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Episode 74:

“The Power of Purpose”

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. We're all on board. Let's kick off the show

Kind of lame...in my head I was picturing like It's a wonderful life when they're at the train station Or maybe a young Frankenstein Next stop, Transylvania, like I was just picturing that kind of black and white scene. It didn't work.

AJ Harper: Okay.

Mike Michalowicz: You're listening to Don't Write That Book. I'm joined in studio with my co host AJ Harper.

My name is Mike Michalowicz. Today we're going to talk about the power of purpose. You know what I admire about you, AJ, is that you get a lot done on your phone. Like actual

AJ Harper: That's what you want.

Mike Michalowicz: No, but writing. Like you actually get book concepts captured. So when, when there's an idea, you can hop on that right away and capture it.

How else would you, I gotta do it. I got, yeah, but I grab a notepad. Sometimes I'll try to do audio. I do clunkily. You, you capture things right in the spot. Like you really know how to work the phone as a tool for good. Is that a good compliment? I'm just admire that.

AJ Harper: Yeah, I'll take it.

Mike Michalowicz: Okay.

AJ Harper: I'll take it. And I mean, if I'm throwing it back on a theme, you know way more about technology and how to use it than I do.

You're always changing. You're always finding a new hack, finding a new thing. That's going to be helpful.

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Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz: Hmm. Hey—

AJ Harper: I think we could have done better on those. I think we could, but that's okay. You can listen to any episode in here and say other nice things.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: We'll just run with that today.

Mike Michalowicz: Also we're filming for the new TV show. This will probably be out. Around then.

AJ Harper: Oh, how's that going?

Mike Michalowicz: Good. We did casting. There's sort of there's some really interesting stories out there. And some sad stories some people devote themselves to their vocation Because they believe the customer wants it.

Others are devoting themselves to vocation because they No, they want it and the ones who know they want it are more successful consistently than the ones who are doing it because they think that's what the people want. But we're told, you know, cater to the customer. Um, if they're not going to spend money on it, you're never going to be successful.

But then the heart, you can see like people lose the heart in it. So we did this casting call with this one guy and it's like, He almost loathes his business, but he feels compelled to keep doing it. So I thought that was interesting. You're definitely invited if you want to come down to the studio. We're filming in East Hanover.

Uh, you're welcome to come down and check out as we do it.

AJ Harper: How fun, I'm so glad this is happening!

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah, it might be fun. Yeah, it could be a lot of fun. Um, but I thought it plays nicely into today's show cause we're gonna talk about the power of purpose as an author and I, for me, purpose wasn't discovered in a flash.

It was discovered in reflection. And over time it built for at least me like a tagline. I meditate pretty much every day, and I have a little meditation space in my home. And in there I will go

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through an affirmation process, uh, per an affirmation process saying my purpose, which is to eradicate entrepreneurial poverty.

AJ Harper: Mm hmm.

Mike Michalowicz: And that builds this massive amount of energy. There's an exercise and I want to go through it together if we can. It's going to be a little bit hard over the podcast, of how I found it. But I find once you find your purpose, it's almost this unstoppable magnetic force.

AJ Harper: It's, I'm, I have such a bias against the word purpose. I was realizing when we were doing the outline for this podcast episode. I have seen it, how it acted, how it helps you, how it's acted as a filter for you as an author, how it drives you. I've also seen people adopt your purpose as their own. Like I'm thinking of like Suzanne Mariga. She says that all the time.

Mike Michalowicz: Okay.

AJ Harper: I want to eradicate entrepreneurial poverty. What better thing for you to have her also?

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. Amazing.

AJ Harper: I'm sure there's many others. I don't know why I have this bias against the word purpose. And I think it's, I think it's kind of like, yeah. I don't know. Maybe, you know what, I think what happens to me is I see so much of the same type of conversations and ideas when I'm working with speakers and authors and people are always talking about finding your purpose.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: So I think I'm just feel like are we talking about that again?

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. And I also don't want people to feel like they have to do it before they do something else.

Mike Michalowicz: Agreed.

AJ Harper: 'Cause I think sometimes you figure it out along the way, which is, which is me by the way. So if we could trade stories on how you found yours.

Mike Michalowicz: Tell me yours.

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AJ Harper: You want me to tell mine first? (Yeah.) Okay. Um, I'd And I also think you can have a purpose not just for your whole life. I think people get—

Mike Michalowicz: Agreed.

AJ Harper: So, I think if my purpose as an author, so let's be clear, we're not saying necessarily it has to be life's purpose forever, reason you were put on the planet. That is, that is too much pressure. But I think for a long time, I thought my purpose in this career in this industry is to help people and inspire people to write better books. And I just, it was as simple as that because I think they can. And I was just seeing too many people not care if they did, but that's not it.

Because as a result of trying to get them to do that, I was, started teaching and I've been teaching now. I mean, I did some here and there, but not really teaching hardcore until I think 2017 or 2018. And, um. It's through that that I realized, “Oh. Yeah, I want you to write better books. Please do that. Write a must-read,” for sure.

But I'm, my purpose is to get you to stay in it. So I want authors, and I would say I'm even thinking of expanding that to just creative people. I want people to not give up. I want people to completely surrender to their artistic selves. I'm tired of people quitting.

I'm tired of people quitting and so that's my mission.

I want you to stay in it.

Mike Michalowicz: I love that.

AJ Harper: ‘Cause I know, I know for a fact if you stay in it, it will work.

Mike Michalowicz: Surrender to your artistic self. What a great, I love catchphrases like that. And I know that wasn't the intention of it. But that surmises it so effectively.

AJ Harper: But I didn't know that. I didn't, I had to go through teaching to realize it because what I started to realize over time is, yes, I'm teaching people how to write a must-read, and that's really important, and it works. And I'm proud of that, that the methods work. But what I'm doing every day is trying to convince people not to quit. And I don't just mean quit before the book is done.

I mean also quit on a book. So letting the dust, you know, the tumbleweeds roll across your Amazon page because you've decided you're not going to focus on it anymore. To give up on promoting the book or anything about it. Um, to decide maybe you don't have what it takes because that first book didn't do so well.

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Right, or to decide I really want a traditional deal, but I think I can only get, I can only self-publish. But you could maybe if you just had a strategy about it. Maybe it would take a little longer, but you could I just all these compromises all these I can't do that. I just don't want people to quit. Because I know for a fact, it's not just, Oh, I'm Mary Fairy about it.

I know from being a professional writer for more than 30 years, that you, if you commit and you just stick with it, you will get to the place you need to be. It may not be what you imagined for yourself. I mean, I used to say, Oh, I'm gonna be a playwright and I'm gonna win a Tony, and I can already hear my acceptance speech.

I don't actually give a crap about that. That was all ego and the only thing, the only thing I could see as success, like that was, there wasn't, but you will get to a level of success in your life if you would just stick with it. And yet almost, almost everybody, and I say that it's true, almost everybody quits.

Mike Michalowicz: Why do you think they quit?

AJ Harper: There's, it's very, it's a lot of reasons, but I think it's a combination of completely unrealistic expectations, their own set of insecurities and self-doubt, and then how the combination of not meeting the expectations that they set for themselves, proving them that they were right.

So the world proves their false belief about themselves correct. And if, so they don't have the right set of knowledge, so then when their book doesn't do as well as it could, I'm just using books as an example, They say, well, see, I wasn't supposed to write it, or I don't have what it takes, or nobody cares about this, uh, I just wasn't cut out for this.

It's kind of like evidence to prove your B. S. right. And I think that's what happened.

Mike Michalowicz: I wonder if a purpose, if we can use that word, is less about how much I want it as opposed to how much I need it. You know in sports they say that team wanted it more, that's why they won. And I wonder if it's actually an internal need.

That's what purpose is, they needed it more. How does it keep you motivated in regards to you don't want people to quit on themselves. You see it with some regularity. Does that feel defeating to you? Does that motivate you more? I got to do a better job to keep people in the game to express their creative side.

AJ Harper: I mean, I'm committed to it, so I'm always going to be looking for ways to.

Mike Michalowicz: How do you face it when people fall off the wagon?

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AJ Harper: I do not try to coax them back. I mean, one of the things that I always say about my own community, we have a membership community, top three book authors, and then I have my workshop and alums and I do something really different where I just, people can just stay around forever.

And it's, I say, I leave the porch light on for your book, you know, like coming home late, maybe... Maybe really late. We'll leave the porch light on for you.

Mike Michalowicz: Mm hmm.

AJ Harper: Because, uh, I don't want people to feel like they can't come back. Because I know it's a process. So, we'll just, you know, I'll... Laura Stone is really great about checking in, seeing how people are doing. We try to bring people back when we can. We can't always do it. Some people are just not gonna come back. So, I just try to figure out how I can help and how I can continue to improve the way I talk about it. But there's some people who are just going to quit. That's just, you can't, I don't take it personally.

Mike Michalowicz: Is it a filter to some degree that you make people aware of what your purpose is to not let them quit, to express their creative side?

AJ Harper: I'll tell people, but mostly I am just in, I have discovered that what I really, really want is to help people stay in it. And so I'm going to figure out ways to do that.

Mike Michalowicz: So here's the big question is what I believe what we teach is actually what we're also trying to teach ourselves. In fact, I think we're our own greatest student.

AJ Harper: Oh yeah. I believe that too.

Mike Michalowicz: So do you feel that is part of your purpose is you're teaching yourself not to quit.

AJ Harper: I've never quit.

Mike Michalowicz: Because you're teaching yourself.

AJ Harper: You know what? No, I mean I haven't, but I didn't, I wasn't thinking like this. My I haven't read her a long time. I wasn't thinking like this the first 20 years. I just wasn't gonna quit.

Mike Michalowicz: So I'm just wondering and you know, you can't see this in retrospect, but if, *if* you weren't so active and promoting don't quit would you would have been times where you may have quit?

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But it almost that you can't anymore because that would burst your whole commitment to others?

AJ Harper: I don't know. You're asking me some tough questions. I don't, I don't think about it like that. I just don't, I'm not, I'm just not, it's part of who I am. We had a podcast, the last episode was about career authorship. It's my identity. So it's not, I'm not quitting my identity.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah, that's when transformation happens. Once, once there's an established identity, that's the new thermometer setting.

AJ Harper: Yeah. I will say what it does help me do though. Um, just really carefully considering your question is say, okay, well, is there something that I maybe decided I wasn't cut out for? So I'm not going to quit authorship, but maybe there's a project I thought, Oh, I don't think that I don't think I can write that.

For example, I don't write literary fiction. I don't think I'm smart enough. You know, I remember, too, when I was at a publishing company, I would, I did all the developmental substantive editing except when it was a literary fiction, and then I would outsource it because I didn't think I was qualified. Um, so I don't know that I have a burning desire to write literary fiction, but I think what, my own how what I'm teaching myself is maybe to try the things that I'm afraid to try. If I want to.

Mike Michalowicz: There's a experiment. I kind of promised in the beginning and I don't know if we can do it during a podcast, but you do on a piece of paper, and I found it to be a great tool to trigger reflection. It's called a lifeline.

AJ Harper: Okay.

Mike Michalowicz: Have I walked you through this before? I don't know. Okay, so here's what you do.

And for our listeners, grab a pen and paper, just pause us for a second and uh, and we'll do it. So I'll give you a second. Okay, we're back. I always wanted to do that. On a piece of paper on the vertical axis. We're gonna make one of these L shaped charts, the vertical axis, um, write the word high at the top of that vertical axis, the word low at the bottom of that vertical axis.

And in the middle of it, just draw a line going horizontally. On the horizontal axis, the bottom right increments of your life in five- or 10-year increments from zero birth to today. I'm 53. So I would go five, 10, 15 and so forth. Then what you do is you look back in those five-year increments. And say, what are the stories that come to mind?

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A major story during that period measures to and put a star of is a high moment, low moment or in the middle. So I mean, my example say, you know, I remember being born, but I think the gift of life is an extraordinary thing. So I may put a high star, but some people say that, you know, I wish I was never born. Like you may be that person. So write that out.

My mother made me wear later hose and my mother's German. And there's pictures of me and a holding a cornucopia going to kindergarten.

AJ Harper: low point? Okay.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah, for my mom, high.

AJ Harper: Cornucopia.

Mike Michalowicz: I had a cornucopia and the German treats are citrus fruit and different things. Yes. So I have the cornucopia. I got lederhosen on, lederhosen, and I might as well have been in an oompa band, you know, coming to school because everyone's like, who's the clown that showed up?

AJ Harper: That was that memorable that you put it on the lifeline. ,

Mike Michalowicz: Well yeah, yeah, totally. Totally. Because there's pictures of me.

AJ Harper: So did you get, I just, on a side, does that mean you got an orange in your Christmas stocking?

Mike Michalowicz: I'm in.

AJ Harper: Me too.

Mike Michalowicz: Did you have, it was called St. Nicholas Day.

AJ Harper: St. Nick's.

Mike Michalowicz: Oh, like, and you put shoes on the windows?

AJ Harper: On the windows? Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz: Oh, you did that? And you get treats in the shoes.

AJ Harper: Yeah.

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Mike Michalowicz: Or coal.

AJ Harper: You know what my strategy was for that?

Mike Michalowicz: What?

AJ Harper: I'm from Minnesota. I put my moon boots out.

Mike Michalowicz: Oh, big shoes.

AJ Harper: You know what else I did?

Mike Michalowicz: What?

AJ Harper: There's a lining in your moon boots.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: I took the lining out.

Mike Michalowicz: Oh, that's so smart.

AJ Harper: Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz: That's optimization.

AJ Harper: My poor mom. She was like, Oh God, I don't have enough to fit in here. Did that with our son too? Carried it forward.

Did you do it with your kids?

Mike Michalowicz: No, we didn't do it. We didn't do it. I wish we did actually. That was a great tradition because I would get you so hyped for Christmas.

AJ Harper: And also it's a great way for you as a parent to get the Santa list.

Mike Michalowicz: Great. Yeah, that's a good point. And it's a good test run too. Like how aware is the kid of what's going on. Like, are they really going to sleep through it? Can I make noise in the room? Like it it's a good test run before putting out,

AJ Harper: but the orange at the bottom of the Christmas stocking, that's a German thing.

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Mike Michalowicz: Okay.

AJ Harper: 'Cause I had that.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. So that's a low, low point. Low point. You keep doing it. I had a girlfriend in high in college who had a heart attack. I didn't even like, you can't even think someone at 18 years old. (Oh!) Yeah. Yeah. It was terrifying. Um, She had a heart defect and she may have flatlined. She survived it. And I think she lives well today, but it was terrifying. And it was the first experience I had with, "oh life is not guaranteed. "Mm hmm. And so that was a very low.

AJ Harper: Do you go back think of these things?

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah,

AJ Harper: So that's about accomplishments.

Mike Michalowicz: Not accomplishments. It's moments.

AJ Harper: It's moments. Okay, good clarity of significance.

Mike Michalowicz: And sometimes it's in the middle .The, like, there was a, a very Beaver Cleaver experience. My sister, I think, would use the same terminology and that was great. Like there was kind of a, the sound of silence in, in a, in a non-positive or negative way. And then once you do this, go back and reflect and what are two or three defining moments? What are moments that when you look at it, you drew a line in the sand and say, I will never allow that to happen to myself or someone else again.

Or maybe you said, this is a defining moment of who I am. This is the representation of my character.

AJ Harper: Okay.

Mike Michalowicz: And in that reflection, you may start finding what's defined you today and therefore purpose. So that's an exercise I do regularly and it's so powerful.

AJ Harper: Where do you find the eradicate entrepreneurial poverty in that lifeline?

Mike Michalowicz: Uh, the piggy bank moment is, is one with my—

AJ Harper: When your daughter gave you the piggy bank to help save the day.

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Mike Michalowicz: Yep. I was, I can't remember, 32 years old. Um, but there's the high moment of when I sold the first business, and it instantly became a low moment because there was for 10 minutes. There was this huge celebration. I sold a business. It's amazing. And the next thing is like, what do I do with my life? And so the realization that this is an infinite game. It's not it's no... You would you'll never be...

AJ Harper: There's no finish line.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah, and all that stuff. So it's a combination of things and when expressing it in a book, it's really nice to put it into one story with a piggybank.

AJ Harper: That's so interesting. Cause now that you say that, I know I would put on there, there were a couple of experiences that my mom, where I witnessed my mom give up on something.

Mike Michalowicz: Interesting.

AJ Harper: And I would have put that on there as a low point.

Mike Michalowicz: So can you, can you give me one of those stories?

AJ Harper: Um, and I don't, you know, with respect to my mom, I'm actually about to go see her. She's wonderful.

Mike Michalowicz: You showed her tremendous respect last episode when you started talking about the male.

AJ Harper: Okay, stop. She's a PhD. She's brilliant. She was a huge activist. She worked for Dr. King's Poor People's Campaign. Wow. Yeah, she's, I'm super proud of her. She has a giant FBI file. She's awesome.

Mike Michalowicz: Well, hold on. You mean the FBI was profiling her?

AJ Harper: Yes.

Mike Michalowicz: So good.

AJ Harper: The story goes when they opened, when they let, uh, Freedom of Information Act and you could go get your FBI file, she went to go get it. But she worked a regular job, so she couldn't leave too much. Early, but she went it was towards like almost five o'clock.

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And so when she gave him her name they came back and said can you come back on Monday? Because it's like a cart. We have to wheel a whole cart. She's awesome. But anyway, not a criminal by the way, not a criminal. Just from activism. So Uh, but she, you know, she had a business once and she's really not, uh, she's brilliant.

She's a genius, but she's not. Someone should be running the business for the genius, right? And she totally choked on it. Like it was, could have been a big success, but I watched it go down and I was old enough to understand what was happening. That was for me, foundational.

Mike Michalowicz: I bet.

AJ Harper: So much so that I carried forward the belief that this was a family trait. That was like a legacy thing like this. We all had it.

Mike Michalowicz: Oh, it's coming your way. It's in your genes.

AJ Harper: I'm a choke artist just like her.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah,

AJ Harper: And in fact because I had believed in writer's block when I would fail to deliver something like a twice I couldn't finish a commission, play commissions. It's just still sick about it because I couldn't write.

I just wasn't I couldn't do it because I falsely, I misunderstood what resistance was as Steve Pressfield calls it that to me was confirmation. Oh, it's a legacy It took me a long time. I do not believe this about myself anymore, but I set out on a mission. Oh gosh, now you're totally blowing my mind You're dang exercise.

You're seeing this happen, right? Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. Keep going.

AJ Harper: I I, I dedicated myself. So, interesting. I said earlier, I never thought I would quit, but I did think I would fail in the critical moment. That's what a, that's what a choke artist does. Fail in the critical moment. So you're about to, I don't know, football, what's the equivalent?

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah, football. Yeah, the field goal kick.

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AJ Harper: Field goal kick. You're, you're. They call it the choke. I know baseball, right? Base is loaded.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. You're the home run hitter. Strike out.

AJ Harper: Yep. You choked. Right. So I thought that it was not so much about quitting, but more about, 'cause I think more about, Oh, I'm going to keep in the, I'm going to keep being a writer, but am I going to rise to the moment?

And I just, I see now how that really shaped me. Thank you for the context. You're creeping me out a little bit.

Mike Michalowicz: It's powerful, right?

AJ Harper: I will say when you started talking about it, I was like, okay, yeah.

Mike Michalowicz: Oh my God.

AJ Harper: Okay. But you know what? You were, you're totally right. Cause I guess that is driving part of my purpose is I just don't want people to...

Mike Michalowicz: Choke?

AJ Harper: I don't, I don't want people to think they will.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. And, and, and I think what I'm hearing from this is you're, you have to, you feel compelled to prove it to yourself day in, day out. I'm not a choke artist.

AJ Harper: I don't anymore because I set out a mission to do that.

Mike Michalowicz: Mm hmm.

AJ Harper: So I, I'm fine now. Do you know what I mean? I set myself some goals and tests and I've done it enough now that it is not an issue for me.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah, I don't know if I'm fine now. I, I wonder if it's still ingrained in you at a subconscious level where you've achieved So much progress in this, this, uh, momentum that you won't see yourself reverting back.

But that thorn is always implanted or the scar is always there.

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AJ Harper: I mean, I have, I don't. If you ask me, what are the two things you really have left to conquer? I've conquered a lot. Two things. One is I'm still trying to solve the weight thing. That is huge for me. I would sometimes I think that will never happen. I'm trying really hard. Yes, I go to the gym, and I do my thing.

Mike Michalowicz: I think there's gonna be a profound moment that shifts at all. It's it's it's most changes is a is a small action done irrevocably. There's something there. I bet.

AJ Harper: Okay. I mean, I'm almost 52. But the other one is I don't think I fully realized my promise as a writer.

Mike Michalowicz: Ah,

AJ Harper: I kind of know.

Mike Michalowicz: It's the infinite game.

AJ Harper: It is the infinite game, and I'm cool with it, but I wonder if maybe I'm holding off on that a little bit.

Mike Michalowicz: Interesting.

AJ Harper: I'm, you know, I'm fine with exploring all these things, but there's a difference between thinking maybe you're holding off on starting something and just thinking that you will never meet the occasion.

So I've definitely met the occasion many times, so I fixed it, but I find it so interesting that how much that probably is driving me.

Mike Michalowicz: I, I guarantee it is. So, you know, I'm, I'm playing guitar and this last year I've elevated my guitar playing by 10-fold. What's so interesting is every step that I improve, I realize how little I know, and I wonder in our journey, The, the obvious things that we overcome were always obvious, but then it opens up to, Oh, there's a lot more.

So eradicating entrepreneurial poverty, that's my little catch phrase,

AJ Harper: But you believe it. It's not just a tagline.

Mike Michalowicz: Oh, no. Yeah. It's, it's a summation of my purpose. What I've defined as my purpose. It drives me so much. And if I reflect back 15 years ago or 20 years ago, it was very mechanical. It was fixing cash.

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It was addressing time. But now it's more, uh, that most entrepreneurs believe entrepreneurship is about sacrifice when it's really the creation of abundance. It's a little softer and way more complex as I'm going into it. I'm really realizing how much it's really just a mind game. I didn't. I didn't see it going in.

I thought it was mechanics. And so your purpose, I think our purpose, the understanding of it evolves as you get more intimate, the more you get into it, the, the bigger, more vast that purpose universe is.

AJ Harper: But how does it help you as an author? It's a game, you know, that's what we're talking about today is it's a game changer

Mike Michalowicz: For me, everything we do.

I'm trying to improve myself in that. category. So the new book on personal finance, I'm not going to, I used to think, Oh, I'm nailing it. No, I'm doing pretty well at it. And, and if I wanted to compare myself to the majority of the population, I think I have a better financial understanding and more capable, but there's opportunity for me to experience this a whole new level.

And as we were writing this book, as I'm teaching other people, it's exposing me to elements of it that I wasn't perfectly nailing. There's these little nuanced components that really up level. The game again. So for me, every book we write, it's an immersion of improving myself. It's another form of eradicating my poverty mindset or my poverty experience.

AJ Harper: I mean, I think you do it really literally. We actually asked the question when you decided to do this book on personal finance, does this still fit with your purpose slash mission?

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah, this has been,

AJ Harper: it does.

Mike Michalowicz: It does. And it's been a challenge too. This is a crossover book. That I that that term finally is landing with me.

AJ Harper: Sorry. Do you think your purpose is shifting?

Mike Michalowicz: I don't think my purpose is shifting. I think the scope So I believe there is a consumer the person that you can serve persons you can serve. There's always yourself. You're serving yourself There's an external consumer the reader and then there's the vehicle. So the vehicle is still a book.

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The end consumer is the one that's shifting. It's not only someone that's started a business. It's anyone who's trying to improve this aspect of their life.

AJ Harper: Hmm. 'Cause I took it really literally when we assessed it. Are, will this book help to end entrepreneurial poverty? Yes, because entrepreneurs will, will read it, although they're not necessarily the primary readership, but also that it will help them because their employees are...

Mike Michalowicz: Correct.

AJ Harper: It's the first read. That's the reason why you did the first test cases. The employees are not financially healthy. That actually impacts the business.

Mike Michalowicz: You know, it's funny when doing the literal translation, I thought from the other side that when an individual brings a worry-free financial independence to their personal life, they may explore the greatest opportunity.

AJ Harper: That too.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. That's how I first saw it.

AJ Harper: Because you're not bringing that because so often they're siphoning off funds from the business for poor personal financial choices.

Mike Michalowicz: I had a call with a guy, uh, I don't do coaching as like a fee-based thing, but I'll do it just because I want to immerse myself.

So he said, here's where my challenge is. I don't know when I want to be an entrepreneur. I have a little bit of a side hustle, but until I have financial freedom, I can't do it. There is this community and it's massive, I believe of people who have a desire, but it's a one-day desire and they need to check out these boxes.

And I think the biggest impediment to getting there for most people is I don't have enough money to do it yet.

AJ Harper: Yeah. Scarcity, feeling of lack of security.

Mike Michalowicz: And then they, they shared all the reasons. So they said, you know, I'm getting married in six months and we want to buy our first house. So I'm not ready to do it.

And my response to him very much in his face was, Oh, wait until you had the financial burden of five years from now carrying a mortgage. And now you've got a baby and wait for

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10 years after that. And now they're going, they're considering private high school or college. Like it's going to get harder and harder and harder.

This is the time, but irrespective of timing, if you don't have a sense of financial security inside, you're always going to have that. I can't, or if you do it, you're going to do it with one foot in one foot out.

AJ Harper: Hmm. That reminds me of your wife telling me that, uh, very shortly, either you were about to get married or you just got married that you quit your job.

Mike Michalowicz: I know. Is that crazy?

AJ Harper: Yeah. And you had, you guys had one kid at the time.

Mike Michalowicz: We had a son. We still have a son, that son, uh, three kids. So it's interesting how the solution finds itself. So I told my wife I'm starting a business now, ignorance is bliss. So I'm like, and you're going to, we're going to, you're going to be showered in diamonds within six months because I'm starting a business and everyone knows every entrepreneur's a millionaire because it's in the news.

No idea what I was getting into. So ignorance was bliss because I don't think I would've had the courage to do it. Then you go into survival mode. And so my wife starts looking and she found a pseudo retirement community. I like to say retirement community minus the pseudo part 'cause it sounds even better, but it was a, it was all retired folks, but they allowed people in of any age.

It just happened to be, this was the inexpensive. It was the cracker barrel of apartments.

AJ Harper: Nice.

Mike Michalowicz: All the old people know to go there. So she's like, I found us a place.

AJ Harper: I mean, perfect.

Mike Michalowicz: You saw, you know

AJ Harper: Everybody's asleep at a certain time.

Mike Michalowicz: But the problem is everyone's awake at a certain time to the freaking vacuums at four o'clock in the morning. So my wife and I, we still laugh about it. Like you put on a new sleeping regimen. Um, So we found this place and she, and she pitched, she goes, Oh, there's a pool. Uh, there's this wonderful community. There's, there's people

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available during the day. If you need help, you know, watching your kids. I'm like, what, what is this community?

She goes, it's people that are in their eighties. Oh my God. So there we moved. Um,

AJ Harper: But so, okay. So yeah, so, so it is of quite literal. The book, even though it's a crossover book, is still fitting the mission.

Mike Michalowicz: It's still fitting a mission. And the mission may be changing or expanding, but the purpose is still the same.

It's this eradication.

AJ Harper: How do you define the difference?

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah, so mission is, here's what I'm accomplishing in this state. Purpose is an ongoing internal magnet driver. It's the... What did Iron Man have that, that thing, the nuclear thing that he plugs into his chest?

AJ Harper: You are barking up the wrong tree.

Mike Michalowicz: Okay. Well, whatever.

AJ Harper: I don't know. The thingy. Some

Mike Michalowicz: nuclear reactor he sticks in his chest. It glowed. It glowed. It's the glowing. Purpose is the glow.

AJ Harper: The glowing thingy.

Mike Michalowicz: It's the glow stick.

AJ Harper: Okay.

Mike Michalowicz: It's the glow stick. It's purpose.

AJ Harper: Purpose is your glow stick.

Mike Michalowicz: How do you share your purpose?

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AJ Harper: I mean, the, the first purpose, right? I, must read is the title of my book now. I mean, I, um, I don't know.

Mike Michalowicz: I think your purpose is to stick with it.

AJ Harper: Well, it is now. I'm just figuring this out though. You know, I don't know. I don't have a slogan or a tagline. It's more like decisions I'm making about what I want to do. It's more like decisions I'm making, but also quite frankly, it's, and without giving too much away, it's the reason I'm writing the second book. Because I figured something out about why people quit and why people, yeah, I figured it out. So, um, so I wanted to explore that a little bit more, but it's the whole reason I'm writing it is because of purpose.

Think about it like this, um, you know. We need more people making stuff. We need more people making art, uh, sharing stories, getting stuff out into the world. I feel like it is deep pain that people are in when they don't fulfill, fulfill that. When they don't answer a call. And I also think in times of struggle, it's definitely a struggle time.

Right now in our world, we need people making stuff more than ever. Not just regurgitating stuff, not just consuming stuff. So the purpose even has a higher purpose, right? I want you to not quit so that you can contribute to society. Because you can help shift mindsets, make people happy, get people to change.

That's powerful. Um, but I think, I remember you telling me about yours, yours has a higher purpose too. 'Cause you said to me, entrepreneurs can save the world. Jobs, innovation, right? So therefore, we need to eradicate entrepreneurial poverty, so they won't quit.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. Yeah, there you go.

AJ Harper: Yeah. You're trying to keep them in it too.

Mike Michalowicz: I, I believe we all have a purpose. Everyone listening has a purpose. We may not have defined it yet. You, you're already living this, I won't quit since you've been a little kid. Because what your mom went through, what you experienced and so forth. You just haven't defined it. I believe also there's kind of three stages.

There's the need, have, need. And what I mean is, some people need to do certain things because it's purely survival. And so that's not necessarily purpose beyond survival, which is fine. It's very difficult living. The next level is, I have to. It's a responsibility asserted upon you from others. So first you need for survival.

Then I have to because others require or expect of me. But then there's a, I need after that, which is an internal calling. So I need to do something. I have to do something, I need to do something, and I think that's what purpose is, is that it's this, this internal flame that if you

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ignore it, it's going to keep burning and burn brighter and brighter and try to catch your attention in different ways. And then when you lean into it, all the warmth is there.

AJ Harper: I think, I think as an author, it's an advantage to have a purpose for a couple of reasons. One, it becomes the filter and you know, how you decide what project you're going to work on. Does it fit to fit with that to help you move towards your purpose, align with your purpose, have whatever words you want to use.

I think it also inspires you to write a better book that's in greater service of that purpose. And third, I think it inspires you to sell that freaking book.

Mike Michalowicz: It does.

AJ Harper: Because if I hear one more person tell me, Oh, I didn't care if I, I don't care about sales. I just wanted to help one person. And I'm sorry if I made that was you and I'm making fun of you right now. But I've got to ask, how the heck do you expect to help people if you won't sell it?

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. Shame on you.

AJ Harper: Baby purpose can get you over that, you know, because for me, I'm not motivated by money So I have to think about my purpose and trying to get Write a Must Read sold, right? So for me that's helps me to think about my purpose helps me to be more motivated to get it out the word out about it.

Mike Michalowicz: It gets you past the fear. I think I.. Call last night with Profit First professionals in Australia, and we were talking about building a brand, a personal presence geographically, how do you do it? Networking, speaking, social media, local journalists and stuff. And so I said, we're going to go through all these different strategies and I'm like, I'm not trying to be confrontational here, but knowing a strategy versus doing a strategy are radically different.

So I'm going to ask, as we go through these, have you heard these strategies before? And just be honest. And so I go through each one every. It was a hundred percent compliance. Yeah, of course public speaking. Of course. I said, okay, so everyone knows this, right? I said now just be candid and this is not judgmental, but I want you to be observational of yourself Which one have you done?

And zero.

AJ Harper: Yeah,

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Mike Michalowicz: So I said, okay, so we know we need to do something, but we're not doing it. I said, Let's talk about why we're not doing it. Well, it's scary and I don't have time and all these reasons. I said, okay, I said What is your purpose in this capacity, at least, is to serve my clients, to help people.

They were teaching the Profit First method to be permanently profitable. I said, what we have to do is reframe this, to realize that if we reject speaking on stage or whatever these different techniques are, we are being harmful, intentionally harmful to people. You got to reframe with such a visceral feel that you are more afraid of not doing than doing.

AJ Harper: Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz: And. At the end I said, and this is the, this is the most unfortunate thing I'm going to say is I still think at the end of this call with all these strategies, we're going to maybe get two to three people out of the 50 people here to do anything. And like, that's the ultimate sin. So I said, all I can do is not all I can do.

What all I commit to doing is I'm going to show up again next week and we're going to go through this again and I'm going to show I ain't going to quit on you. I ask you not to quit on them. And I think that's what authorship is, is you, you don't quit on that reader and they're going to buy the book and it's going to send a shelf and they're not going to read it.

And you still go out and try to serve them again. You're going to talk about it at an event and you're gonna have three sales in the back of the room and you do it again. It's not quitting on them because then you're not quitting yourself, which means if you're not putting yourself and you're not quitting on them, you're not quitting on the purpose and you're living it.

That's my soap box. Um, any other things?

AJ Harper: No, I think, and if you don't know what your purpose is, that's also cool. I have a thing I do called Monday Night Readings—you did one—where I bring in authors, um, to read from their recently published books. And the very last question I ask at the end of the night is a question you can ask yourself.

I think it's hard if you say, what's my purpose and you sit down, even that lifeline exercise could be intimidating. So you may not know how to interpret it, but you could ask yourself this question, what's the change you want to see in the world that you hope your book will bring about, right? So because your book is in the world, what change do you hope will happen because it exists?

And then I think you can backdoor that purpose that way, just by answering that question.

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Mike Michalowicz: I like that a lot. If, uh, At one of your retreats and folks listening and can go to ajharper.com to sign up for one of these retreats do it now. I volunteer to come up there and I can do this exercise in a group.

It's really interesting in a group dynamic where you do the lifeline and some people may find some significance in it. There was a there is a Profit First professional, Christina Harbridge No Oh, my God. I'm mixing her with someone else. Her name's Christina. I'm mixing up the last name. Nonetheless, we went through this lifeline exercise and at the end, I just saw a change in her.

She's like, I got to drop for a minute, and she left and she came back a couple days later and said, I went and I started writing and writing and writing out that she's aspiring to be an author. Um, but she's like, I had to capture something. And she's like, my gosh, I now know why I'm doing what I'm doing.

Um, so it can be a life changing moment. If you haven't purchased right at must read, what are you doing? What are you doing? Get a copy of it right now. Join me. Listen, you're, you say, I already have a copy, Mike. I don't need another copy of that book. My God, get 10 then. Because help AJ, help me help yourself spread the word on discovering that creative inside you.

And, uh, there's no greater source than, than AJ's books. So check it out. Right. A must read. And there's a future book coming there too. All right, my friends, we're wrapping it for today. I invite you to go to our website. It's dwtbpodcast.com. Don't skim through this. I know you're like, Oh, the show's over.

I'm going to exit. No, no. Go to the website. Sign for our email list. I want to do a live event. We had one person decline now. We had 12 people. One person said, I rescind my commitment. So we're back down to 11. They weren't happy about endorsements. So, um, We need that 12th person. Okay, so we're down to

AJ Harper: 11.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah, we're down. We're down one. But I have a feeling we're going to go up. So email us at hello@DWTBpodcast.com and say, I'm coming to that gosh darn live DWTB podcast. We're going to then call Steven Pressfield, Steve, as you go, as he goes by, uh, with you and invite him to come and, and by golly, we're going to get them there.

If you are writing a book in the entrepreneurial space, I want to hear about it. Just put simplified in that email you sent to us. So we know maybe there's an opportunity to partner together. Here's the grand reminder. Don't write that book, right? The greatest book you can.