

don't write *that* book!

Episode 95:

“Life of a Book”

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, so today we're gonna talk about understanding the life of a book. AJ, as we were prepping for this just a second ago, an email came in from a guy named Jim Manning and Jim said, Mike you randomly popped in my head. I wanted to throw you some love, so to speak. I just rewatched, It's a Wonderful Life, the one you sent me. So quick backstory I connected this guy. He owns a business called Three Doors.

What they found is housing development helping with the need, the population in need. Has a success rate of like 3% of getting people in homes. So he started this company for profit and they have like a 60% of getting people in need of homes into homes. It's called Three Doors. It's amazing.

And as I used, tell me the story. I'm like, dude, you're you. Like George Bailey from from, It's a Wonderful Life. He's like, he goes. Who's that? I'm like,

AJ Harper: Oh, come on.

Mike Michalowicz: That's what I said. I said, oh, come on. He's like, I've never seen it. I said, okay.

AJ Harper: Oh man.

Mike Michalowicz: What's your mailing address? So I, I bought him the DVD, I bought him a DVD player because I didn't think he had a DVD.

AJ Harper: Come on. You did?

Mike Michalowicz: Did popcorn, and all those things. And I mailed it. I said, you and your entire business, like everyone in your office needs to watch this. 'Cause you're George Bailey. And so they watched it and then he said, he just rewatched. It's a wonderful life. So he is sending me some love. What's interesting about that movie, it's a Wonderful Life, is it was a flop outta the gates.

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It, that show did not work, and at a certain point it did, and the reason it did, because I looked into the backstory, is it entered a public domain where. A broadcaster, whatever the channel is, didn't need to pay a royalty on it anymore. So they, whoever it was, these channels start broadcasting it over and over again.

And then it starts becoming this Christmas tradition. By golly, it's an amazing movie. It's a shame that that movie wasn't hit outta the gate 'cause it's so good. But that's not just true for movies, it's, it's true for books too, apparently.

AJ Harper: Yeah, so we're talking about that.

Mike Michalowicz: We're talking about that today. So welcome to, don't write that book. You gotta write an extraordinary book. I'm joined in studio remotely. Hopefully our audio is pretty darn good. It feels like it is.

AJ Harper: I feel excited.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah, me too. I'm joined in studio

AJ Harper: I feel like the whole world has opened up to me.

Mike Michalowicz: My gosh. How many shows we can record now without you having the hall all the way down to Boonton for me?

AJ Harper: I'm, I'm gonna come down in July when I'm back in New York and I, I do like, my little rituals.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. And there's something special about it. And you head over to the coffee shop downstairs. Cat flight coffee. I, I, now that I've been to Madeline Island, I, I wanna repeat that again and again.

The ferry ride over. There's this feeling of transformation. So I, I want us to do more face to face, but this is offering such flexibility that we can stay on top of these episodes. Right?

AJ Harper: Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz: So one thing we start off with is a is a acknowledgement of each other. I wanna acknowledge what you're doing for your health. Oh. It is just extraordinary. And the more you have shared about your journey. I understand more and more the struggles that you faced and how you have been persistent in finding the answer that you needed. And it, it looks like you have found it. I'm just so darn freaking proud of you.

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So proud.

AJ Harper: Oh, thank you. I'm not ashamed to say thank you. You're protecting what is going on with me by being so respectful, which, you know, I'll just throw that in there, that you're always res, you don't, you don't spread my news or anybody's news around. And you're very respectful of what's going on with people and what's can be shared and not shared.

So I always feel safe telling you things.

Mike Michalowicz: Oh, thank you.

AJ Harper: But I've been on a weight loss journey my whole life probably since age eight. And that means in the eighties as well, which is about the worst time that a person could be going through that. And you know, what happens is you, you think that it's, you're just, you're just doing something wrong.

Or you don't have the wrong thing even when you can lose and then you gain again. And it took trying really hard for about 14 months and only losing eight pounds. And that comes with making all these lifestyle changes, working with a trainer, like really did everything I could. And then my doctor saying, you only lost eight pounds and you need to start accepting that you have a medical situation here.

And so I reluctantly started on a GLP-1. Zepbound, which I'm not gonna be. I'm told everybody I will tell anybody about this. And I didn't even wanna do it. It was, I was scared. I, I cried. I held it off because the messaging is, you should be able to do this. Well obviously I have tried my ass off for decades, you know?

And it really isn't good for your mental health. 'cause you start to think there's something just fundamentally just wrong with you. And the truth is, there's just some medical stuff you need to deal with and there's a really helpful drug out there, at least for me. Like it's not for everybody, but it's like a miracle for me.

So it, just so we're clear, it helps me keep my lifestyle changes and implement them. It's not a substitute for it. And so now I've like, I think I'm up to like 38 pounds lost now, Mike.

Mike Michalowicz: Oh, wow.

AJ Harper: I know. And I've got a long way to go, but it's okay.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: I feel hope again.

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Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: So thanks and I'm, I am happy to share that. I just want, you know,

Mike Michalowicz: I'm proud of you. I'm proud of you sharing that. I was gonna help so many more people.

AJ Harper: Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz: The interesting parallel here is similar to the topic we're talking about today is what? It isn't working may just not be working in a subtle shift or something happens, a catalyst moment that changed everything.

So I, I talked about it in a movie but you can talk about it in books. Tell me about the life of book and, and maybe you can give an anecdote or an example here of, of,

AJ Harper: Well, there's, let's start with Moby Dick. So people would argue it is a classic, it might not be your cup of tea. But it's a classic.

It has sold millions and millions of copies. I tried to find the exact number or a close to number, but I didn't get it. It was written in 1851 by Herman Melville, and it sold 3,215 copies in the United States and fewer than 600 copies in the UK. And when he died in 1891, it was outta print because it was basically a failure.

So. They published it again in the 19 hundreds and that was the right time to publish it. Sorry. Sorry, Herman. You were already gone and it became, it's now a classic. We don't want you to wait until you're dead for your book to be a success, of course. But we are hoping to inspire you today with thinking about the life of your book in a different way.

Because most people in my experience are thinking about it in a transactional way. I wanna reach this destination of being a published author or getting this book done because my clients need it, or because I needed to raise my speaking fees. Or I just wanna get this done and then I can move on. And they might think about promoting the book, but it's usually not beyond a year or two, you know?

Then it's this thing that they did in the past. And that's detrimental to your book's success because it has a longer life than you think.

Mike Michalowicz: It's interesting you see this play out over and over, not just in books. You know, we talk about movies, but in products. I remember the Apple Newton. It was a

AJ Harper: what? What was it?

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Mike Michalowicz: The apple, Newton. N-E-W-T-O-N. And the Newton. Or Newton. 'cause I say Boin, not Boonton was the first iPad. Effectively. Yeah. You gotta Google this thing. And it was a flop. I don't remember this at all. Oh, it was way ahead of its time. Remember the Palm Pilot? It was the first like. iPhone or handheld phone, and it was moderately successful, but it was just too clunky.

Remember the Google glasses or whoever the first one came out with glasses and how creepy they were, but now they're starting to roll out everywhere. It's just interesting just because you brought it out. Sometimes the market just wasn't ready for it. And I'm not saying in books, that's always the case, but it seems like maybe in the case of Herman Melville, that was the situation.

AJ Harper: Yeah. I mean, there's a lot of reasons. It could be distribution, it could be just not the right time. It could be you need a new audience. So that I'm gonna give you, I'm gonna tell you, so I made a list of some, and there's a, there's a massive, it's not comprehensive, but I have not shared this, this with you, so it's not in the outline.

I wanna just see what you think about... okay. So here's a flop. The Great Gatsby.

Mike Michalowicz: No way.

AJ Harper: Yes, it flopped. It was published in 1925 written by f Scott Fitzgerald. And it was not only was it a f flop, it only, so it only sold around 20,000 copies, which actually is really good. So y'all, if you sold 20,000 copies of your book, you're doing great.

But Context. F Scott Fitzgerald had written This Side of Paradise, which was a huge hit. So in con, in context. It was considered a flop by his publisher, and it was a commercial flop, but it was also panned by the critics. They, they hated it. They absolutely hated it. So what happened was it got this new audience in World War II, so again, published in 1925 in World War II, the US military distributed it to soldiers and that led to this huge resurgence and it became a classic and it has sold, let's see.

I don't remember what the, how many millions now, now I'm gonna, I thought I had it. Millions and millions. I mean, we've all had to read it in school, y'all. Yeah. So if everybody has to read it in school, it's millions and millions. And for context, that 20,000, the publisher was expecting 75,000.

Mike Michalowicz: Wow.

AJ Harper: So when the, yeah. Yeah. So that, here's another one. A more modern take, game of Thrones.

Mike Michalowicz: What? That was a flop?

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AJ Harper: Initially, the first book is called A Song of Ice and Fire, and this is an actual quote from George RR Martin, the author. He said reviews were generally good, but sales were okay. Nothing spectacular, no bestseller lists.

And so he says he went on a book tour and he said, at one stop. Not only was attendance zero, but I actually drove four patrons out of the bookshop, allowing me to set my time, all time bad signing record at minus four. So he was driving people away that, that book went on to sell 90 million copies.

Mike Michalowicz: I love that. My all time signing record of minus four.

AJ Harper: Yeah. Here's another one. This series has sold over 130 million copies. Chicken Soup for the Soul.

Mike Michalowicz: What for? I had no idea, has sold 130 million. Wow.

AJ Harper: Reject, rejected over 100 times by publishers.

Mike Michalowicz: Really?

AJ Harper: Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz: And that's a, what they, they call it anthology. What? What is it when you assemble?

AJ Harper: They're technically collections because an anthology means it's a collection of already published work.

Mike Michalowicz: I see.

AJ Harper: A collection is, you know, a new work, but people usually misuse the term. Those are just, but I don't really wanna share one, so, have you read The Alchemist?

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. Oh yeah, I've read The Alchemist. Yeah.

AJ Harper: It's one of my favorite books. Okay, and I'm gonna mispronounce the last name by Paolo Cuelolo. Colo. Do you know how to pronounce his last name?

Mike Michalowicz: No, I don't. I have to look it up. No, I don't.

AJ Harper: Okay, so I looked this up. So it was published in Brazil initially, and they had a print run of 900 copies. Okay. That was the initial print run, 900 copies, and that was in 1988.

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And it didn't get any traction. But then what he did was start to push these other translations, and so then there was a French translation and that caught fire. And then in 1993, there was an English translation. And he went around actively promoting it and he traveled and he tried to engage with readers, but he also really pushed these authentic translations.

That, that was a whole thing that was really, really, he called it, you know, strategic translation with getting this sort of really local flavor. So probably not an in modern times would not be an AI generated translation. And so, *The Alchemist* he, it became an internationally renowned bestseller.

And then, let me see. I wrote down how many it went on to sell over 150 million copies worldwide.

Mike Michalowicz: Wow.

AJ Harper: It has been translated into 88 languages, and he's in the Guinness World Book World Record for the most translated book by any living author. It was on the New York Times bestseller list for more than 315 weeks.

Mike Michalowicz: Wow. Wow.

AJ Harper: So the lesson with his is he would, he was strategic about, okay, I'm gonna get these translations and I'm gonna work hard to make sure these translations really speak to that. Culture and community and I'm gonna go travel and promote it with, for, promote those translations. And so he did had a different kind of strategy, versus *Gatsby*, who, that was about a new audience.

They sent it out to all these soldiers and they got a resurgence of a new audience.

Mike Michalowicz: Or Melville strategy, which was, I'm just gonna die.

AJ Harper: I know, but there's others. Let's see, others that were flops. *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* *Catcher in the Rye*, *Wuthering Heights*. *Ulysses*. *Lord of the Flies*. *Dune*, *Handmaid's Tale*.

Mike Michalowicz: *Handmaid's Tale*. Okay. That's a modern one. You know what, what I'm hearing though, the common thread of the ones where you gave some of the anecdotal information around it, is they, they found their audience by hook or crook or some divine intervention. They found their audience and that's when it hit. It reminds me of bands at least back when, when FM dominated music consumption as opposed to MP3 or, or now it's, you know, streaming was, these bands would try to get in into radio stations and say, please play our music. Just please play it. And that's how they would break if they got enough. Listens that the, the tune became a hook, and now it's like you become addicted to it.

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Songs get better every time you listen to them because your, your mind is predicting what's coming. So there's these dopamine surges and so forth. The modern version like Justin I was gonna say Justin Timberlake, who, who's who's the young guy? Is it Justin?

AJ Harper: He's not young, is it Bieber?

Mike Michalowicz: Bieber. Yeah. Justin Bieber used, can't believe—

AJ Harper: Used to be young.

Mike Michalowicz: —I forgot Justin Bieber. Which I just heard a backstory, which sounds horrible. Which of, of what he went through his experience with. Someone that's going through trial right now, but Justin Bieber got all this play, I think on YouTube and with enough quantity he took off, but I think.

One of the lessons I, I, I want to ask you about is, do you have to write a book? If it's not gonna pan out now, you want it to pan out now, but if it doesn't, you have to write an evergreen book. I assume something that's perennial and not just for the moment.

AJ Harper: Yeah, you, well, you need to write a must read, meaning you always wanna write, I'm always telling people write it like you want it to be a classic. Don't write it like you are just gonna get it out and or this is just your first book and you'll do better the next time. Write it like it's going to be a classic. With that intention. Because none of those stories I just told you would've worked as well or maybe at all if the books weren't great.

The vast, there are books languishing in free bins all over the world that are magnificent, that are just as good as these books I just shared. But we're never gonna hear about them for other reasons. But we definitely wouldn't hear about them if they weren't good. So first thing is you've gotta write the classic. so the opportunity is there, that when people do discover it. It's so good they have to tell everyone about it. 'cause that's, that's how that happens. But also, yes, evergreen as, as evergreen as you can make it, you know? And there are a lot of strategies for that in editing to make sure that it doesn't feel like it's just a moment in time.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. It's funny, like, a lot of people wrote in their books like, oh, I did a Google, or I did a Google search.

AJ Harper: Mm-hmm.

Mike Michalowicz: That's becoming less relevant now with chatGPT and AI, like within five, 10 years people may not be doing Google searches maybe sooner and

AJ Harper: Well, I mean, it's a, it's also, they don't always mean Google, like it's a verb. People are using it. Google it means look it up.

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Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. But, but we may lose that verb, of that word. Like, I, I think the word, you know the phrase, I'm doing an internet search. It gives you a longer life. I, I've also found that these books. One of my favorite books, because it just has been so transformative in the self-help space for me, is *How to Stop Worrying and Start Living*, by Dale Carnegie.

That was written back in the early 19 hundreds and you read it today. It's like, oh, yeah, yeah. This is, it's, it's current and some of the words are old school words and some of the stuff like, you know. I was flipping through the newspapers like me, were you? But it's really relevant. I just finished reading a book and I'm gonna meet with the author.

His name is John Strelecky. He wrote *The Cafe on the Edge of the World*. Wrote in 2020. Yeah. I just finished reading that about a month ago, and I read this book. I'm like, this book could have been written 200 years ago or 200 years from now.

AJ Harper: Hmm.

Mike Michalowicz: I'm like, this book, no wonder it is wildly successful.

He's, he's sold well over 5 million, maybe 6 million copies now, and it is just chugging along because I, I'm gonna interview him around this, is he had this mindset of I gotta write something that's relevant into perpetuity. At least that's my perception.

AJ Harper: It's definitely a factor. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz: What are the mistakes that authors make when it comes to the life of a book?

AJ Harper: So they, you know, they send, tend to think about their book as something they did before. Something they did in the past like that was, you know, they moved on from it and for, for various reasons. A lot of times they just get busy. Maybe they're moving on to the next book, so they're not giving. The other book as much attention or it didn't go as well.

So they're just thinking of it as something they did in the past. And that can, is easy for you, easy for that to happen when you're transactional about authorship to begin with, where you're just thinking about as something that you have to check off. Hmm. Or that you need in order for you to get paid more, booked more.

You just need it for lead gen. All those things that, that way of thinking. That's, you know, that when we say don't write that book, that's what we mean. Don't write that book. That's not gonna extend the test of time. Don't write the book. That's transactional. Don't do that. Those books are less likely, in fact, very unlikely to hit it.

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You know? So if they start thinking I did that, it's over. Then you're not in the right mindset to be thinking strategically like, you know what? I'm gonna go for translations and I'm gonna work those translations. I'm not just gonna get the translations. The author of *The Alchemist*, I'm actually going to make sure they're perfect.

That they speak to that audience. Exactly. And then I'm gonna promote the heck out of those translations. That's a strategy man, you know?

Mike Michalowicz: Oh, totally is. It totally is.

AJ Harper: But if you thought, oh, I wrote it, I tried. It's in the past, you would never have thought of the strategy. So that's one. And then we just talked about the other one.

If we start thinking about something that was only good for one moment in time. Mm-hmm. So we tell ourselves that's an old book, that's an outdated book. You shouldn't ever be thinking that because a mindset shifts, universal themes, speaking to the author, connect, or reader connecting with readers.

That should stand the test of time. And if your book isn't evergreen and you feel like you made it outdated, then that's gonna be a problem. Another one is people tend to have very weird expectations about book sales. At the launch. First six months. First year, yeah. And then they, they tend to think, oh, that didn't go the way I thought it was gonna go.

So it must not be good enough. Must have not be worth promoting. Well, I tried at least some people read it. And this is kind of, this is kind of the, at least I'm proud of it. I'm, I'm proud of what I did. It's okay that it didn't reach that All this stuff is things people have told me. And that attitude is not gonna get you to have some sort of breakout a few years down the road because you're gonna have given up on it.

And then also, if it's something you regret, which unfortunately I hear sometimes too, they didn't. They didn't take the time to edit it. They didn't work on their voice. They didn't, they rushed through the process. So they wrote, they didn't write, they did write that book. They wrote the one that, you know,

Mike Michalowicz: Don't write that book.

AJ Harper: And

Mike Michalowicz: they did.

AJ Harper: They just want, they just wanna get it done. And they did. They cut corners even if they didn't know they were cutting corners. And then now they have regret. You are not gonna try and make that book live on. You just aren't, if I'm telling you, if you regret your

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book, that's a different story because it's really hard to push forward with a book that you regret because you think you could have done better.

Mike Michalowicz: We really do have an obligation to be of service to our books once we write them in. My little phrase is, you gotta put 110% of your heart into writing the book, and then you have to put 110% of your heart into marketing the book. And I had an author recently reach out and said, I didn't take that. To heart myself and they, they said, I did everything to write the book and it didn't sell itself.

And I'm like, yeah, you, you have to honor it. One of the indicators I've experienced, AJ, that I'm not marketing the book, a book well enough, is when someone contacts me and says, oh, I read your book. 'cause my head, I'm like, well, which one? But to them, I only have one book out there, whichever one they read, which means I haven't been cross-pollinating effectively and I gotta turn up my game.

So. Tell me what triggers the tipping point, or when do you know you're at the tipping point that now the book's getting momentum, or how do you bring yourself to it if you haven't been there?

AJ Harper: Well, the tipping point, that's easy. You're gonna know because you have book sales and people talking about it.

But I mean, I, I just I think people need to realize that even a must-read book takes time for readers to find it. You get that there's this period of time where your book has been out, and then you, you are really urgent for the sales to just ch, you know, keep rolling in. But you have to give people time to read it.

You have to give people time to read it, process it. It takes people sometimes time to read books because we're also busy. And then it's gonna start, they'll start telling people about it. You can't give up on it in that period. We've said that many, many times. But maybe you're gonna need exposure to a new audience.

Maybe you're gonna have to meet the moment. Like, the Handmaid's Tale, one of the reasons that it became such a huge, huge hit is because there was a TV series and also a lot of political strife.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: That put this in the forefront where people were reading and talking about it more than ever. So that book met the moment and you don't know when your book is, what, when is the moment you don't know.

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And I've seen authors who had books that could meet the moment, but then they didn't capitalize on it. You know, maybe you need to push, push the trans. I'm sorry, you were about to get going say something. Oh no. I was about, say

Mike Michalowicz: hands made tale was it felt prophetic. And may maybe in fact it was. But right place, right time.

I just wanted to touch a little bit more on the new audience with the Toilet Paper Entrepreneur. My very first book that we worked on together I thought the target was graduating college students. The audience shift I made was to the female audience. And they kind of revealed themselves, meaning I had calls from moms who had read books that their son had brought home because I was speaking mostly to a male college student audience who felt obligated to buy the book, but then didn't read it and left it at home and mom read it and said, oh, this book serves me Well, that's when the Toilet Paper Entrepreneur took off.

It's sold. Well now over a hundred thousand copies. This is another book I wanna show you. Look at this. This is now the second release in Spanish.

He iCal... oh God, I probably mispronounced that, but that's the toilet paper entrepreneur

AJ Harper: is that toilet paper that he's like holding up. He like, he's waving, like he's doing like a, he's a flag.

Mike Michalowicz: He's very proud.

AJ Harper: It's not a flag. It looks like he's doing like, it's like a ribbon dancer.

Mike Michalowicz: Oh, that's, he's, it's actually right. He's woo. He does like ribbon dance.

AJ Harper: It's not a flag. That is,

Mike Michalowicz: We're gonna get funky. With toilet paper. This is the new released edition that just came out about two months ago, rereleased in Spanish because it is taken off in the Spanish market. So to your point that your audience may not be the audience you expected, we have to have the courage to try new audiences.

And maybe you wrote something for someone you didn't know, and it could be a different language, it could be just a different type of community. But we gotta look for that and, and for me at least, it was getting up and getting out there. So when I found that there was some women, female entrepreneurs resonating with this book, moms in particular, and I.

Moms who had college age kids, so these were moms typically in their late forties to mid sixties. I was like, these are people I gotta speak to. And I, I got on the road and started

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speaking at those events and sure enough, that's where the book started getting traction. I think that is actually what made my career as an author, I was floundering prior to that.

AJ Harper: Yeah. Another option is you could find another way to a way to adapt your content. Like George R.R. Martin. His books became a massive hit when HBO, I think it was HBO, right? Did the Game of Thrones.

Mike Michalowicz: Oh, Game of Thrones. Actually, I don't know. I actually not watch movies. I've not read those books, so... Sure.

AJ Harper: I cannot watch that kind of thing. I just can't have the violence. It looks amazing. But that's the story for many, many books because there's some sort of film or TV adaptation. But when you think of, okay, well, oh, that's all good for them. Okay, there's other types of adaptations and applications.

Maybe it's a workshop that comes out of it. Maybe it's a big event that's related to it. Maybe you create a serial podcast and that catches fire. Maybe it's like Mike has businesses built around his book, so that helps push things forward. When you think about adaptation or application, it's not just waiting for somebody to discover it so that it becomes a TV or a movie or a video game or whatever.

You can go out and create your own adaptation or application so that it brings new life to it. That's another thing you could be doing, but the main thing is that you've got to be thinking about. Your book as your greatest asset, and it doesn't depreciate like you, you think it does. You are in this attitude of.

Depreciation. Right? But it doesn't depreciate.

Mike Michalowicz: Why don't you walk me through the, the arc, if you will, of a book the, the entire life.

AJ Harper: So, well, there's book development and then you write, so book development, and we talk about that all the time here. We just did an episode on one component of it, which is core message.

So it's making sure you're really clear on your book fundamentals and that you have a transformational outline and, and so forth. There's a whole book development process. Then you write. Then there's the phase where you're editing the book, probably also trying to get a deal and then kicking up your marketing all at the same time.

Then we have, when the book is published and it's launched, and now what we're talking about is well then there's the quiet, right? Yeah. Yeah. When people are reading the book and

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you don't hear anything. Yeah. But the thing we're talking about here in the life of the book of the last stage, and people really need to understand this is years.

This is years and years, and the life of a book can go on for decades and decades. But what are you willing to commit to? I want everyone to at least do a 10-year commitment. And in that time, continue to find strategies to find new audiences. That is, that's the life of your book is way beyond what you think.

And when you see the life of your book, it's not just years. What is the, the life of your book in terms of unexpected audiences? What is the life of your book in terms of unexpected uses? Yeah, and when you start thinking like that now you are increasing the chances that it will take off. And maybe it's not gonna be year one, maybe it's gonna be year three, year seven.

Mike Michalowicz: Just last yesterday for maybe four hours I worked on promoting the Pumpkin Plan, and that book is, I think, 10 years old or maybe more.

AJ Harper: No, it's, no. Oh, it's older than

Mike Michalowicz: Profit First?

AJ Harper: Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz: Oh my God. So maybe 15 Is 14, 15 years old? Is it?

AJ Harper: 2010 maybe.

Mike Michalowicz: Yep. Maybe. But I just did hours and hours of social media content, these little clips, and we're going through all of it.

I, I have a keynote coming up on All In and then went on, Get Different back-to-back, which is tough to prepare for. 'cause those are topics I don't talk about as often as I do Profit First, but you just cannot give up on your book.

AJ Harper: I gotta tell you something about that.

Mike Michalowicz: What.

AJ Harper: So I was at an event and I ran into an author who oh shoot, I can't see if you're watching the video.

Mike Michalowicz: She's referred to her catalog books on the wall. I,

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AJ Harper: I was, well, Laura Stone, who is on my team and she's the, a magician, she came into my office and she szushed up the shelves and, and she does a brilliant job. I just don't know quite where all the books are now. Hmm. But anyway, there's this author and she, she said, you know, Pumpkin Plan is my favorite of the books that you wrote with Mike.

I said, thank you so much. I love that one so much. And the reason I love that one so much is 'cause it's the first time that you and I started from scratch.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. Truly collaborative.

AJ Harper: Mm-hmm.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah.

AJ Harper: And the beginning really of the partnership was that book.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah, it totally was. Yeah.

AJ Harper: So I'm partial to it. But anyway, she said that she studied it for write, to write her book.

Mike Michalowicz: Oh, I love it. Yeah. I'm very proud of that.

AJ Harper: Yeah, so she studied how that book was written and constructed to write her book and you know, that was a huge compliment. I just had to throw that in there 'cause I remembered when you just said that.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. We're moving, at least the US editions of books published a penguin alone, about 2000 books a week. And it's actually down from where I want it to be. But what's interesting is looking back. Of our history, just, these are just the Penguin published books now. There's also self-pub books. There's now the hybrid book coming out, hybrid publishing, just watching the histories.

It's interesting, the, the climb that's happened over time and it's just like, like income in a business. It goes up and then there's a dip down. It goes up again, so forth. But if you stick with it relentlessly and you keep on trying to find your communities, the, the life of your book. Can sustain every one of the books we've written together will sell today at least one copy of our book, of every title we'll sell today based upon the averages.

Except for Surge. But now with Surge in Spanish, maybe that'll come back.

AJ Harper: Never know.

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Mike Michalowicz: You never know.

AJ Harper: We have to have more faith. We can't keep putting it in the corner. I know. No,

Mike Michalowicz: no. I'm gonna stop bashing it because I'm actually very proud of that book. But it points to the fact is you, you just gotta keep working it and try to find the communities.

And sometimes those serendipity moments are gonna happen. I, I think someone's gonna be caught where get different or they're gonna attribute their success to it and the book will explode again. Andrew Wilkinson, who wrote I just bought his book, I haven't read it yet, from Barista to Billionaire.

He's a billionaire out of Victoria Canada, and I connected with him now. Referenced how he uses Profit First with his investments. He owned a com. He owned a company called tiny.com, I think it is. And he was sharing on a podcast that he uses Profit First with the businesses he's invested in. It changed his business forever, and the host and him start talking about Profit First and Blink.

The book talks takes off. Yeah. Jesse Cole was on the air talking about, I don't know if it was the Pumpkin Plan. It may even get different actually. And Bink, there's a pop, but you just, you gotta keep it. Gotta stay out there and keep it circulating.

AJ Harper: Mm-hmm.

Mike Michalowicz: Any final thoughts before we start wrapping up? I got one weird update for you too.

AJ Harper: Okay. I do, one thing I forgot to just say is that also your new books might create a new resurgence in your back catalog. So. You never know. Yeah. Sometimes people are reading one book and then all of a sudden the back catalog is the one that takes off. So that has happened all the time on book talk right now with fiction books, backlist, backlist novels that are coming up.

Mike Michalowicz: Like what?

AJ Harper: That nobody that has been selling in years and all of a sudden it's a huge resurgence. So, you know.

Mike Michalowicz: Reference your, your historical books in your current book too? Yeah.

AJ Harper: Yes. Not just in the listing of All Soul Buy. Yeah. So buy I put

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Mike Michalowicz: it inside the book. If it's appropriate,

AJ Harper: Yeah. Yes. Absolutely. If it fits. But anyway, don't give up on it under think of the life of your book in a different way. Reframe your thinking around it.

Mike Michalowicz: So, I just gotta tell you a bizarre update before we wrap up. Today we're recording this on July 3rd, so this won't broadcast for a little bit. But why that's relevant is on July 2nd, I get a text from my daughter.

I'll see if I can find it real quickly here. And there's a picture of a pig and I'm like, what is going on here? So there's the picture. Can you see? It's a black pig? Yeah. She was walking out of her apartment. Her house. She owns a house and she's walking outta her house and in her yard, that's, that's her backyard. There are three pigs walking around.

AJ Harper: Oh my gosh.

Mike Michalowicz: So she screams for her boyfriend and he comes running out. Marco and the two of 'em spend with the, now she lives in Chattanooga, with her neighbors. Now they start wrangling these pigs in, they are domesticated pigs. And they get 'em into this fencing area that Adeela has.

And they, my, my daughter now goes on to hunt like, whose pigs are these? Well, she calls animal control, whatever. And they're like, great, but we're too busy, basically. So hold on. So then she's like, well, what am I gonna do? I gotta feed these pigs. She goes down to the tractor. Trader or whatever the place is called.

And she's like, I have a weird circumstance. I have, I found three pigs and I wanna make sure that they're cared for and give 'em some food and stuff until I find the owners. And the guy at the tractor store goes, you found three pigs? She goes, yeah. He goes, are they black? And she goes,

AJ Harper: Oh no.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. She goes, yeah. He's like, we've been hunting for these pigs for over four months. Four months. So it ends up while they're domesticated pigs. They're a, a breed that can live in the wild too. And they escaped.

AJ Harper: They're on a field trip.

Mike Michalowicz: Went on a field trip and they're, my daughter lives on this thing called Signal Mountain. It's a huge mountain out in the Chattanooga area. And they've been working their way down this mountain on their own. And this person, the tractor store knew exactly

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the person who's on the hunt to find these pigs, calls a woman, puts her in touch with a gal. They're both crying. We found the pigs and they're okay.

And she's like, I've been looking four months. I've been trying to trap them and, and there's been sightings. The news shows up at my daughter's house yesterday.

AJ Harper: What?

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. So channel three on the spot news shows up at my daughter and they're interviewing the whole wrangling. They have security footage. My daughter had her, she had her breakthrough moment, and I wish she had a book about. Pigs pig, there's a piggy bank story.

AJ Harper: But oh my gosh, come on.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. But there you go. She's,

AJ Harper: That's too funny.

Mike Michalowicz: She's all over the news on channel three in Chattanooga for what she did, so. That's our producer of our show,

AJ Harper: Pig Wrangler. Pig Wrangler. You need to get her a t-shirt or a hat or something.

Mike Michalowicz: Oh, that's a good idea. I'm gonna write that down.

AJ Harper: You should.

Mike Michalowicz: Yeah. Pig Wrangler.

AJ Harper: Official Pig Wrangler.

Mike Michalowicz: Official Pig Wrangler. All right my friend. We are done for today. Hey, thanks for listening into our show. You better go to ajharper.com. We talk about every episode, at least I try to talk about every episode because AJ has more resources, more offerings, more skills to, to help you elevate your author journey than anyone on this planet. I promise you I've been,

AJ Harper: can I add one thing?

Mike Michalowicz: Beneficiary of it? Yeah.

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AJ Harper: Sorry to interrupt. I have so much free stuff on YouTube.

Mike Michalowicz: Oh yeah. On YouTube too? Yeah. How do they find the YouTube stuff?

AJ Harper: It's just it's just Anjanette Harper or AJ Harper. I should, I'm Sade is probably losing it, listening to this who handles my marketing that I am not telling you the exact handle. It's gonna be in the show notes, but if you just put AJ Harper in books into YouTube, it'll come up. But I, I've done so much free stuff on there,

Mike Michalowicz: So find that stuff. Now that we're recording this one video, we'll probably get that up there too. Our website for this podcast is DW tb. Don't write that book podcast.com. If, if there's a starting point to getting materials, we'd love for you to sign up there. Plus we'll give you some specialists behind the scenes stuff from our.

Podcast episodes. AJ has materials there for you. I got some stuff for you there too. And if you want to work with AJ personally, you got your opportunity, go to ajharbor.com. If you are an entrepreneurial author, we are seeking really good authors with really good, profound ideas. That one, make a really big difference.

Email us at hello@dwtbpodcast.com. Just put, simplify this, the name over imprint. In there. Alright, aj, I think we're done for today. I appreciate you as always, and you as a guest, remember this. Please, please don't write that book. Write the greatest book you can and then market it forever because who knows when it'll take off if it doesn't take off on day one.

Maybe it'll take off on day two.