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Episode 80

“Make Your Book Accessible”

Mike Michalowicz: Welcome back to the Don't Write That Book podcast where you can learn how to write your bestseller and own your authorship. Follow along with us as we give you an insider's view of the book industry. Now here are your hosts. Myself, Mike Michalowicz and AJ Harper. Okay, I pushed record button. I think it's recording.

I'm pumped for today's episode. I think it's just gonna be. I don't know, just a celebration of what we've accomplished so far with The Money Habit.

AJ Harper: And also insight about some things. We learned this, we always learn something new.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. We're, you're definitely gonna discover insights on this episode.

We're gonna talk about accessibility and you've really been holding us that standard of, of ensuring really defending the reader. I think this has been our best work in that regard, so I'll, I'll talk about that a little bit, but we've been. Adamant about protecting the reader. And it's not just been you and me, it's been Kendra, our editor, that's just holding us to the standard and the first pass, the manuscript, she seemed to be very happy.

AJ Harper: Mm-hmm.

Mike Michalowicz: And this second. One when they heard we were the team.

AJ Harper: Oh my God. Yeah. That was such a moment.

Mike Michalowicz: And you're the one who revealed it.

AJ Harper: I did.

Mike Michalowicz: So I'll set the stage and you say what you said. They're like, okay. So, uh, you probably submitted the, the second pass of the, the edit today. Um, so we'll. We'll get through that pretty quickly. And you said, well, there's, there's been some changes. And they said, well, how many? And then, what did you say?

AJ Harper: About 40%?

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Mike Michalowicz: And there's like this awkward silence, like, I'm like, is this microphone still on? Hello? Hello? You're like, it's 40% new. And then you hear Ronnie go, oh. Oh, okay. Okay. Well, well, Kendra's on it. Kendra.

AJ Harper: It's a good thing.

Mike Michalowicz: It's excellent. It's excellent.

AJ Harper: It's not a bad thing that we change 40%? That's actually not uncommon for us.

Mike Michalowicz: It's excellent. It's paragraphs have been tightened. Um, the flow.

AJ Harper: Whole chapters removed,

Mike Michalowicz: Sections moved.

AJ Harper: Whole chapters moved.

Mike Michalowicz: Whole chapters moved. Yeah. So that was one thing. The continuity was off in certain sections. And that was one thing I was going through in my past. Like, you're like, Mike, you've been silent because I'm, I'm going through it and I'm trying to read the entire book. Not memorized. You just do, uh, we didn't mention Rich Commanders yet, so when it says, oh, and remember what Rich said, it was never mentioned. So I'm gonna have to change this and fix it. Um, which is great.

AJ Harper: Yeah, that's it. At a micro level, we had a bunch of macro things to do, though we had some flow issues. We had a whole chapter that had to be almost completely redone, which is on custom accounts because of accessibility.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah,

AJ Harper: Because I had asked you, I had, well, I had asked you to show us the, okay, let me back up. In the book, we ask readers to open up bank accounts for different expenses. I asked you to share what your current accounts are, and you did a beautiful list of how you categorize everything now and which accounts you have, and we realized that it seemed too aspirational for the readers.

Mike Michalowicz: That's right.

AJ Harper: And so that whole thing is completely gone and replaced with something new. So what I asked you to do then was, Hey, let's do a snapshot of when you started, what were your accounts? And then you did a, went further with that and did a progression. Here's

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where it started. Here's when things started to get a little better. Here's kind of where I am now, but you also didn't reveal as much, which I really liked. By the way, this before you had all the accounts.

Mike Michalowicz: It was so much. Yeah.

AJ Harper: And I thought, I thought that was great. But access, it turns out it's just was. Too seemed impossible, it seemed like something that people couldn't attain. And I, so I love that it's tighter, but also that you went back to basics of, this is when I first started, how, what my accounts were. That's an example of accessibility and some major rewrite. And I think in that Zoom room, they were all like, what?

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: Because they already thought it was good. And so in their minds they're like, what could they have done? But we know. We can, we can still make it better.

Mike Michalowicz: We, yeah, exactly. Um. Let, lemme do the introduction of you real quick and, and you can do it for me, uh, and then we'll kick into it. But you're already getting a tease of the accessibility and how important it is. This episode we're gonna talk about the new book, *The Money Habit*.

We're gonna give you some updates. We're gonna talk about how to make your book more accessible to folks. I'm Mike Michalowicz, I'm author of *Profit First*, I'm joining Studio by AJ Harper, author of *Write a Must-Read*. And, uh, AJ, what I admire about you is you're vigilant. For the reader's journey. Uh, and I wish there was more folks like that.

I, it is not just my own books. It's like all books, you're vigilant. That the readers are being served.

AJ Harper: Mm-hmm.

Mike Michalowicz: And you, you've been involved with hundreds is, have you approached a thousand or more books in some capacity? Just probably just planting seeds with authors has been over thousands, but directly involved with hundreds of books.

AJ Harper: Approx... Yes.

Mike Michalowicz: You've elevated the quality books. Thank you. We need more, AJ. Thank you. Thank you, thank you.

AJ Harper: Aw. Well, you know what I would say is, um. One thing I've noticed about you is that you, you're such a better writer. Not that you were a bad writer before, but you've

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really improved your skills so that if I say to you, Hey, we've got an accessibility issue. This is what I think we need to solve it. It used to be that I would kind of have to demonstrate.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: So now I can say, here's what I think we need to solve it. And you say, okay, I got it.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah,

AJ Harper: and you can take the note.

Mike Michalowicz: So yeah.

AJ Harper: It used to be that you needed me to do it or

Mike Michalowicz: That's right.

AJ Harper: Or you needed me to at least demonstrate it.

Mike Michalowicz: Yep.

AJ Harper: Right. We're at a point now where I can tell you in shorthand and you can say, okay, got it. Go. I'm going,

Mike Michalowicz: Thank you.

AJ Harper: And I really love this makes this it so fun.

Mike Michalowicz: It's so much more fun.

AJ Harper: It's so much more fun.

Mike Michalowicz: I've, I've been reflecting on that 'cause you mentioned that off air and I think my challenge before is you're the Michael Jordan of writing.

And so when you are the bench warmer of writing and you're watching Michael Jordan just rip shot after shot after shot, like I, I can never do this. So then I realized, oh, she just does one shot and she rips it. But I'm allowed to take a hundred shots in a row until I get it in.

AJ Harper: Totally.

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Mike Michalowicz: And once I find, acknowledge, I'll never have your ability of writing. But if I do it a hundred times over. I can get there and so I just have to forward myself the time and leeway.

AJ Harper: You, you really surprised me on this book. I mean, you sometimes I read so like, well, dang!

Mike Michalowicz: Dang. He turned up so well, you know what, the change, the, the changing moment for me happened five or five years ago or something. It was, it was, I've mentioned the story before. It was flap copy.

AJ Harper: Yeah. When you, you took 12 hours or whatever to write your flap.

Mike Michalowicz: Six hour flight. I, I took off in New Jersey. It was 300 words, 400 words, and I landed in California and I finally said, I'm done. And I, I collapsed on the floor. They actually had to dragged me off the airplane and I sent it to you and you wrote back, said, yeah, this is good.

This is great. No, no edits. And I'm like, what? No changes. This is great. As is amazing. What I didn't tell you then was I labored over that excruciatingly. And it's now in retrospect like, oh, I'll never be Michael Jordan, but I'm allowed to take as many shots as I want.

AJ Harper: But I think you're your own person and I feel like you... I just, I don't know. I see so much growth.

Mike Michalowicz: Thank you.

AJ Harper: Yeah, and it just, it, it's so fun for me, it's, it's always been, you know, if we, if we look back on older books, I can't tell, did I say that? Did you say that? Did which section? You know? Huh? I have some, some stuff that was harder to write, like say the piggy bank story, which was actually took me like three weeks to write, just to get all the com—

Mike Michalowicz: In Profit First or in--

AJ Harper: In Profit First. Just to get all the components in. If you look at it, it's very intricate. The, the timing and the layered in the messages and all of it. Like, I'll, I'll remember that forever probably because that was quite a challenge for me.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: But for the most part, I'm like, I don't know. Did he write that or did I write that? I don't know. You know?

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Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: Now I'm like, this's gonna get even worse now because you're just, your skill level is just up so much.

Mike Michalowicz: Oh, thank you so much.

AJ Harper: Anyway, so I just, I've, I'm, it's, it's more fun when that, it's more fun for someone like me when I'm, when you and I are on the same page where I don't even have to say much and you know what I need you to do.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I love that.

AJ Harper: Yeah. So good.

Mike Michalowicz: So, uh, let's talk about where we are on The Money Habit right now. As of this morning, it is April Fool's Day. I was driving in and there was a comedian on, and he goes, April's Fool Day is the only holiday. And he also acknowledges, maybe it's not a holiday, but it's the only holiday where after you do something, you have to announce the day of the holiday. Like you play a prank and you're like, April Fools'!

AJ Harper: He's like, not like May, you know, May 17th!

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah, exactly. It's like Thanksgiving. People walk in, you go Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving. Like you don't yell that. But April Fool's Day, every time something happens, you have to yell the name of the holiday. He's like, why isn't every holiday that way? Valentine's Day. Happy Valentine's Day. It's Valentine's Day. He goes, you put a flower down Valentine's Day, you walk away Valentine's Day.

It's very funny. Um, The Money Habit right now, as of today, we are in the substantive stage.

AJ Harper: Substantive.

Mike Michalowicz: I always say substantive. Yeah. Sub. Stamp. Substantial. Right? So substantive stage. It is in pass number two, which means we submitted the manuscript, it came back from the editor. We did 40% more changes. They're going to Kendra's saying they're shocked, um, she's gonna come back. How many iterations will there be during the substantive stage?

AJ Harper: Probably just one more. So we'll just get it one more time.

Mike Michalowicz: And is that normal?

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AJ Harper: Yeah. She's gonna do a line edit the. We've had a couple times where we had to go over a tricky chapter again and maybe just isolate that one chapter and just look at that versus the whole thing. Um, but for the most part, it's two passes,

Mike Michalowicz: So--

AJ Harper: And so the next one is gonna have a more detailed line edit from her. So she's gonna go over it with a finer tooth comb than she did before.

Mike Michalowicz: Along with submitting the manuscript to Kendra, I submitted it to readers that raised their hand and said, I said, you have early access, just give me critical feedback, but this is my community. So all of them, or most of 'em, had read Profit First. They come in with a. Opinion or an experience already. So you did something which is unique is you said, I'll reach out to readers who maybe don't even know who you are, which is the ideal reader.

AJ Harper: That's what we should have done in the first place.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. So I wanna read this, just little bits and pieces of what carries.

AJ Harper: I gotta put a shout out to my team too, 'cause Laura and Sade, I said okay, y'all, we gotta do this fast.

Mike Michalowicz: Fast too. You turn around in a week.

AJ Harper: They, they were like, okay, got it. We had our people lined up within probably 36 hours

Mike Michalowicz: In their hands and then they got back to us within like

AJ Harper: It was 10, about two weeks we gave 'em, but oh, two weeks. We needed to turn it around quickly so I could have the data in time to turn in the manuscript.

Mike Michalowicz: And I think what's so great about this is these people may not know who I am, likely don't know who I am, are not familiar with pro, like these were the qualifiers, don't know Profit First, have never used it.

AJ Harper: Yeah. And you must be an employee, so meaning you have some sort of predictable or seasonal income, or you W2. Yeah, basically W2.

Mike Michalowicz: Exactly. And so Kari Sadler says, I'm just gonna read bits and pieces. I was two parts skeptical and one part willing, et cetera, et cetera.

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AJ Harper: Mm-hmm.

Mike Michalowicz: Uh, it's been almost two weeks since I've set my accounts. So far, I'm completely amazed at how different this money habit feels. And I'll check back later and there was more accolades. I just don't want to, um, tip off anything that may be personal or private, but she talks about, yeah, some things she's able to experience

AJ Harper: The, the relief she felt. She was excited.

Mike Michalowicz: When I read two parts Skeptical, I was like, this is the perfect reader.

AJ Harper: Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz: Like this is who I want. Um, so how I interpreted that is. She was skeptical but still willing.

AJ Harper: Mm-hmm.

Mike Michalowicz: Secondly is she was more than willing to consume the book. She was willing to take the action. So they must have been easy enough or accessible enough that she was able to take certain action and now she's seeing the results.

AJ Harper: She actually took action right away.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. Now part of it is you asked people to do this, but I think that is more typical of a consumer because they do decide to buy the book. They do take end action.

AJ Harper: I didn't ask anybody to do any of the exercises.

Mike Michalowicz: That's right. You just said will you read this.

AJ Harper: But I did, to be clear, I made sure I included the reader statement about who the book is for.

Mike Michalowicz: Mm-hmm.

AJ Harper: And so you have to identify with that to participate. You can't, people make a mistake when they do advanced reader feedback and they're like, oh, they're, you know, so and so's gonna do me a solid and read the book. We don't want anyone who's gonna do us a solid.

Mike Michalowicz: Right. Right. No solids.

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AJ Harper: No solids, no fanboy or fan girls.

Mike Michalowicz: Correct.

AJ Harper: We just want people who have. That need to solve that problem or have a shared desire.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: That they would be interested in the book anyway, right? Mm-hmm. Yeah. That's what we're looking for.

Mike Michalowicz: How do you define accessibility? It looks like you have three components to it.

AJ Harper: Yeah, so when we think about accessibility, again, it's how accessible is this book to readers? It's part doability, meaning can people actually do the things you're asking them to do? Part relatability, and that was the, at the top of the hour, this podcast we talked about how when we showed your accounts, we thought it was gonna be a cool thing, but actually it made it so wasn't relatable anymore.

Mike Michalowicz: Right.

AJ Harper: This is too far outta reach for me.

Mike Michalowicz: Right.

AJ Harper: Which is hilarious because you were at the... As, as illustrated in the book below the bottom.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah, Like I was at the Yeah, exactly.

AJ Harper: The underground. Earth's core level of rock bottom,

Mike Michalowicz: but the, but what I thought might be aspirational. Actually it was a disconnect.

AJ Harper: Yeah, it was a disconnect. And it too far of a leap. People felt like, you know, you don't want that because then people don't want to even start it.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. This is impossible.

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AJ Harper: And then part inclusivity, so are you making people feel at home in your manuscript? Which we have a whole podcast episode that we did about that. I don't think it's aired yet as I, as I'm talking right now, but it will be, by the time you hear this. So part doability, can they do it part relatability? Can they relate to you, and three-part inclusivity, do they feel at home in your manuscript?

Mike Michalowicz: The assessment was something I spent the most time on redoing because both you and Kendra said way too many steps. Overwhelming. And my first form of resistance, I acknowledged that, but it's like, I, I don't know how to make this simpler. And then I said, that's not an excuse. No. I just don't know how to, but I have to.

AJ Harper: You have to figure it out.

Mike Michalowicz: that the assessment was one of the ones when they, when it cracked on me, um, because I was doing the work in the document itself. And that's the one I spent four or five hours on was the assessment. What I realized is there was a lot of unnecessary work. What made it. W did you read the assessment? I don't even know if you had time. 'cause I, you only had--

AJ Harper: I read every single word before I turned it into Kendra.

Mike Michalowicz: You only had two days. You went through every single?

AJ Harper: I blocked off the time to do it, man.

Mike Michalowicz: Oh my gosh. You were teaching classes too.

AJ Harper: Listen,

Mike Michalowicz: Talking about classes. If you're listening right now, go to [aj harper.com](http://ajharper.com). Oh God. Sign for her classes.

AJ Harper: I got it done. And no, but I mean, I am also have a total, a lot of time blocked off for this next pass so that I can, yeah. You know, but I pay very close attention to the things you changed,

Mike Michalowicz: So. The big thing I changed, I went through all the numbers. I cleaned up the assessment, was applying the Prato principle, the 80 20 rule, and realizing what's the 20% that's necessary, that's gonna gets 80% of the way there. Because what's inherent to the money habit system is you don't need to have a perfect assessment. We just need to understand your general starting spot. And the season you're in, we know your season, we know your starting spot. That's enough. And the system will automatically adjust over time, just like Profit First does. So I'm like, why am I trying to nail this?

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AJ Harper: Because you would do that for yourself is the thing.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah, maybe. Yeah.

AJ Harper: And you're a total geek about it. And most people are not gonna be as geeky as we are about our own stuff.

Mike Michalowicz: And they don't need to be.

AJ Harper: And they don't need to be. And I noticed in the language, it wasn't just that you simplified it, you included a lot of language in the description of, "Hey, if you don't get this over and over again."

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: Over and over, yeah. Yeah. And that's per, that's part of the doability piece.

Mike Michalowicz: One thing I got heard back from Liz, so Liz. This was shocking to me. Liz does our interior graphic design. That's how it used to be. Page Two said, it's time for interior graphic design. And I said, okay, I'll have them submitted. They said, what do you mean submitted? We do 'em for you? Which was just, I've never heard of a publishing house actually do the--

AJ Harper: That's unusual and you have to be careful with a hybrid too that they might be charging you for it.

Mike Michalowicz: Oh, maybe they are. Yeah.

AJ Harper: But um, yeah, no, it's usually the author's responsibility, so

Mike Michalowicz: it was shocking to me. So I already had him in process with Liz. But Liz, who was not reading the manuscript, she just got the graphics. She said, oh, I get this.

AJ Harper: Mm-hmm.

Mike Michalowicz: And she goes, you just, you just gave me this answer to the question I've had for the last five years around where I stand. And another component is, what should I say for my future? And she goes, it's all answered just with graphics. I'm like, yeah.

AJ Harper: Yeah. I do think your graphics are on point. I mean, yeah.

Mike Michalowicz: Nailed it.

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AJ Harper: You nailed it. Especially the one about the accounts and the flow. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz: You like that one?

AJ Harper: Oh gosh, yeah. I was like, oh, there it is. There it is.

Mike Michalowicz: So, uh, well, and that's,

AJ Harper: And you know what that is, you making yourself work on accessibility, not just saying, oh, it's good enough.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: You push yourself and push yourself and push yourself. Yeah. Until it becomes something that people can connect with right away. Ah, so good. So good. That's the most so good.

Mike Michalowicz: Besides Fix This Next, I think it's the most I pushed on, uh uh, that kind of basic simple effect of understanding. Um, I. The bank accounts seem too hard because of just the volume, I think the volume of bank accounts.

AJ Harper: Mm-hmm. So that was a doability factor.

Mike Michalowicz: But I think one of the big discoveries, and this is actually something we had a lot of banter back and forth on, because I wasn't able to convey it to you clearly. Um, but there was a moment that we both got it and it was this concept of having these specific accounts I call clarity accounts.

AJ Harper: Mm-hmm. Yeah, you, you change, you changed it. Foundational and clarity.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah, foundational and clarity. 'cause I'm like, that's easier too. So the foundation,

AJ Harper: That was good.

Mike Michalowicz: Good. So a foundational account is, uh, income needs, wants, dreams, fixed, future, and emergency, right? That's the, you have to have those accounts.

AJ Harper: Foundational.

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Mike Michalowicz: Foundational. Those are foundational. But to get started, but also as you're using the system. There's certain elements that you question every night. It's the thing that gives you that stress at night.

AJ Harper: Mm-hmm.

Mike Michalowicz: Can we do a vacation this year or can I pay groceries or something else? Mm-hmm.

That's when we need a clarity account, because it relieves that question, because it answers it for you. A clarity account is a account that says groceries or vacation. Or allocating money to it. So you have the. Question answered and it alleviates the worry. When we were working with one of the people featuring the book, Sam, um, his circumstances, we went right to clarity accounts. But I realized that's true for all of us. Everyone has, if you're reading a book about your personal finances, you have something that's weighing on your mind.

AJ Harper: Mm-hmm.

Mike Michalowicz: And it doesn't necessarily mean something negative like. I shouldn't say negative, but something that's a stressor in the traditional sense, like, can I afford?

AJ Harper: Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz: It can also be when can I in the future, it's another form of stressor. Can I buy that house? Can I buy that car? Or whatever. And so we address that with bank accounts by having foundational and clarity.

AJ Harper: Yeah, so we fixed the doability and another issue we had was we had those after stories. Which were great about you succeeding using the system. But we just had too many that were fancy.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: We just had too many fan, which is I'm unlike us.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: But we had too many fancy,

Mike Michalowicz: yeah.

AJ Harper: So we had to pull, yank some out.

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Mike Michalowicz: and we asked some people who were in it. Um, who did we put, did I put, I may have mentioned, I don't know if it was, it was Carrie. There was one story I put back. In, I can't remember.

AJ Harper: Well, we did add some anecdote anecdotes from other folks, but we also more importantly, yanked uh, um,

Mike Michalowicz: Some of my stories.

AJ Harper: Yeah. We yanked two big stories that we didn't, we left a couple, but we had an on balance that wasn't working for relatability and doability, so we had to yank 'em.

Mike Michalowicz: We left in the wedding story.

AJ Harper: We left in the shoes because it was Krista's Triumph.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: Where she gets her Louboutins. But we took out this one where you guys go to Le Cirque.

Mike Michalowicz: Oh, right, right, right. That's out now.

AJ Harper: We just, it's completely yanked.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah, it's completely yanked.

AJ Harper: Deleted content.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah, exactly.

Exactly. And as a reminder, as a listener, whatever you delete is not lost forever. You can use that as delete the content, or we call it the lost content, and then share it with readers as a bonus material. Maybe an incentive to pre-order your book or something. Uh, the shoe story, Kendra pushed back on something specific and.

You responded before I did. Uh, meaning you got the edit first, then sent to me and so my wife literally said the word "worth it." So the backstory is my wife played softball, um, when she was in like the little league system, so pre-12, and she was a catcher. And this one play the, there's a play at home plate.

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The runner comes sliding in, cleats high, hits her in the. Uh, knee shatters her knee and like massive damage, like lifelong damage. And my wife, uh, will never resolve that because of the financial situation, they could not afford a doctor. Um, they were denied.

AJ Harper: I say that was the point of the story was--

Mike Michalowicz: To show she didn't have insurance. Yeah. My wife's mother was a beautician and she had a friend who had a chiropractic business, and that chiropractor had an x-ray machine, said, I'll X-ray your daughter's leg. And then they said, yeah, it's shattered and here's a brace, but. I couldn't afford medical care. Um, so my wife ex kind of shares that and then at the end she says, and by the way, I got that girl out.

AJ Harper: Worth it.

Mike Michalowicz: Worth it. And Kendra's like, was it worth it? I'm like, that's literally her exact words. Yeah.

AJ Harper: That's her personality. I'm think my dude, she's Jersey. What are you talking about?

Mike Michalowicz: When I do the audiobook, I may ask her to come in and just, just do a little thing to say hashtag worth it. And I'll say, yeah, that was my wife.

AJ Harper: Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz: Um. We didn't have enough examples of people from different income brackets. How do we, how did we resolve that?

AJ Harper: We just went and got some more, we have a few little anecdotes,

Mike Michalowicz: You what know, we did, we, we reached out to some of the, um, people that were, I did the, the live teaching.

AJ Harper: Yeah. At this time. At, um, inside.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah, exactly. And there was three or or so more people. But because we were so late in the process, you just did two or three of the interviews solo. Whoa.

AJ Harper: I did and we pro. I'll probably weave in a little bit more on this next pass.

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

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AJ Harper: There was just, we just had so many big moves we had to handle.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: That these are like little surgical edits that will show, like, that's what I'm chomping at the bit to do next. Now it's just these little tiny. If page two is listening, no worries. That's not gonna be another 40%, but just a little surgical edits to add a little more to that. And then we did some, and that's an accessibility issue.

Mike Michalowicz: I wonder if there's gonna be any folks like Kari who was a pre-reader that maybe want to talk to now they've read the book. Some may have elected like Carrie to deploy the system and by the time we get the book back, there'll be a month and a half into it.

AJ Harper: Yeah, good point. You know what, I'll have Laura reach out and—

Mike Michalowicz: Oh, that'd be wonderful.

AJ Harper: We can come up with a little mini questionnaire.

Mike Michalowicz: That'd be wonderful.

AJ Harper: Um, we could also, and it's to save time, one thing we could do is do a little focus group where you and I get on a Zoom. So instead of an individual one.

Mike Michalowicz: Oh. That's interesting

AJ Harper: because we don't, we really don't have space for full stories now.

Mike Michalowicz: No, it's, but there's,

AJ Harper: The little, little gems is what we're looking for. The little result, the results is what we really want.

Mike Michalowicz: It almost is

AJ Harper: It's a form of social proof also. So we could, why don't we organize that?

Mike Michalowicz: Okay.

AJ Harper: Okay. I'll work on it when we get back. Another thing for accessibility is we didn't have enough graphics, and I'm still think we might need more.

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Mike Michalowicz: What do you think is missing?

AJ Harper: I don't know yet. It's just a feeling I have. I, I'll, when I get it back, I'll know,

Mike Michalowicz: My next flight is to San Antonio versus Kansas City. I have a, I have a speaking gig out there, um, on Friday, so I'm gonna be on the plane a lot and I'm gonna work on graphics now. The, the graphics are all submitted and they're, they're the way I want 'em. But I'm gonna do the figure explanations, like figure 1.1. I actually have a technical question. Maybe you don't mind answering. Uh, in the formally the money map, we're now calling it the money target.

AJ Harper: Mm-hmm.

Mike Michalowicz: Okay. Which is much... Dude. Good call. Also. So this is, this is also an accessibility thing.

AJ Harper: Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz: I was like, I love the money map. It's the map you need to get to where you need to go, but it was. What was in Profit First? We called it the TAPS, the target allocation percentage, like what you should be targeting. And so I'm trying to find something for the quick assessment because I don't like quick assessment.

You're like, that's the money map. So we took the term that was originally the, the, uh, the TAPS, if you will. We moved it and now we have these targets that you should want, that, need a name. And we're going back and forth and I'm like, what, what should be the targets? And finally it's like, oh, the target, the money target. Yeah. So. Here's my question for you. There's figure 6, 6 1, 6 2, 6 3. Do, should I have an explanation for each or is it just figure 6 1, 6 2, 6 3. And then you have a summary of all the sixes because they all link together. Is each one individually explained?

AJ Harper: Yeah, I mean, you want a, a tight description

Mike Michalowicz: For each one.

AJ Harper: Yeah. Right Now you'll have longer descriptions that include how tos, in fact,

Mike Michalowicz: I may have to tighten that up.

AJ Harper: I left a comment in there for you so that when you get it back again, you'll see. Okay. Like maybe we just

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Mike Michalowicz: put that in?

AJ Harper: It's just a description of what it is.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: Um, so we'll see how that goes. But yeah.

Mike Michalowicz: Um, so maybe not enough graphics. You'll help me identify what those are.

AJ Harper: So like, here we don't have graphics that explain the science.

Mike Michalowicz: Okay. Can you gimme more?

AJ Harper: To... like a contextual model? Like this is what happens.

Mike Michalowicz: Oh, with consumption, like Parkinson's law? .

AJ Harper: Yeah. We don't have any of that. I don't necessarily know if we need it, but I'm just tossing it out that remember this is a different reader.

Mike Michalowicz: That's a great point. We do have one graphic, and what it is is mount versus frequency.

AJ Harper: Yeah. We have that one.

Mike Michalowicz: Right. And so the chart says if you do a large amount infrequently versus a large amount frequently, while logically you'll save more with a large amount, more frequently, it becomes inaccessible.

We talk about small amounts and so the optimal is small amount because it's accessible. High frequency volume gets you off into your target the fastest, even though logically large amount more frequently. Um, so we should do more of those. I like that. I'll,

AJ Harper: Yeah, and we have like the um, Howard Farkas and we talk about the rebel and how we wanna be, we wanna comply. And, but we also have this rebel in us. Which is why we keep overspending. And how that's a real thing. And it's not, doesn't require willpower. You have to kind of lean into it.

Mike Michalowicz: Yes.

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AJ Harper: So just thinking about maybe some of those would be actually cool to have.

Mike Michalowicz: That's cool. I'm also thinking, um, now BF Skinner's work on small wins. Uh, Dave Ramsey subsequently interpreted that to the debt snowball.

AJ Harper: Mm-hmm. Which we do talk about.

Mike Michalowicz: We do talk about Dave Ramsey's work, but we talk about this, this transition to, uh, debt avalanche, not my term. It's an existing term where then you prioritize, once you get some wins under your belt to convert over to the more logical thing of high interest rates.

That's based upon behavioral work. Going back to Skinner.

AJ Harper: I'll tell you what, if you went into the end notes where all of the references are to psychological stuff, and you or behavioral stuff. And then you played around on the plane and thought, I wonder if I could put a

Mike Michalowicz: Graphic to this?

AJ Harper: You, you really have a good head for it. Yeah. It would be a fun thing for you to try. 'cause I think it would actually enhance the accessibility. 'cause I think a lot of people might get, we love that behavioral stuff, but sometimes it's hard for people to really understand it without pictures.

Mike Michalowicz: A picture. Yeah. That's a good idea. Okay. Good. Good thing. I got a lot of flights coming. Um, another thing we did was. This was hard, I think for you, I think I saw it before you did in this case, was the shift from the Profit First entrepreneur kind of mentality. That this, this book, we went in originally saying, oh, I think it's a Profit First book. And I was like, oh no, it's not. But I don't, I don't know. I think I saw that maybe before you did.

AJ Harper: Oh my God, I, when we started the book, I was like, this me, this be great. This'll be cake.

Mike Michalowicz: Walk in the park

AJ Harper: We wrote this book twice. Don't forget there was the first one.

Mike Michalowicz: That's right.

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AJ Harper: And then the second one, the one from the Penguin published is actually revised and expanded edition, even though it doesn't say that.

Mike Michalowicz: It does say it on it.

AJ Harper: Well, it doesn't, does it say it on the cover?

Mike Michalowicz: It says on the cover. Does it say it on the website? On the Amazon Point?

AJ Harper: Well, anyway, it was a complete re rehaul like it's, we wrote it twice.

Mike Michalowicz: I know.

AJ Harper: So then I was like, alright, I got this. And then I was like, oh, I don't.

Mike Michalowicz: I don't got this. I don't got this.

AJ Harper: Um, yeah, it was a big shift for me because even though I knew it intellectually, it's like I couldn't give up on our reader. We have been loving on that reader for 15 years.

Mike Michalowicz: I know.

AJ Harper: And it's So if those of you who are Mike's readers, the book is still for you, right? It, it 100% is, but the challenge is there's an entrepreneurial mindset that is, you would say like. You know, hunt and kill, right? Like, get, you need the money, you need to solve this money issue. You're gonna go get, go get the money. Like there's this attitude of growth. Right? Infinite possibilities. Um, make something from nothing. And there's just an attitude that we're used to having in our readers that's not as present. It's not saying it's never present, but in people who get a paycheck.

Mike Michalowicz: Mm-hmm.

AJ Harper: And don't have, or don't own a business. And so we were making, I was making a lot of assumptions. So we had to make some, some shifts there and it took me a minute to find my mojo. It was challenging for me.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. But you did. Profit First is referenced. Obviously in the introduction, I shouldn't say obviously. It's in the introduction. I think it's referenced in the main text.

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AJ Harper: It's in chapter one, two, when you're kind of, it's kind of your origin story for the core message,

Mike Michalowicz: but very light.

And it very light and you don't have to understand Profit First.

AJ Harper: No.

Mike Michalowicz: Um, a couple other changes that happened in the process was the book cover design. So we went back and forth and I always like to have that. One piece that's, that's unique around the book cover, um, while maintaining the core elements of a large title.

So it's thumbprint impressionable. You, you go onto Barnes and Nobles and you can see it, even if it's a, not even a one-inch graphic design. I want my name to present consistently so it shows a, a brand consistency across all the books. Um, so there's some kind of standard parameters. Um. Andrea, who leads all of our marketing efforts, uh, did a color sampling of the graphic.

She says, this is the wrong blue, and went back and uh, page two's like, oops, that's the wrong blue. It's not the same blue from profit first. So she did for brand consistency.

AJ Harper: Hmm.

Mike Michalowicz: But the, the graphic element I wanted, like what makes, what's something around money that everyone gets? But you don't commonly see? And I don't know who had the idea. But we wrapped it in a money strap. So you know, if you ever see a stack of

AJ Harper: Like you did the band.

Mike Michalowicz: The band, yeah. The ones or tens. Here ever goes to the bank, there's a money strap. I'm like, oh, why don't we money strap the book? So

AJ Harper: clean, so elegant. .

Mike Michalowicz: It's clean and elegant. Yeah So we did that. So that was the final ad. Um, then we took, I sent over to Liz because I needed, she said, can you send me the cover so I can do the interior graphic designs consistently with that, which is very smart. She gets it. She goes, I can't help myself. She goes, here's my feedback on the cover. You can change the color band to this. She gave you all this feedback. So I sent it over to Page Two and like, thank you.

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AJ Harper: Mm-hmm.

Mike Michalowicz: Um, they said, we'll, we'll consider it. I said, they said, so is this the new one you want with her suggestions? I said, I don't know. So we, Adayla ran a test on pick food.

AJ Harper: Mm-hmm.

Mike Michalowicz: And it, first time ever we've ran a test. It was a 50 50 split with the audience. Literal 50 50. So we said, okay. Then it goes back to the first image, the one submit by Page Two. Let's not make any more changes if it's ambiguous to the audience. Let's just keep the original and cleaner. So that was interesting. Um, also how to rewrite the bio for the first time ever.

AJ Harper: Mm-hmm.

Mike Michalowicz: And I think we still gotta go through it. I don't know if it's there yet.

AJ Harper: We, do, no, I don't think it's quite there yet. We'll do that in the next pass.

Mike Michalowicz: I don't love it, but there's stuff in there that's like irrelevant. Like I don't, I don't even know, like, who cares about built and sold multimillion dollar companies? Like who eff-ING Cares? I don't know.

AJ Harper: Yeah. Kinda have to think about it. It's, it's, you know, you always need your, your bio to be, include the things that are relevant to that book.

Mike Michalowicz: And also to that reader, accessibility is part of it. Does someone read this and say, oh, this guy's a, he's a tool. Like, oh, you know, or, or he, he's got something I'll never have. So this book's irrelevant.

AJ Harper: There's a way to do it. I think you might need to go a little bit more into kind of how you grew up.

Mike Michalowicz: That's what I think. The personal story. Yeah, yeah, yeah. I wonder if it's a little bit of, I grew up under the envelope system with my German mother. Um. Then when I was kind of let free, when I flew the, the out of the nest, I crash, landed, destroyed myself financially.

AJ Harper: I like the fact though, that one of the things I like about the book is the difference between the way you grew up and the way your wife grew up. So a lot of books, you know, people, these super underdog stories, you know, like I used to be destitute and now I'm in a, in a jet.

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Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: But you actually were middle class.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. To upper middle, even.

AJ Harper: You didn't worry about

Mike Michalowicz: anything,

AJ Harper: Money at all.

Mike Michalowicz: No.

AJ Harper: But Chris to worried about money all the time.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: And I really love the juxtaposition of that and the way that relationship plays out in the book. And so I think in your bio, I think it's worth it to say. You know, I don't come from humble beginnings, but I'm, I had to humble myself.

Mike Michalowicz: That's,

AJ Harper: Oh, we just did it. I just got the goosebumps. Oh, we just did it. Like, literally,

Mike Michalowicz: I hope you were watching the video of you doing the point you went a wrapper on me. I literally got goosebumps when you said that.

AJ Harper: Yeah, I didn't because I think you have to honor that. You can't, you don't wanna fake out. Like, it's not like you came from nothing. Because a lot of people need to understand that you can f up if you.

Mike Michalowicz: Like, dude, you said the opening line of the bio. I didn't come from humble be beginnings, but I had to humble myself.

AJ Harper: Yeah, that's the opening line. You need to write it down. 'cause one thing I, when I, I know

Mike Michalowicz: I'm gonna email you right now.

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AJ Harper: Sometimes I forget the stuff we say on here.

Mike Michalowicz: I know, I know. It was funny when we were doing the edits, there was something you said, oh, we are putting that in. I actually made a note of it. And you didn't put it in. I what thing?

AJ Harper: I don't even know. The good thing for good for you.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: That you remembered.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: You gotta make yourself a note as soon as we,

Mike Michalowicz: Well, I'll make a note. Now you fill the air. Was something interesting.

AJ Harper: Well, I think for, for those of you that are still listening, accessibility is. Don't, uh, you know, it's one of the editing passes in this, the must-read editing methodology that I created for myself so I could make sure books would work.

And, um, and then accessibility and learning styles is the actual editing pass. And it's so important. Make a person feel like they can actually do something to make it people feel like it's possible, but also to help them really grasp things, understand, um, process. So we can't, we can't sleep on this. You have to be really vigilant about accessibility and it's an editing pass more than a, something you do in writing.

So don't be nervous if you feel like you have a lot to change when you have a manuscript. When it comes to accessibility, it is an editing pass. You can be mindful of it while you write, but you're really not gonna nail it until it's already written.

Mike Michalowicz: I, uh. I dunno if you noticed my finger. I had to get surgery.

AJ Harper: I did not?

Mike Michalowicz: Yes.

AJ Harper: No! For what would you do?

Mike Michalowicz: Authors get this? I had a lump on the back of my knuckle assessed and so they had to cut up my finger and, and take it out. So it happened yesterday. Ugh. It's

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impossible for me to type. So that one sentence was the hardest type writing of my life. I didn't come from humble beginnings is atrocious.

AJ Harper: So that's why it took you that whole time. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah, because this damn lumpy finger is in the way. Um, anything else with the book that's been.

AJ Harper: No, I think we're, we're caught up. I think we're caught up.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. Um, we will. He said we One more round, then it goes to the, uh, copy proof--

AJ Harper: Copy edit first.

Mike Michalowicz: Yep.

AJ Harper: And that's cake.

Mike Michalowicz: Copy edit means basically line by line. Checking for grammar,

AJ Harper: Grammar or punctuation Syntax. Formatting continuity. Yeah. Minor fact checking. Et cetera.

Mike Michalowicz: Okay. Yeah. Okay. Um, but once it's there we can't do much more major changes, but we have done that. I think we were in a copy edit once with Kaushiuk and we were like, this has to change radically, bro.

AJ Harper: Well, that's when I finally convinced him to let me change the opening story and clockwork to what I had wanted it to be, to begin with.

Mike Michalowicz: That's right.

AJ Harper: Which was right. That's right. And we did, and we did, but that was actually at the proofread stage, which they usually aren't gonna let you do that.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. I, I did a little, few Hail Marys that Get Different retitling,

AJ Harper: but I, I, I couldn't, but I convinced him because of reader feedback.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah,

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AJ Harper: yeah. I was like, please look, this is what people are saying. That's the most memorable story and it's buried.

Mike Michalowicz: Powerful.

AJ Harper: Um, but I wanna say that, uh, copy edit is gonna, is, uh, yeah, copy edit is production. So that's officially when production starts and you move from. Working. I mean, the book isn't technically accepted until you move into copy edit. So, um, we're not there yet, but once we do smooth sailing.

Mike Michalowicz: And we're, it's April 1st. Today as we record this, we are still. Eight months, nine months away, isn't it? It's this, there's a lot of work to do, so it's necessary, but frustrates me. It's like, gosh, the book is so close to ready and we have to wait still nine more months.

AJ Harper: Yeah. But you're gonna do all your, all your fantastic work about marketing and building readership, correct? .

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah, correct. We're gonna start serving.

AJ Harper: And also, can we just pause for a moment? 'cause I'm gonna try Van, I was thinking we just, here it is again, like this book didn't exist.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: And there it is. There it is. Because it's, it's so close to being done. That's when I get this, this really giddy feeling, like, oh, look what we did.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. Yeah. It is a great feeling.

AJ Harper: And you go through so much to get there.

Mike Michalowicz: You know what, I love that. You know what gives me the greatest feeling is actually when the first translation book arrives or any, any translation book arrives, 'cause that feels like it's just now this kind of rolling. It has momentum that is totally out of my control. So yesterday, Fix This Next in Japanese arrived at the office.

AJ Harper: Congratulations. You're in Japan.

Mike Michalowicz: It's this black cover with purple Fix This Next time.

AJ Harper: Oh, funny.

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Mike Michalowicz: Yeah, it's very Japanese and I see that and I that, those are the things that take me back. I'm like, my gosh.

AJ Harper: Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz: I got, uh, an email from someone in China yesterday. Uh, someone from Iran yesterday, um, and someone from Russia yesterday, and I'm thinking, well, our governments are in conflict and there's this, these crazy things going on, but entrepreneurs, underdog, entrepreneurs exist everywhere. We are the same people, and it's just somehow these books somehow got into these people's hands.

And, uh, you and I have invoked and been of service as someone that we would never have access to because of our crazy difficult situation with our governments. So it's just really cool.

AJ Harper: And that was just one day.

Mike Michalowicz: That was just one day! And it was sitting here. It's just, I'm aghast. That's one guy in Japan. It's funny. At the end of this full thing, they felt compelled to disclose that they were using, uh, Google Translate. I'm like. It's kind of funny, like say all those things. By the way, I don't speak English. This is all Google Translate. I'm like, that's awesome. That's awesome.

AJ Harper: Oh, in the email?

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah, in the email. So, oh, it's long English email. I'm reading it. I'm from Japan and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And I'm reading. The very answer is, by the way, I don't speak English. This is from Google Translate.

AJ Harper: Well, it was kind of them to be upfront about that.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah, totally. So I responded in Japanese and said, by the way, I don't speak Japanese as Google Translate.

Um, okay. I think we're good. Right? We're good. Hey man, that I'm talking to the listener. That's Jersey talk. Hey man. Go out there and write a book that reaches people that you wouldn't be able to reach otherwise. Next week we're gonna be talking about starting a podcast to support your book.

AJ Harper: Yep.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

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AJ Harper: Versus being on podcasts as a guest.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. It's, it's pretty wild. And this, this podcast, I think speaks to the impact it can have. We now have fans of this podcast, really fans of AJ that, uh, come to me and say, oh my, I love, I love that show. That they don't know of my work. Um, but it's given me selfishly some exposure to an audience I wouldn't have access to. So it's pretty cool.

AJ Harper: We have a good time.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah, it's a good time. I still want to do a live one so we can--

AJ Harper: We're gonna do it. So I don't know when.

Mike Michalowicz: It's coming. Uh, go to our website, dwp.podcast.com. Also go to AJharper.com. She has spots available for her retreat. Do you call 'em retreats or wor working? What do you call 'em again?

AJ Harper: I have retreats. I actually, by the time this airs, I probably will only have spots available for October.

Mike Michalowicz: Okay.

AJ Harper: Which would be my last one of the year for the editing retreat.

Mike Michalowicz: Mm-hmm.

AJ Harper: But I will, I do have spots available for my top three book workshop, which is my 14 week. A program that's hardcore. Um, so that, that you could still check on for sure.

Mike Michalowicz: I think the best book that's inside you comes out of you during these, these events. These meetups. There is this necessity to work on every day to keep it moving the writing, but there's something special when you devote days

AJ Harper: in a container in a, yeah. With someone who can help you see what it could be.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. It's, it's miraculous. So, [AJ Harper dot com's website](http://AJHarper.com). Uh, one last reminder before we wrap things up here too is you can email us at hello@dwtbpodcast.com. I started an imprint with page two. It's called simplified. It's for authors in the entrepreneur space.

So if that's you, maybe, maybe something there. Email us at hello@dwtbpodcast.com. Just put simplified in the title and, uh, AADE will direct you accordingly. Thanks for joining us

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for today's episode, and we're looking forward to seeing you next week. As always, the grand reminder, don't write that book.

Write the greatest book you can.