etsy. It's interesting how people, when I share, I'm doing an intentions plan and I suggest they do the same.

They're like, well, can I just copy yours? I'm like, yeah, by all means. I'm not my intentions. You probably, that probably doesn't serve you, but you can copy the categories. I didn't really appreciate how much. It helps to have a template. Yeah. Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** Examples. Just examples. Examples. Yeah.

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**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. Um, anything else on this subject we want to talk about?

**AJ Harper:** No, I think that's it. I mean, I, we hope we gave you some ideas. For what it's like to kind of be in the trenches year after year. I mean, it's not nothing's ever done all the way

**Mike Michalowicz:** No,

**AJ Harper:** You're always tweaking and thinking. Okay, this is the trend. I'm abandoning this and

**Mike Michalowicz:** And it can be an emotional roller coaster, too.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah,

**Mike Michalowicz:** I was looking at... Was it get different or maybe somebody was just ranked like a hundred and fifty on Amazon thousand hundred fifty thousand like, oh my god What I suck and the next day I'm like, hold on. It's a good book. And then you know, I do a speech I'm like, yeah, I just spoke on get different down in Australia and it landed and be right.

This is the best one guy came. I was like, I want you to consult with me now He's like, let's leave the conference and start working together He's like this is such game changing knowledge You And then I look a week later and the book is ranked poorly and I'm like, I suck.

**AJ Harper:** You need to, you need to, um,

**Mike Michalowicz:** Chill?

**AJ Harper:** Yeah. I mean, that's what you need to think about. Like, let me just hit these marks for myself of the things I want to do.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** And let your expect, I mean, you've already got people, you've got a staff tracking.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** So you don't have to be that guy.

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**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** And set your expectations low so you can enjoy life a little more.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. I love life. It's interesting. So it's not like I, to me it becomes motivational and maybe, maybe I'm making an excuse for myself.

**AJ Harper:** Okay.

**Mike Michalowicz:** But when I'm like, Oh, it's not performing well, like, all right, get back up there and get out there. I don't feel like I'm a failure in the moment. I'll be disappointed.

**AJ Harper:** Okay.

**Mike Michalowicz:** And say I suck. And I'm like, well, don't suck. Push yourself more.

**AJ Harper:** All right. I don't know if you need to have that conversation with yourself.

**Mike Michalowicz:** I don't know. It's a big, I mean, it goes there. I mean,

**AJ Harper:** Well, let's, we're not going to, yeah, we're not doing therapy. Right. We're just going to close out this episode.

**Mike Michalowicz:** All right. Uh, we do a variety lab coming up in February. So, uh, Check that out. Um, you can email us at hello at dwtbpodcast. com. We get you all the details. Adela is watching that for us. Um, next week we're going to talk about marketing assets you need to promote your book, what you really need on hand to make it easier for you and for others, of course, to promote your book.

And, uh, it's that for others part, I think that's the biggest Overlooked thing. Um, I often get a request. Hey Mike, can you promote my book? I'm like, yeah, I'd love to support you. And you're like, okay, thanks. With no support in me supporting them. Uh, we want to invite you to go to our podcast link. It's dwtbpodcast.

com. You can email us at hello at dwtbpodcast. com. We want to hear your stories. We want to hear what you want to hear. We've gotten some really cool feedback. I want to do a live Instagram. Like on stage thing. We had one person already, uh, say they wanted to attend. Yeah, I said we need 500, though.

**AJ Harper:** We have one out of 500?

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**Mike Michalowicz:** We're 1-500th of the way. Um, but we wanted to see if you'd show. And then, that's the one I want to get Steven Pressfield to. So, that's the big ask to AJ.

**AJ Harper:** Steve.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Oh. Don't you call him Steven? Or you call him Steve?

**AJ Harper:** I call him Steve because that's what he had said to call him.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Okay. You call him Steve. Thanks for joining us today. We'll see you on next week's episode. As a reminder, don't write that book. Write the greatest book you can.