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Episode 89:

“What Would We Write if We Had All the Time and Buckets of Talent”

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. I gotta tell you. Um, we'll find out how this audio recording is.

That's the bane of my existence at the moment, but I'll tell you what is beating that is look at the lupine.

AJ Harper: Lupin.

Mike Michalowicz: Oh, lupin. But isn't spelled L-U-P-I-N-E?

AJ Harper: Yes. So you can spell it either way, but in North America, Lupin is spelled L-U-P-I-N-E. That's the preferred.

Mike Michalowicz: Okay.

AJ Harper: Spelling.

Mike Michalowicz: So we're on Madeline Island.

AJ Harper: Mm-hmm.

Mike Michalowicz: In Wisconsin, right? Or Minnesota? Now I'm cu as in Wisconsin.

AJ Harper: No, it's in Wisconsin. But a long, for a long time you thought it was Minnesota because you fly into Minnesota.

Mike Michalowicz: It's in Minnesota. Minnesota. Which is, so it's funny, I, so I'm visiting your home. It is gorgeous. It gets me emotional. Um, you have manifested your dream. And while I understood it logically, now I understand it emotionally.

AJ Harper: Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz: It is gorgeous here.

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AJ Harper: Yeah. When you arrived, I instantly became emotional.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. Yeah. Just driving in it.

AJ Harper: Just like the merging of two worlds for me.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: Because we've always had this pla, not this place, but we've always visited here. And um, and we've always had our island friends and, but I re, rarely do my worlds collide.

Mike Michalowicz: And there was the moment when I was coming across the ferry, on the ferry where you disconnect with the past. And I'm not saying like the history's past, like the past moment, and you be, I became very present. And it happened right on the ferry. And then there's this presence now. It, I'm very much more in the moment. And that ferry ride was that I, I felt a change. Do you feel that too? Is it the ferry?

AJ Harper: Yeah. It's very different here. Time is different here.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz: It's really amazing.

AJ Harper: And you are very focused on what you need in that moment. Not so much your schedule or your to-do list or any of those things. It's like it just evaporates.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. That's what I'm feeling. Oh, what a, what a fabulous place that you—

AJ Harper: And you came at such a good time. 'cause the lupins.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. And so Lupins are these flowers. They, my best, uh, comparison is called Fox Glove, which grows in where we are in New Jersey, where I am and where you are too, in Nyack. Um, it looks similar, but, but not identical. The vibrance and the, the quantity is what's amazing. Like, it's everywhere. It's everywhere. It's gorgeous. Alright, so let's kick into our episode. Um, we are on a new device and so the audio may be, well, we'll find out.

AJ Harper: We're gonna find out,

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Mike Michalowicz: We'll find out. But I, I was spent. The, the most part of the morning trying to work on this thing. And the, a good accomplishment is we have a multi-track recording that helps in the editing. The downside is there is this clipping and kind of echoing that's going on that I cannot figure out, but, um,

AJ Harper: But maybe it's all gonna be fine.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. And maybe between episodes I'll work on it.

AJ Harper: So we're, we're trying to make sure that I can still record the podcast from here because traditionally right, I drive. 45 minutes. To Boonton. Climb 50,000 stairs. That's right. I'm never gonna stop saying that.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: And then we record in the studio, the Profit First studio.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. Um, and so now while we're doing this live in person together, um, and you've set up for that, now I have a reason to come out. Uh, and instead of you climbing 50,000 steps, I have to So you'll be here in a couple weeks? I have to come out with some regularity. Um, we will try this over zoom or some kind of remote connection, but we wanna make sure your audio quality is exceptional.

AJ Harper: Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz: So we'll see. We'll get there. Um, today we're gonna talk about what it would require to write or what would you write if you had all the time, all the talent, um, and no other constraint. There's no constraints on you. You could write whatever you want.

AJ Harper: Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz: Um,

AJ Harper: but first we're gonna do intros,

Mike Michalowicz: Introductions. Yeah.

AJ Harper: We had a listener write in and say, don't stop doing the intros.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. Oh really? I, I, is that that long, long email?

AJ Harper: Yeah, that's, that's Natalie Banks and, uh, thanks Natalie.

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Mike Michalowicz: Thanks, Natalie. Yeah, I was reading it this morning. It was great. And, and she's like, you're not asking for critical feedback, but here's what it is.

And she went through I think like six or seven points. And one of the points was, um, for me, an opportunity to write a book for teens. So I wrote My Money Bunnies for children. Um, but what about for teens? And thank you, Natalie. It has me thinking.

AJ Harper: Oh my God. Well, of course, because the money habit could be the money habit for teens.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah,

AJ Harper: the money habit for retirees.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. So it could translate,

AJ Harper: uh, we could translate quite a bit.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. So for the introduction, um, what I want to say is the, I was about to say like affection and love that you have for your wife, but that's not it. I mean, that, that's there. The partnership is really effective. It's like two, I was just watching you. Two, how you work together, how you talk, how you support each other. It's like two gears that just are really well synchronized. It just subconsciously or consciously, it just syncs. That's really cool to see in a relationship.

AJ Harper: Oh, thanks. Yeah. I guess you haven't really spent any time with us.

Mike Michalowicz: This is the most time I spend with Polly. Just BSing. Then I found out she's a drummer and I was like, what? How did I not know this? Or maybe I was told once and I forgot, but gosh.

AJ Harper: Yeah, she's a percussionist

Mike Michalowicz: and she loves, I love ginger beer. Not to, oh, she said,

AJ Harper: I, I'm telling you, we should get stock in Reads.

Mike Michalowicz: Clearly. I, I was helping her carry in. Some of 'em I was like. I've never seen such a voluminous amount of ginger beer. Um, I love ginger beer, but for me that means I have it once every couple months. And it sounds like she has like once every couple or a couple times a day, like she's that into it. Yeah, yeah.

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AJ Harper: It's a, it's a lot right now.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: That's okay though. Whatever makes her happy.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: We're at that stage of life, whatever.

Mike Michalowicz: Oh no, exactly, exactly. Life is short. Enjoy it.

AJ Harper: But I would say the same about you, so, okay. Y'all have to hear this. This is so funny. Mike's going across on the ferry, so you can bring your car across. Just if you can visualize that and you can bring a motor home across, so it's big enough to

Mike Michalowicz: It's huge.

AJ Harper: Yeah, it's big. You could have a semi on there. I get nervous when there are semis on there though, because I'm like, wait,

Mike Michalowicz: That's a lot. How, wait, are you sure?

AJ Harper: Yeah, it's a little nutty. But you came across and you took a picture because you immediately met an entrepreneur. Of course. Who was bringing a sauna. And then you came over and told me about the sauna and then the guy was texting you and it turns out the sauna was being installed at my neighbor's. Just two, three houses down.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: So we go over there, of course, because you have, we're crashing their sauna party because you're you. But what was so cool is you're instantly texting your wife.

Mike Michalowicz: Oh yeah, I was, I'm like, we got, yeah.

AJ Harper: You're in constant communication with her.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. Thank you. Yeah. And that's, that's how we, you know, 'cause I, I do travel a lot and that's, I think how we found a way to sync, um, kudos for you too. I, it may have pushed you outta your comfort zone a little bit just to crash your neighbor.

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AJ Harper: I definitely wouldn't have gone over there.

Mike Michalowicz: But, you know, I, I sit there and observe you and instantly you're in flow. And I think her name was Liz. And you're like talking and we,

AJ Harper: yeah, it's Liz.

Mike Michalowicz: Liz, um, they purchased a sauna that faces ocean. Oh my gosh. The ocean. Basically. You have the ocean. I didn't really appreciate the size of Lake Superior.

AJ Harper: No. It's an inland sea.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. And so they said, yeah, go in the sauna not to use it. Uh, it's brand new. It's installed. They're gonna be the first to use it. But, uh, I went inside just to get the view. And uh, like looking at the loop in here, my heart starts racing, uh, goosebumps like. They have this f fantabulous view.

AJ Harper: It looks like a magazine.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. So, um, really cool. And the entrepreneur, his name is Justin. Um, I don't have his card in front of me, but, uh, just a fascinating story of trials and tribulations. And so I already reached out to, um, our podcast partner who's sponsoring the podcast. Not this podcast, but another podcast I'm gonna be doing.

I said, this may be a good candidate. Also, uh, the Future TV show. They were, we were talking about this morning, they um, they text me some information. I can't give full details yet 'cause it's not public. But there is a TV show coming and I sent it to them and so there's interest. What's so good is just getting out and about.

You meet folks like that.

AJ Harper: Dude, you were on a ferry. Yeah. In the middle of nowhere basically he approached me.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah, I was just taking a picture. Like, this is wild.

AJ Harper: Well, because you were taking pictures, like, what are you taking pictures of?

Mike Michalowicz: My sauna? Yeah. Yeah. He's like, you want one? Alright, so let, let's just start with the big grand question.

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Um. Well, actually, let's not start with that. Why do authors not write what they really want to write it? It sounds like so obvious, like, this is what I want to do, yet I'm not gonna, I'm gonna dumb deny myself of it.

AJ Harper: Yeah. Well first of all, they think they can't, for some reason, that they just want the skillset. Um, they don't have the chops. That's one. They think maybe people don't wanna read it. That happens every day, all day. And, and then I think we get, especially with prescriptive nonfiction, we get kind of caught up on what we should write. So this makes sense for my business. Everyone wants this from me. Um, I know a lot about this. I should just write that and get it out of the way. And, you know, that's just a death No,

Mike Michalowicz: it's a shame because I believe you and I've been put on this planet... To serve a purpose, maybe self-defined, but there's a transformative moment I think for people. I don't know who said this, but uh, the two greatest moments in life is the day you were born and the day you discover why you were born.

And so I think ultimately we all have a, an opportunity to serve a purpose. And if you want to do something, I think that's the biggest indicator of purpose. Um, and yet many people say no.

AJ Harper: Yeah. Well, there's also time, you know, it's, as you know,

Mike Michalowicz: Time and money. Right.

AJ Harper: Okay. Yeah. Well, so they don't think they have enough time to write it. A lot of people have written great works in very short periods of time. Usually it involves, quite honestly, getting up early.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: That's kind of it. You've, you've blown it. If you think you're gonna fit it into the day.

Mike Michalowicz: I, I a hundred percent agree. Do do you get the majority of your writing done in the morning?

AJ Harper: Yeah,

Mike Michalowicz: me too.

AJ Harper: Yeah. I mean, if I'm pushing a deadline, I'll write when, whatever.

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Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: Although not past 8:00 PM anymore.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: Or seven.

Mike Michalowicz: The money habit. Um, we had a deadline due and we, we asked for an extension because we're over, and there was a lot of work to get done still. That was probably the greatest writing of my life, I think. There was, to your point, there was this compression, like there is no more sitting around, there's no more like, just get it done. And I was waking up, I did it, uh, I think three consecutive or four consecutive days in a row for two weekends, you know, Thursday through, through Sunday. And I get up in the morning, but I would work till midnight and um,

AJ Harper: I think that's when I had Norovirus.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. And you were sick and you had—

AJ Harper: And my wife was in the hospital.

Mike Michalowicz: Exactly. There was a lot of shiitake going down. So I'm texting you saying I, I get it. I'm like, let me just go. Uh, not, let me just go. I'm just gonna go. And I just did. And, uh, it is interesting when, um, there's a, there's a time pressure too that there, there's, you know, there's an obligation to someone else. There's, there's no more time. It's like, just buckle down and do this.

AJ Harper: Yeah. You can't keep, you know, I did that for 10 years. So imagine what that felt like for you. (Yeah.) That was my life for 10, for 10 years when I was a ghost writer.

Mike Michalowicz: Do some people hold off writing a book? Because, uh, I'm thinking about the, the income component as if, if I'm making a living doing something, but the book I wanna write is not in alignment with that, do some people say, I, the book just has to wait or I can't afford to do this book?

AJ Harper: I don't know if it's someone to afford, but I think it has to align with business goals is what they're thinking.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah,

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AJ Harper: But the, the problem is if you don't... If you're not excited about it, it really impacts the business goals in the end anyway.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. Have you worked with other authors who said, I gotta do this, and even though it makes no logical sense, it doesn't?

AJ Harper: Sure, yeah. All the time.

Mike Michalowicz: So, well, tell me a story. Like how's it, how did it play out for them emotionally? I'm

AJ Harper: trying to think of one that's not a ghostwriting client, 'cause I couldn't share that.

Let's see. Oh, um. Now you put me on the spot. Okay. I'm trying. Yeah, I'm trying to think of people I could actually share with you.

Mike Michalowicz: I will tell you from the, at least the business space, when I work with, uh, entrepreneurs who feel compelled called to do something and it doesn't make logical sense, it does not guarantee success, meaning financial success or anything, but, but it does.

Allow them to live without the regret of not knowing if they gave it a shot or not.

AJ Harper: Mm-hmm.

Mike Michalowicz: And that's huge. I know too many people who say, I could have been that, or I, I should have done that. And I know very few people who say I tried it and I failed and I regret that I ever tried it. I wish shame on me forever trying that.

Like I, I very rarely see people punish themselves for doing something they feel that they want to do.

AJ Harper: Yeah. Well, what about Kasey Compton?

Mike Michalowicz: She, she wrote in search of you?

AJ Harper: In search of you, and it didn't align with any business goal really.

Mike Michalowicz: No, it didn't.

AJ Harper: I mean, but she felt compelled to write it.

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Mike Michalowicz: Yeah, she's a, a therapist. Um, she, her, the thesis of that book is you can't love anything until you love yourself. Um, and that many individuals go through a life of trying to achieve something with an expectation that they'll finally have arrived if I get that degree automated or if I get that job, or if I buy that house or have that thing.

AJ Harper: Mm-hmm.

Mike Michalowicz: And she goes, it just masked the problem. In fact, it makes it even worse. She goes, when you just fall in love with who you are and you fall in love with yourself, that. All that weight goes away and you've actually have arrived.

AJ Harper: Yeah, but you know what, I remember when she was writing it and she just said she deliberately, she said, I'm gonna write this book even if it doesn't make sense the way I'm structuring it, the way, um, I'm building it the way, um, the way it comes across to readers, even if I don't have a business model associated with it. She was just very intent on writing the book that she wanted to write.

Mike Michalowicz: You know what it is, is you've said this is a book will serve readers or change readers. Maybe that's the word to use. But it'll change you, the author.

AJ Harper: It does. I'm actually gonna say, I think, um, you can find a business model. You can find a way to make it work even if you, even though it doesn't seem appropriate. Yeah. I think you just have to have a little strategy. I. So I think you should decide, this is the book. This is the book for sure. And instead of saying, uh, I'm not, I don't care if I'm gonna make you money. I think you need to figure out how I, I don't think saying, okay, here's my business.

I need a book that fits that. Let me just write that. When it is not on your heart, I think that you're doomed. I think you're doomed. But if you were to say, okay, I have this nutty idea. But it's calling to me and I really wanna write it, and I don't know how it fits. I think you can figure out how it fits, because I feel like when you're answering that call, as long as it's in service to your readers and these are people you wanna hang with for a considerable amount of time, you can figure it out.

You can figure out how you can monetize it, if that's something you wanna do.

Mike Michalowicz: I like that. To me, generating income means you are being of service. It's the. Acknowledgement points.

AJ Harper: Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz: So if you monetize it, it means it is serving people because they're departing with money.

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AJ Harper: Mm-hmm.

Mike Michalowicz: To experience that. Um,

AJ Harper: but you know, another thing I wanna point out, sometimes people are, um, they decide not to write the book because it's a shift in genre. So if they're deep in a genre,

Mike Michalowicz: Sure.

AJ Harper: Um, I once had an author when I had my publishing house. I do think that that author went to two, she had probably three or four genres she bounced around in and then that it was pretty hard for her to get legs in any of them. It was just too, abrupt switches.

Mike Michalowicz: Yes.

AJ Harper: They couldn't cross over. But then, you know Julian Winters, I do New York Times bestselling author and I was the acquiring editor on his first three books. He was deep in young Adult. And recently had an, um, an adult book. So Young Adult Romance. Adult romance, but it was many books in young adult. Established readership. Right? So it wasn't like young, adult, adult. It was a, let me dig deep where I am and then I'm gonna expand from there, but also maintaining the same themes. So I don't think it was a huge risk for him.

Mike Michalowicz: This is similar to experience with The Money Habit.

AJ Harper: Yeah. 'cause now you're having a different reader. This is the first time ever we've had a different reader. First time ever, ever.

Mike Michalowicz: On my wall in my office, at home, I have the message from the message, the sign that says Eradicate entrepreneurial poverty. I have it at my office-office too. And I, I look at that and I do feel this conflict. That I'm resolving that The Money Habit isn't only for entrepreneurs.

Um, and what I think what's forced me to do is expand my understanding of myself and who I can be of service to. I, I like writing a book that's not consistent with what I've written in the past because it just, it's forcing me to think about me and how I can be of service in a different way.

AJ Harper: Yeah. I would say it still falls under eradicating entrepreneurial poverty because the impetus for actually creating the system be outside of yourself.

'cause you were using it yourself.

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Mike Michalwicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: Was to help Tommy Mellow.

Mike Michalowicz: Oh, for sure.

AJ Harper: Who is an entrepreneur to help him with his employees, which ultimately helps his company. That's a great point. Much stronger.

Mike Michalowicz: That's a great point. Even if an entrepreneur doesn't discover it and someone individually does, who works for a company? Mm-hmm. Companies are run by business leaders, entrepreneurs, and so forth. If that person without any awareness or knowledge of that business leader, entrepreneur, knowing that person, the employee is reading the book, if the employee achieves financial independence. Control and authority of their numbers.

They perform differently at work when we don't have that. So in the glows of the book, to give away a little secret, so I have tinnitus, ringing in the ears, we were able to pull that in the end of the book. And what financial worry is, how I define it, or at least how I can associate with it now, is, is that constant ringing in my ears.

Um, it's, it's happening right now. It is constantly present and it, it, that worry is constantly present. And if we can alleviate that, um, you can listen, participate, perform at a whole different level. Let's get to the, the core question here for you. If you, um, had all of the. Talent needs, desires, opportunity, money, like, no worries.

And you could write anything. AJ, what would you write?

AJ Harper: Oh, man. Um, I don't think that I fully realized my promise as a writer yet, and I, so I would love time to dig deep, get back into fiction.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: I really wanna get back into fiction.

Mike Michalowicz: What's the closest you've been to in recent years?

AJ Harper: Fiction?

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

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AJ Harper: I, I mean, I guess I don't, I don't have anything close. You're, it's really been a long time.

Mike Michalowicz: You're a playwright.

AJ Harper: I, well, yeah. It's been on 20 years since I wrote a play.

Mike Michalowicz: You, you also did a thing with Garrett Gunderson. I was talking to him just recently. Now, that's not fiction, but it's comedy.

AJ Harper: I wrote, well, I didn't write his comedy show.

Mike Michalowicz: Oh, I thought you participated in that. How, how did you work with him? 'cause he, he brought your name up a lot in our conversation.

AJ Harper: Yeah, he's my buddy.

Mike Michalowicz: He's a great guy.

AJ Harper: I love Garrett. I just texted with him last night. Oh, I showed him a picture of you setting this up. I was like, Luke Mike's setting up my podcast thing. Um, I did his theatrical keynote.

Mike Michalowicz: Okay. That's what you then, that's what he was referring to.

AJ Harper: So it's like a one man show.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: But more like I theatrical keynote is a term that I don't know if anyone else uses but me. But that's what I use to describe, it's not just a keynote, it's a very specific type with, we did create characters and so forth. So, yeah. I did a little there.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. Yeah. It's a performance. It's a real, a good keynote.

AJ Harper: It is. It was. It's different than a regular keynote.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: Because it has fictional moments.

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Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. For me. You know, for a while I was like, oh, I think I'd write fiction, um, if I had all the talent all the time. But you know what?

As I think about it, that sounds like it might be fun, but it doesn't feel as fulfilling as now. Personal improvement. I hate personal improvement. I hate self-help. Like those titles are,

AJ Harper: Oh, are you gonna go into self-help?

Mike Michalowicz: I don't know. I'm saying if I had all the time, all the, all the talent, maybe more self-help because the money habit is a pathway in. Another thought I have that's come across my mind is be the money guy. Um. It is such a struggle for so many different people is maybe just keep hitting that from different angles to be of service. It's naturally following my lap. This television show, it's about money. Um, the that's coming down. This podcast one I'm gonna be doing independently. It's ultimately about money management. Um, it's entrepreneurial stories, but has a huge money theme.

AJ Harper: Okay, well let's think about it. So you would write a self-help, but you aren't confident that you could.

Mike Michalowicz: No, no, I think I could, I just don't know if writing a self-help is going to be fulfilling.

AJ Harper: Okay, so the question was what would you write though? What would you, what's the thing that you would be scared to write for whatever reason? Okay, let me ask you this. What would you be scared to write without me?

Mike Michalowicz: Anything.

AJ Harper: No, but I mean, I think you've improved so much. Like I feel like you

Mike Michalowicz: I think I have too.

AJ Harper: I, I told, I mean, we were talking about Polly earlier. I told her like, this is this, like I, I can see so much growth and brings me so much happiness to see that. So what, you know, is there anything you would like to try on your own?

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah, I just, just for the hell of it. And it's not even fulfill, like I was thinking from this angle of fulfillment, like what would make me feel satisfied, but really just for the fun. Maybe it's something about guitar. Uh, I'm so interested in guitar, right now, the learning experience is maybe a how to on how to learn guitar.

AJ Harper: Really a how to on guitar.

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Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. I actually, I think I mentioned it once too, like in a, I said, oh, I just discovered something when I was practicing that they don't teach, and I'm like, maybe I can write about that. And you're like, yeah, yeah. You make a note of it. Make a, you say That's a good blog post or a good, uh, video. I'm like, oh, maybe that, maybe that.

AJ Harper: Hmm. Okay. I would also love to challenge you that I think that you are, I don't, you have a, you're a great lover of history and you're always bringing in historical anecdotes.

Mm. Interesting. Or weirdo factoids. Yeah. And tying it to what we, how we can learn from it today. Mm. But also, I think that, I wonder if there's more for you to say about money and emotions and money and trauma and money and, you know, why we make these choices.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. Yeah. That, that's my feeling. Is it? I I might be money Mike. Like it might have to be more on that Money Mike. Yeah. I. It's, you know what is interesting, we were talking about this separately is, um, I overheard you were doing those sprints this morning. Yeah. And someone was talking about speaking and so forth. And my interpretation of what the person was saying was, um, there is a community of speakers that I don't like, um, and they're getting paid a multiple more than this person was. But they don't want to step into that community 'cause they don't wanna be like them. And my response to that is if there's a community you don't like, you have to insert yourself to affect the change that you envision. And I wonder, I I don't, I'm resistant to this Money Mike.

AJ Harper: I mean, you sound like it's like, um, morning Shock Jock money. Mike,

Mike Michalowicz: money Mike. Yeah. I just, just the money side it, it's like. It, it, it feels a lot of people in that space may be dirty. It's it is, it is a lot. Get rich quick.

AJ Harper: Yeah. But that was you, that was you 17 years ago.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: When you entered the entrepreneurial space.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. No. Right. That was you. That's true. I wanted to make a lot of money. That's a good point. And so now maybe—

AJ Harper: No, no. I mean you were wanting, you didn't wanna be exactly like all the entrepreneurial guys back then.

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

AJ Harper: And so you,

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Mike Michalowicz: oh, I see. You're saying

AJ Harper: You are firmly in that space now. You corrected it.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. Maybe go into this other space.

AJ Harper: What if you do that?

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: And also I think you have so much empathy and compassion for your readers and. I'd love to see that come through with financial support stuff about money.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. Yeah. Maybe that's it. It's interesting. We're gonna, I think there's gonna be a lot of learning that's gonna happen in the next year because this, the money topic is coming up in so many different facets.

Um, and it is a reorientation of what I've done. I, you know, there's also this fear of are, am I abandoning a community I've committed to? I call it the sellout syndrome. So, um, I, I'm sure I told you a story back in college, my roommate Phil Nunnally, um, coolest dude ever. Nerdy. Cool. Like he once we're sitting there and he, I hear giggling in his room, so I knock on the door.

I'm like, dude, what? What's so funny? And this is a pre-internet and stuff. He's got this cone, not cone, he's got a headset on like we're wearing now connected to this big cone, and he has it outside the window. He's like, oh, I just invented this thing. It has like tin tinfoil on it and stuff. He could listen to conversations happening like a mile away. So he, he create this conical type of shaped device and you could orient it and you could listen in to other people talking. I'm like, what the hell, dude? First of all, that's really creepy. Um,

AJ Harper: But also cool, like remember that, uh, eighties movie real genius?

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. This is how, that's how he was. Yeah. Yeah. So I go, I'm in his room and he's like, dude, you gotta hear this band. I'm like, who's a span? He goes, they, this broke, uh, a new song is called Nirvana. And he plays one of the songs. And I'm like, oh, this sucks, man. Like, okay, whatever. Oh no. And um, he's like, no, Nirvana's the best band ever.

And I'm talking to other people like, no one's heard of this band, Nirvana. Then they have this song called Teen Spirit that breaks,

AJ Harper: Smells like Teen Spirit.

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Mike Michalowicz: Smells like Teen Spirit. I listen to it, I'm like, dude, this is the most badass song ever. And like the whole campus lights up. So I go to Phil, I'm like, dude.

Nirvana rocks. He's like, they suck. He goes, they sold out. They aren't true to themselves. They're making gimmicky top 10 music. Screw them. And it, it's so funny. There's this sellout moment. There's the early, the early adopters who fall in love with what you do. And then there's this next community that actually discovers on a much broader basis what you can do. And early adopters say, you've abandoned me.

AJ Harper: What? What does? There's nothing selling out about. You've always been a money guy. You've just been a money guy in an entrepreneurial context.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

AJ Harper: You're not selling, who are you selling out to? ,

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah but did Nirvana really sell out? You know what I'm saying?

AJ Harper: Well, you're asking the wrong person. You could ask my wife.

Mike Michalowicz: Later. Yeah. They didn't sell out. I'm just saying they, she's gonna say no, they didn't sell out. But to, to certain consumers, you become sell out. The second they sense that there's other people being served by you. There's a sense of disloyalty. Um, I, I think that's true.

And there's a really interesting interview around the Savannah Bananas where Jesse Cole says, I knew we were gonna get to a size where people started to hate us. And he says, it's happening now. Some people hate the Bananas 'cause they're too big for their britches.

AJ Harper: It's, it's, yeah, that stuff happens, happens.

Mike Michalowicz: Um, he smartly started new teams to compete with the Bananas that. Uh, he's a great created one called The Party Animals, um, the Firefighters. And he goes, the reason we did this is A, we wanna have a league, but B, if you hate the bananas, you can love someone else. It's so smart.

AJ Harper: You know what, listen. Um, I'm gonna just tell you right now. Yeah. This is not a good reason not to go where you want to go.

Mike Michalowicz: No, totally is. I I'm just, but these are

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AJ Harper: maybe some of the things writers are thinking. I'm afraid of abandoning my readers.

Mike Michalowicz: Exactly.

AJ Harper: It's real. I mean, it is this internal month, it definitely happens. Readers say, oh, why don't you write this exact thing that I want? But you can never fully, you can never fully please everyone. So just, I don't know, man. I feel like this is direction you're going and you and I are taking a two year, we agreed first time ever, two-year writing hiatus. And I hope during that time that you let yourself just tinker and think and follow that because you're not on... you. It has, you have not in the entire time you've been an author had a break like that. Yeah. Where you don't have to make a decision right away.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: We have always had to make a decision and

Mike Michalowicz: Which is a very difficult space for me.

AJ Harper: The last, last time we wrote the, so this book, the Money Habit. We had one or two other books. We, we got one whole other book ready to go.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: And we didn't write it. It took, we think we were six months delayed or something like that.

Mike Michalowicz: Oh, how sell your business book? That one?

AJ Harper: Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: And then maybe we even outlined another one, but I can't even recall. We tinkered with

Mike Michalowicz: maybe

AJ Harper: others. It took, we weren't on the, we were off on our schedule.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

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AJ Harper: Because normally we don't write, normally we writing over the summer and we weren't writing over the summer.

Mike Michalowicz: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

AJ Harper: And it was already sort of like. What are we, what are we doing? Yeah. You know? So I'm hoping that now, because you don't feel like you have to have this locked in because normally, so we're, we just finished, we're gonna talk about this on another episode, but we're about at the time where we, we would've at this point have already planned the retreat.

In fact, we probably would've used this time that you've been here on the island

Mike Michalowicz: To work on the next book.

AJ Harper: To work on the next book. But instead you've been like hanging pictures in my house. I know. We've talking You've been like a workhorse. Yeah. Um. We haven't even talked about another book and we aren't going to. And I just really, really hope that you let yourself see possibilities.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. And I may need that assistance from you too. That discipline of, hold on.

AJ Harper: Just hang on,

Mike Michalowicz: hang on. Um, how are we doing on time? Like, you should see a runner up there. Uh,

AJ Harper: 32.

Mike Michalowicz: 32. Okay. So maybe we should start wrapping.

AJ Harper: We, well, let's wrap up. But I do wanna say, I didn't really say if I really felt like I could write anything. I have always wanted to write a series, like a, um, commercial fiction series and, uh, I'm sure you haven't read Tales of the City Series.

Mike Michalowicz: I've not.

AJ Harper: It's written by Armstead Maupin, and he started writing it in the seventies as a serial in the San Francisco Chronicle.

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And then it became a book called Tales of the City, and then More Tales of the City. And then more and more, more it went, went on to different titles. I'm gonna maybe get this wrong. My wife would know. I think there are nine books now. And, um, it's one, it became, um, a miniseries. It became a musical. It, it's well loved, especially in the L-G-B-T-Q community. Amazing storytelling and um, I've always wanted to do that. I've always wanted to do a series that where people can't wait for the next installment.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. That's super cool.

AJ Harper: I would love to do that. That would thrill me to have that kind of, um, connection with readers.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: Where they're waiting for. What happens to these characters next?

Mike Michalowicz: Do you have any reasons not to do it?

AJ Harper: Well, I'm working on another book. I'm working on my own book right now, book two, which is nonfiction, and I feel strongly that I need, that is calling to me.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: Very, very strongly.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: Maybe after that.

Mike Michalowicz: Are you working with Page Two again?

AJ Harper: They'll, yes. I mean, they'll, they're just, yes, they know about it. They're right, they're waiting for it. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz: Okay. Yeah. And I wonder if that's the end lesson is I think we have to satisfy that calling, like there, there's a reason. There's that persistent sense of I must do this. And I think if we disregard that, there's consequence.

AJ Harper: Yeah. But I, I hope that, um, I hope that this episode inspires people to just move forward anyway. Just move forward anyway.

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Mike Michalowicz: Totally. And I think what we revealed in this episode is, you know, there's, there's muck going in on my head, your head and all of us that, um. Just go and, and do it.

AJ Harper: Can I also just wanna say that I've mentioned this to my students a lot. Steve Pressfield, he keeps a file, an actual analog file of all the different books, the different projects he's gonna work on.

And he gets, gets it to the point where when he's done with one, the very next day, he starts the next one. And the reason he can do it is because he's been tinkering with the other ones enough that he can hit the ground running. On another book the next day. We can't always hit the ground running.

Sometimes we have research to do. Other book developments. So he is taking time to work on those other projects enough so that he can hit the ground running the very next day.

Mike Michalowicz: Interesting.

AJ Harper: Now, you don't have to do that. I'm, I don't do that. But my point is, you can keep developing the projects you do wanna work on.

It doesn't have to be like, um. Well, I'll do that three years from now. You could still, if you get excited about it, just make a little bit of time for it and I'm telling myself this while I'm doing. Yeah, because I don't do that. I don't do that that much, I think, 'cause I'm just busy. This, I think this little two-year break is gonna be good for me too, because maybe I'll be able to develop a little more. It's if I'm working on your book, I'm not working on anything else.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah, yeah. Yeah. That's interesting. I, this is a total strange aside, but maybe relevant. So I was in contact with, uh, Lucinda Halburn.

AJ Harper: Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz: Yesterday.

AJ Harper: Who wrote the book, Get Noticed.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

Yeah. Mm-hmm. Get noticed.

AJ Harper: No, no, no. Get signed.

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Mike Michalowicz: Get signed.

AJ Harper: Get Noticed is the book we should have written but we wrote Get Different instead?

Mike Michalowicz: I know, that's exactly right. Um, well we did write the book. We should have changed the title. We did.

AJ Harper: We Should Have changed the title.

Mike Michalowicz: Talking with Lucinda, uh, via email, and she goes, oh, you're working with Obsidian. I'm like. Hold on. So I have a company, it's a holding company called Obsidian Launch. Well, there is a new author tool called Obsidian MD. I know nothing about it, but when she said this, I looked it up. And what it does is it allows you to collect all your notes when you're talking about Stephen Pressfield and collecting.

And then it uses some algorithms and, and stuff to, um, help you write your book from your collection of just general thoughts. And she's like, oh, she just, she just published an author who used Obsidian MD. And they, um, argued that it was a really powerful tool. So maybe something to check out.

So I guess our final, my final questions for our listeners is what would you write? If you could write anything? And then why aren't you writing that? How, how can you make some space for it? Maybe it's not a full-time commitment, but how can you make some space for it every day?

AJ Harper: Write the thing.

Mike Michalowicz: Write the thing. That's the closing message. Write the thing.. Mm-hmm.

AJ Harper: Mm-hmm.

Mike Michalowicz: Alright. Uh, next episode we're gonna talk about, um. Someone already wrote my book, I, should I do this or not? It's, it's the help Scream. And you get that a lot, right?

AJ Harper: I do. I do.

Mike Michalowicz: I've had people call me. I've had actually two types of calls. One is someone rewrote this book, so why can I do, or how can I do it?

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Or I can't do it. Secondly, um, no one's written my book and I don't want to talk about it because I gotta keep it hidden and confidential.

AJ Harper: Amateur move.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah, it's, it's the two things, and either way it prevents you from writing. It's kind of funny. Um, thanks for listening to this episode. Hopefully the audio is okay.

I actually have an idea to make a little adjustment to it for the next episode. We'll see if it there's anything or if I mucked it up. Um, I want you to visit our website. It's dwtb.com. We have free materials there. Lots of folks are reading, reaching out to you, aj, um, about your retreats and so forth.

You do a retreat here on Madeline Island when I, where I'm sitting right now looking out the window at the loop and. How do people sign up for that? How do they find out?

AJ Harper: They can go to ajharper.com. I will say that I think we have maybe two spots left for October, but otherwise we're sold out for June, July, August. And almost October, but we will be on a, we have a wait list for next year and you definitely, you definitely wanna get on it.

Mike Michalowicz: Well it's funny 'cause you were saying yesterday, you're like, oh it's, it's people from my community that are showing up and I'm like, people from the island are doing this.

AJ Harper: No. My author community and

Mike Michalowicz: Your author community, but. If you're not already in the author community, there's a couple slots, get in the community, you got a chance.

AJ Harper: You don't have to be in it to sign up. It's just that it costs a lot less.

Mike Michalowicz: Oh, it costs less if you're in the community. But I'm saying you, you have a chance because there's people that appreciate you so much right now that they're signing up for everything and um, it could block out people that haven't experienced yet.

AJ Harper: They do get dibs. They do get dibs. Yeah. So before I even open it to anybody else, I give my community dibs on slots. And it's, it's kind of a cool thing to set the goal. If you are kind of, if you aren't on a strict timeline, or even if you know your timeline, you'd say, you know what, let me sign up for that June retreat next year, and I'm gonna get ready for that.

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Mike Michalowicz: We, um, we have people emailing us, now we have, I think like our, our, I lost count now, but another person said they'd come to our live show if we ever do one. Um,

AJ Harper: I think that might be four people. 'cause we lost one.

Mike Michalowicz: Uh, we say that I'm not coming to your live show anymore.

AJ Harper: Yeah, we lost that one person.

Mike Michalowicz: Oh, I don't even remember.

Um, we're down one. Up one. So there's a break down. Um, and also just be clear. There's people saying, I'd love to do, suggest a guest for your show, or, I'd love to be in the guest show. We, we've decided, um, early on that we're not gonna have guests except for one person, Steve Pressfield, um, should he want to join us.

And that'll be impetus for me at least for us to do a live show. Um. Go to dw.tb.podcast.com. Please do sign up. We'd love for you to rate and review our show. We hope you enjoy this episode. Just a little different perspective and, uh, make sure you join us for next week. 'cause what if someone already wrote your book?

There's an opportunity there. You'll discover what it is as a reminder. In the meantime, don't write that book. Write the greatest book you can.