

# don't write *that* book!

## Episode 97:

### “Visibility: Showing Up for your 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. Since you've lived in your town, Ny-- of Nyack.

**AJ Harper:** Mm-hmm.

**Mike Michalowicz:** How many movies have been filmed there, would you think?

**AJ Harper:** A lot. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Really?

**AJ Harper:** Yeah, there's us, there's very often, um, you know, the trucks, huh? If you live in New York or New Jersey, you know the trucks.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Uh, I, we don't, and not in Boonton until recently, about two years ago, something happened, and I heard through the grapevine there was, there's someone in government that's encouraging this. We've had four movies filmed in our town. Like one, a couple houses down from me, there's a movie called Jewels, and they have, um, this crashed UFO and I'm driving to work one day. I'm like, Ugh, what is that? I'm like, I'm sitting, they're UFOs are real. I'm calling all my friends.

**AJ Harper:** Mm-hmm.

**Mike Michalowicz:** And they're filming a movie. And um, it, when it was broadcast or created or whatever, I saw Jewels. And they call it Putin, Pennsylvania. They couldn't call it Putin, New Jersey. They had to call it Putin, Pennsylvania.

**AJ Harper:** You mean the town? The fictional town.

**Mike Michalowicz:** The town, yeah. I guess to be fictional, you have to do that.

**AJ Harper:** I don't know. I don't know. That's silly.

**Mike Michalowicz:** It was silly. Yeah.

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**AJ Harper:** Yeah. We've had a lot of movies filmed in our area. We're right on the Hudson River. We have some beautiful, you know, idyllic looking architecture. Then we have some weird stuff that people like. We have one of those old school gas stations. That looks like it's from, you know, 1948. So that gets filmed a lot. Um, I think we talked about this before on the pod actually.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Oh, did we?

**AJ Harper:** Yeah. Because I think I remember telling you that there's a, a location scout. Who lives in Nyack and I think, you know.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Oh, so there we have a old, old gas station, 1920s, 1930s. That's just been, uh, it's still utilized as a space, but it's run down. It's gross. They were filming Friday the 13th. One of the prequels.

**AJ Harper:** Mm-hmm.

**Mike Michalowicz:** There, uh, yesterday, a few days ago. Well, the day before they're filming it. I'm driving by, I'm like. What they do at this gas station, they're like updating it, but they're making it worse at the same time. And my wife's like, they're filming.

Oh, I'm joined in Studio with AJ Harper, who is going on two hours of sleep. Just about. I know. I can't believe you're here. Thank you for being here. And then I show up late. We started recording. We were supposed to start recording at 6:00 AM this morning. It's now six 30. You're texting me. I'm, I have my guitar in hand.

That's part of my morning ritual and I'm like. What, what? I'm like, oh, I'm under my instant thought is like, oh, maybe you can't make it today. So I'm like, okay, well how are we gonna forget these episodes? And then you're like, where are you? I'm like, where am I? Where are you? You're like, I'm at the studio. Start at six.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz:** When are you heading back to Madeleine Island?

**AJ Harper:** Um, maybe this weekend. Okay. We're sort of a little bit up in the air.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Okay.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah.

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**Mike Michalowicz:** Well, AJ's back here, uh, for a short period of time. So we're grabbing some episodes. You know, what I admire about you is, uh. It, you can get a lot done with no sleep. Because I've seen it. You've written books that are extraordinary. No sleep, you've done.

**AJ Harper:** I don't think this is a good thing.

**Mike Michalowicz:** I know that's what I think it's kind of a backhanded compliment, but you... But you find a way to motor through

**AJ Harper:** Hey, thanks. You know, it's because, um, I, well I wanted to spend time with my kid, so I wouldn't write until I was, I would write when he was in school and then I would.

As soon as he was outta school, I was just on, I, that was it. I wasn't writing, I wasn't doing meetings. And occasionally then if, if my wife was home, then I could. But it was really important to me.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Mm.

**AJ Harper:** To be present. And I think I maybe overdid it. Because then he would go to sleep at seven or seven 30 and then I would head out to write.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Wow.

**AJ Harper:** And that means that I've had the worst sleep patterns since 2005. And I don't think that was a good choice.

**Mike Michalowicz:** It, it is not healthy not to sleep.

**AJ Harper:** No. Now all I wanna do is sleep. Yeah. You know, I, since up on the island, I really wanna sleep when I'm up there.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah, I see that because. There, there's something a, there's a vibe, but I wonder if it's the water. The humidity?

**AJ Harper:** I don't know. Everyone sleeps well when they're up there and I don't get up so early when I'm there.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** I really don't, I I could, I would be happy to get up at, for me, eight o'clock is another person's noon.

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**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. I'm honored you put my housewarming gift up on your shelf there.

**AJ Harper:** Yes. Yeah. Laura Stone asked me to take a picture. Take a picture of Mike's. Oh, she's the best. So yeah, I sent it. Mike gave me a cute housewarming gift. That's what I admire about you. You're very thoughtful.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Thank you.

**AJ Harper:** No, you are very thoughtful.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Thank you. Thank you. It was funny. I I, I got that gift. I was like, you need a housewarming gift. But I was traveling in and didn't have something on me, but we stopped at the ferry place. So I run to the store and, uh, the ferry, I've had this twice in my life. The, you're the ferry at your place says it leaves at 12. It's documented. So I'm like, oh, I arrived in half hour early, so I'm just gonna wander around the town.

My car's parked here, and all of a sudden I hear the car's engine starting. I'm like, that's kind of peculiar. And they start pulling forward. So now sprinting in to my car. The other instance I had, this was the funny, I'm visiting. Hawaii, uh, Lanai where my, my in-laws live and there's a race, there's like a 5K or something and they sign me up for it and I, uh, they said the race is gonna start similar time, like noon or whatever.

So it's, I look at my watch, it's, it's 20 minutes before noon. I'm like, you know what? Lemme go to the bathroom because I had lots of water. Clear out the system, get ready for his run. I go, I'm in the bathroom, I hear [makes an explosion sound]

Like what happened? I opened the door, they started running. I'm like, what the hell's going on?

So I come out and they're like, go, go, go. So I start running. They say, oh, the person that runs, she says, if everyone's basically here, let's get started. How's just go so we can get over early,

**AJ Harper:** just get it done. You know, it's island. So that's an island. Yeah. Clearly. So, yeah, there's the island time is real.

It's so funny. Yeah. I had to, um, you know, we have our retreats. We've done two of them. Yeah. And on the second retreat. I added things onto the agenda that said that island time is real.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Oh, that's so great.

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**AJ Harper:** So if you want to eat at a restaurant or go to establishment before you drive into town, just call because even though the hours might say such and such and such and such. That's not necessarily true. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Uh, and you know, people get disappointed, you know, there's no, there's just a whole 'nother way of life

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

**AJ Harper:** And I have to tell you something. Oh no, I'll save it for the next episode. Save. Okay. I have to tell you something super funny about island time, but we should, we should get started with our podcast.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah, let's do it. So we got an email from a listener named Michelle, and it really triggered some interesting, um, thoughts. It's about visibility and showing up for your book. Do you think, should I read through this email? The context?

**AJ Harper:** I really, I really think so. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Okay. It came to me specifically and said, hi, Mike. I'm reaching out because I need some guidance, and you instantly came to mind. I finally finished my book 10 years in the making, and now I'm stepping into a whole new world: media, interviews, visibility. All the things that are slightly terrifying for me. If you remember, you did a podcast interview with me after COVID, and we had a lot of fun in the interview, but I have no idea how the interview happened.

Like in most of my wins, I think, oh yeah. Like in most of my wins, I think I can just be lucky. Apparently I need more than luck after writing the book, that was the easy part. This is a whole new ball game, and it keeps going on. Do you want me to read the entirety of it or?

**AJ Harper:** I do, because I put it all in the outline for today because I feel like what she's feeling a lot of authors feel.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Okay, let's keep going then. It says, my book is called *The Guts of Fermentation*. It's a mix of science, storytelling, and wild ferments. Exploring.

**AJ Harper:** Isn't that cool?

**Mike Michalowicz:** It is pretty interesting, yeah. And there's a lot, there's so much conversations about gut health now. At least I hear it a lot, exploring what happens when we sterilize our food and ourselves.

It's also about remembering flavor, soil and gut instinct by reclaiming the wild, messy magic that makes us human. It launches September 1st. Now, I dunno when this episode goes live. We're recording this video

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**AJ Harper:** Probably after that. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. Okay. So it's launched, so go get your copy. Go get your copy. I have a media kit, website, social plan, even a YouTube channel.

But now I need to start showing up on podcasts and interviews on camera, and that's a whole new game for me. You've always amazed me with how vibrant and real you are in all that you do. I know it takes practice and you've published so many books. These books have become bibles for us poor entrepreneurs that I am forever grateful for, and she ends with this.

Am I overstepping by asking for some advice on how to even start to tackle this? I have my targeted audience. Do you, uh, recommend I just jump in and start emailing podcasts, asking to be interviewed? Is there anything I need to be worried about? I honestly have no idea how to move this direction.

Any advice you can pass on? Yeah, it's much appreciated.

**AJ Harper:** I mean, some version of that I hear every day.

**Mike Michalowicz:** You know, I, I responded to, to Michelle last night and said, first thing you gotta do is read or listen to. Don't write that book every single episode. Second thing you gotta do is head over to [ajharper.com](http://ajharper.com). So I hope she did those things.

**AJ Harper:** Oh, that's nice. We do talk about marketing a lot in my, you do membership community. We solve a lot of those problems. But this is such a common thing. People who are really, 'cause you know, she said terrified. That's the first thing she said. And then there's a question of, so there's the tactical part, which we can definitely give Michelle advice about the best way to go forward, but I think the bigger issue is fear around around visibility and showing up.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Totally. You know, I have a way I deify myself and this is going very woo very quick, but I think it's relevant. I had a, have a really difficult conversation, actually a couple this week, but I have a really difficult conversation with a long time, um, colleague to, um, address some business challenges and, um.

I always enter it with gratitude, and I think that's a very helpful thing that I, I appreciate that we're here because the alternative is there's no conversation. There's the cross my arms and walk away. So when it comes to marketing my book, I can cross my arms and walk away or I can have gratitude that as terrifying as this is, I'm showing up.

**AJ Harper:** So what do you, wait a minute. So you do what? You kind of list the things you're grateful for or it's just that one re reframe?

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**Mike Michalowicz:** That one reframe for that one moment saying this is a. A blessing that I have this opportunity.

**AJ Harper:** Wait a minute, I have to back up a minute. You just said you, how do you deal with your own fear?

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah,

**AJ Harper:** I, I honestly am shocked.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Really? Well, this is not the only technique. That's one I want to get.

**AJ Harper:** No, no, no. I'm shocked that you have the fear.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Oh, constantly.

**AJ Harper:** What are you talking about?

**Mike Michalowicz:** Someone, it's funny, someone's like, oh, I'm you're keynoting this week. I have a keynote in Mexico of all places. I'm like, yeah. I go, do you get scared anymore? I'm like, yeah, I get terrified.

**AJ Harper:** Well, I knew that about keynoting, but I really honestly thought when it came to marketing. I just see you as somebody who's, yeah, let's go. And I never, I don't see the hesitant... hesitance.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. Well that's the next technique. So I, I say, let's go before I think about it, because if I think more and more about it, there's all the reasons not to do it.

**AJ Harper:** But hang on, hang on, hang on again. This is new information.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. Okay.

**AJ Harper:** You really are terrified.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Terrified wouldn't be the word I use, but I feel a trepidation or fear and the easier path feels not doing it.

**AJ Harper:** What part is terrifying? Is it putting yourself out there? Letting people judge the book, or is it the marketing effort?

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**Mike Michalowicz:** Yes. Yes. It's the effort. It's gonna be, it's gonna take a lot of effort. It may fail, which is a negative on my little checklist of myself or social perception, this guy really doing that. Um, the book may fail. It's, it's all that, that monkey mind.

**AJ Harper:** Wow. I'm kind of blown away.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah, I wouldn't call it terror. I mean, it doesn't stop me in my tracks, but there's a couple things I do. So one is just show moment gratitude for the moment because the alternative is, there is no moment, so at least there's a moment. Secondly, I'm move before I have time to overthink. I think that's actually the biggest trap for most people is thinking, thinking, thinking. I know you have it in your community.

I have it in mine, where people. We will go through more and more education 'cause they feel they're not ready. And education is the escape from doing. It's a shame. I have a friend, long time friend, that's all he does. He just learns and learns. I'm like, dude, you know more on the subject than anyone on this planet, but you know nothing because you're not taking action.

He's like, But here, here's the really woo thing I do. A, according to quantum physics, which I've been, you know, I've been talking about that watching in my son.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah. Your deep, your deep dive is quantum physics.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. There's concepts called Parallel Universe. Um, this could be the great simulation at the end of the day. This could just be a movie. Like, I could just be a character in your movie. I'm not real. It could be a generation, you know, or vice versa. So I lean into that.

**AJ Harper:** I don't know if I, if you're just a character, what difference does it, there's, what does make what's at stake? What's at stake? What does it make?

**Mike Michalowicz:** The nothing's at stake. Um, yeah.

**AJ Harper:** Oh my God. It's, are you, you know what's so funny? I have to interrupt you.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. Go. No, go.

**AJ Harper:** For the past couple months I've just been having you remember, um, Oregon Trail? Okay. So. I was making a joke a couple of months ago. I, I don't remember who with whom, uh, but a fellow Gen Xer about, you know, what kind of feels like since COVID we've been living in the Oregon Trail, like you have dysentery, you know, just with everything that's happened.

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You know, remember when it was one month, it was like murder hornets? Yes. Like everything. It was just this whole collection where you're like, what else?

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** And a couple months ago I said something about, I wonder what, I feel like I'm in the Oregon Trail, but it's modern times. And so these messages, you know, not, um, you have four beaver pelts, you know, whatever. Oh, you lost your entire family. You know, it's just like, do you remember this dumb game we had to play?

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

**AJ Harper:** But I. I since I thought that, I've been thinking, oh, what if this is just a game? And it's interesting because if it's just a game, you don't feel the same way about the choices you're making.

**Mike Michalowicz:** It's yeah, it gives so much relief to me.

**AJ Harper:** I've really been thinking about that a lot.

**Mike Michalowicz:** That's so funny. So, okay, so maybe we're gonna go very woo here. But, um, yeah,

**AJ Harper:** Michelle, now we're talking about quantum physics.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** But you're psyching your, all you're doing is psyching yourself out of that, um, the, uh, what's at stake.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Correct. I also set certain rules. I always want to lead with kindness, which doesn't mean to being a pushover, but I always just want to be kind and empathetic. A couple days ago, so I'm working on my Oregon Trail. It's around our property. I'm setting up a trail, another one. I love doing that, but I'm putting gravel down and stuff.

**AJ Harper:** A trail to where?

**Mike Michalowicz:** it's as, oh, it's a loop. I call it the, we call it the moose loop or something. It just loops. There's a major huge boulder on the edge of our property. It just loops around it.

**AJ Harper:** Just for funsies?.

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**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. Yeah. So. Yeah, so you can walk from the yard area up to, we have like a sitting area that's up.

**AJ Harper:** Oh, okay.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Maybe 20 feet up and it kind of slopes up to it. Um, it's maybe 200 yards, 300 yards. But it's, it's hard work because there's these big boulders I'm digging out and moving. It's, I've been working on it for maybe four full days so far. Not consecutively, but whatever. Well, I'm walking, I step on a hornet's nest, talking about murder hornets or a wasp nest and, uh. Have you've been stung, right?

**AJ Harper:** By a bee. Not a swarm of hornets.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Well, it wasn't a swarm. I only got bit by one. Sometimes I get stung by more, but it feels like a nail going into you. It's like bink. And every time my thought was like, where did I run into a nail?

And I'm like, ah. So I got stung by it. And in the past I've been like, you know, tonight I'm coming back with a Hornet spray. I'm gonna spray these guys down. But Mike, if this is a game. Maybe in this game, they're just simply playing defense, like they're defending their hive like they're doing the right thing.

I'm, I didn't mean to step on their nest, and only one of 'em stung me. I'm like, let 'em be. And then toward the end, I actually felt grateful toward 'em. So I'm, I'm, I kept on working and I've never seen, this is just woo, I've never seen a hornet's nest settle down so quickly. I just chose within. A few seconds of this happening saying, you know, I'm just gonna appreciate those animals.

And they did what they are supposed to do and I was gonna keep working. And I was working within a few feet to them and they all sailed back down, went into their hive and they're, you know, they're coming in out zing, zing, zing. But none, not another one stuck on me. I. Go back two years ago or a year ago, I was doing a trail out there, bink get hit by one.

I'm like, son's a Bink. Bink. I started getting, so I'm not saying that's how the world works, but at least in my mind is much less terrifying when you just see it as a game or accepting it or kindness.

**AJ Harper:** Hmm. That's interesting. You do okay, but you're, I don't think you have the kind of fear that Michelle has or that a lot of others have. It really cripples them.

**Mike Michalowicz:** I, I do wanna share one more thing just for framing for Michelle, the book she wrote. I mean, how many people do you know, know about the guts of

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fermentation? Like I, she must have such a technical ability. Um, she must have so much experience. This represents a massive span of her life.

**AJ Harper:** Mm-hmm. She said 10 years, took her to...

**Mike Michalowicz:** 10 years, and she, she's putting the recipe. Figuratively, you figuratively, probably, literally too, into the book and saying, here's everything I know on this subject. To me, that's the greatest gift on the planet to, the books are the only way you can take a download of someone's knowledge and just get the whole thing in one chunk.

The notes are taken for you. It's the book. So I think what she created is such a gift to our world. She has to see that she's, she's not delivering, she's not marketing or selling. She's delivering gifts.

**AJ Harper:** Okay. Those are good reframes. The reframing. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. Um, so how do you, what, I guess some of the things she's asking is what are the actions to take.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah. I mean, look, uh, here's the thing there. Everybody's different. So do,

**Mike Michalowicz:** do you see this a lot with your authors? Is terror to market and sell? Uh,

**AJ Harper:** yes. Constantly. And I don't know if they would say I'm terrified, right? But it does keep them from taking action. So I think the fear, there's, the fear is, um, not just one thing.

I think it's fear of being seen. That's a big one. And then it's fear of doing the wrong kind of marketing. And then sometimes they're just afraid that it's gonna be too exhausting.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Hmm.

**AJ Harper:** Meaning they don't really wanna start it because if they start it, it's gonna take over their lives.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Mm-hmm.

**AJ Harper:** I think those are the three most common fears,

**Mike Michalowicz:** if it's gonna take over your life. I guess you have a choice to say because it could, you could choose that.

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**AJ Harper:** Yeah. I just think they, well, that's where knowledge comes in. Yeah. Just get a little knowledge and then you won't feel like, because I feel like it's mysterious. Michelle is feeling like this is mysterious. You know, she's not sure exactly what to do.

Actually. It sounds like she's in pretty good shape based on some of the things she already has in place. Yeah. And I would tell her the same thing I would tell an author, where do your people hang out?

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** You know? Um, how do they like to consume? Do they like to listen to podcasts? Then yeah, go bang that drum.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. That'd be my suggestion too. And what's the method that you like the most? Does she like a small group where people get together? Yeah. And they, they, yeah. Maybe do some recipes if that's appropriate for fermentation. Um, does she like to be on a big stage? Does she prefer to interview others and learn from others?

And she's super inquisitive. I think you pick your primary form of joy.

**AJ Harper:** Mm-hmm.

**Mike Michalowicz:** And then that's the way you market the book.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah, and I also think one of the main things people miss is they, they market, but they don't actually try to expand to different readers. Yeah. So they're just continually doing the same regurgitated stuff that ends up helping you initially, but just gets to the same circles over and over.

So you have to go out and fit, you know, identify. I would say at least every quarter. Who do I wanna try and reach this quarter? Maybe you could, or you could do that every six months. Yeah. And devise some sort of plan to reach a new set of readers that you haven't previously had access to. Yeah. And if you do that, that's actually more effective than just blasting all the time.

**Mike Michalowicz:** I wonder if there's a way for her to promote to other authors. So which A, removes the pressure off yourself. Some people feel icky 'cause they're promoting themselves. They feel like,

**AJ Harper:** Well you should always be doing that, that this to me is the thing that authors should be doing. I will beat this drum,

**Mike Michalowicz:** lay it on me, let's go.

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**AJ Harper:** You have got to support other authors. Yeah, you cannot. So you've gotta find, who else are they reading? The people who are interested in fermentation or gut health. Who else are they reading?

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** And then if you think their books are great, I mean, don't do it just to do it, but if you think their books are great and useful, then at a minimum,

**Mike Michalowicz:** Right,

**AJ Harper:** Review tag the author when you do the review.

But I would go the extra mile and promote that author in a more meaningful way. And then you'll probably get a chance to know that author. Because, uh, they'll probably be grateful to you and you can start to build those relationships and do things together and reach their audiences. That is the easiest thing.

It's free and everybody should be doing it.

**Mike Michalowicz:** So earlier this week, I think I texted you, I had a breakfast with a guy and um, he's a fan of ours.

**AJ Harper:** No, I don't think you did.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah, I did. 'cause you saw the picture and you're like, oh, gullible. So,

**AJ Harper:** oh no, that's

**Mike Michalowicz:** Alex. Alex Wakowski. Wakowski.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah, yes. He's in my writing Sprint community.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Okay. He's amazing. So he's a great story on marketing. Alex is the nicest young guy, 30 years old. Um, and even though I said we had breakfast this week when this broadcast will be like two months ago. But, um, he's working on his book. He's working on his book.

**AJ Harper:** Mm-hmm.

**Mike Michalowicz:** But he supports other authors level.

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**AJ Harper:** That's his whole, it's his whole thing.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. And as he, as a, a business partner, Jonathan Goodman does the same thing. They, together, they support business authors at such a high level, like just promoting them, talking about them. He has a whole website about, here's books you gotta read. Well, guess who loves him?

All these authors when his book launches. Oh yeah. It's gonna be so effing big. Like, I'll do anything for Alex.

**AJ Harper:** I, I will.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Alex, if you're listening, I hope you have your I Love boot and mug

**AJ Harper:** and you should go, go check out how he does it. So he doesn't just recommend a book. He shows photographs of where he's highlighted and underlined.

He does a summary of the key points that he thinks are really useful. He goes out of his way to create content. That's cool and interesting and specific. Um, if you wanna get an author's attention, mark up their book and put a picture of it up on social media. I mean, we're like a moth to a flame to see that business.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah, it's uh, his website is Alex and books, so you can go to Alex and spell out the word and books.com.

**AJ Harper:** Also, also follow him on LinkedIn, which is where he puts a lot of content.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Um, and he's writing a book on how to read books better.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah. Yeah. He's, he's, I see him in my writing sprints working on his book.

**Mike Michalowicz:** So I think Michelle could do that. Michelle could, could be the Oprah of the Fermentation world.

And it's so interesting, just by sharing the word of other people, you become part of that circle and, uh, I think that's a great un-terrifying way to market.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah. So, uh, focus on connection.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

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**AJ Harper:** But I, I do wanna say that I, I think, um, I, you know, I've learned a lot this past year from my marketing coordinator, Sadé Amherd.

And she's Gen Z, super knowledgeable, and she's helped me to see that we don't have to do all the things.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** And we can do it in exactly the way we want to. She's much more relaxed about it. Their whole generation is much more relaxed about it. I feel like if we're older, like, oh my God, what's the right way?

What are all the things I have to do, all the socials I have, you know? And she's just made it seem so much more doable with this sort of relaxed attitude. And I think, uh. Take the pressure off yourself, Michelle, and anybody who's terrified to just think about one thing that you might enjoy doing that could be useful.

Instead of thinking that everything has to be done by a very specific time, um, just try and focus on one thing that you could do and go deep with it and, and deliver cons that deliver consistently. I think that's, uh, really, really important. The problem is we think that the launch, we have to have everything by the launch.

The only reason you would need everything by the launch is if you were trying to make a national list. If you're not trying to make a national list, then think about it as more of a long game and. Then you aren't gonna be burned out when the launch happens, and then stop engaging and expanding your audiences, which is what most authors do, is they stop selling and stop marketing a few months after the book comes out.

**Mike Michalowicz:** There's a new documentary on Billy Joel that came out on one of the streaming channels, Uhhuh, that my wife and I are watching. I thought Piano Man was this breakthrough song. It wasn't. It was a hit. It wasn't a big hit. It didn't make him go big. And he came outta the song, the Entertainer.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz:** And that was a big failure. It caused all this resentment because he was, it was a dig at the whole model of how it worked. You know, one part where he says, great song, kid cut down to 3 0 5. Mm-hmm. Something like that effect. Uh. He, his agency representation all kind of went away. Um, he, he was in it for years and Piano Man was already out.

Entertainment was already out before he really got the momentum building and building. He wasn't getting the airplay like everybody else. It was just a fascinating story.

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**AJ Harper:** What was the break? Was it Uptown Girl? That was the break?

**Mike Michalowicz:** It wasn't, it was, it was just, I, it the documentary's three hours, so I gotta do it in like four segments. I, I can't consume that much of a show.

**AJ Harper:** Is it only the Good Die Young?

**Mike Michalowicz:** No, it isn't a song. It's just the momentum. It's the continual effort.

**AJ Harper:** It wasn't one song.

**Mike Michalowicz:** It wasn't one song. He had all these hits, but nothing was a big breakthrough. Hit It. Just started building, building, and now he's,

**AJ Harper:** well, uptown Girl was definitely a big hit.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Oh, he's got thousands. He's got, that's a little hyperbole. He's got a lot of big hits. Uptown Girl. But there was no one song that made him, at least so far, it was Piano Man. That was part of the momentum. It was the entertainer. It was part of the momentum. It was Bottle red. Bottle White. Was that the Italian?

**AJ Harper:** Italian restaurant,

**Mike Michalowicz:** Italian restaurant, New York, state of mind, all these, oh yeah. All these songs are building, but nothing like, was like, he didn't go all of a sudden mainstream. He was always kind of on this fringe, was this building and building and building and was relentless

**AJ Harper:** just the way you are.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Geez. You're, you're trying to find the one thing.

**AJ Harper:** But I mean, come on. Those are all awesome. I guess I don't get it. Those were hits.

**Mike Michalowicz:** They're all hits. I'm just saying they. They, they weren't the blockbuster. And he went all of a sudden from, um, a no name to playing main stages. It was years and years after the songs were out that he was still the Oh, I'm blister.

I'm, I'm just pointing out to Michelle and her listeners that you gotta keep on going.

**AJ Harper:** You're saying keep going. Even though you have, you might, might, I'm sorry.

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**Mike Michalowicz:** Well, you were talking about the launch, like, like, you know, a lot of people give up.

**AJ Harper:** Yes, they do.

**Mike Michalowicz:** And I'm, so, I was like, oh, Billy Joel didn't have a launch, even though you think he would've.

Um, so. Here's a, I think it's a peculiar but appropriate and common question. She says, am I overstepping by asking for some advice on how to even start. Isn't that interesting? Am I overstepping by even asking for advice? There's just such a lone wolf mentality. In the authorship space and I think people are afraid to ask advice 'cause they think it's a burden.

Yet most people love to dull advice.

**AJ Harper:** This whole show is about me and

**Mike Michalowicz:** you dolling out advice.

**AJ Harper:** Isn't it refreshing that she was polite and asked you that and then also was focused on advice versus what usually happens, which is endorse my book and do it by Tuesday.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Exactly. Yeah. It's funny when I got that, when I got that email.

Um, and I rarely check my own email. Erin's monitoring it. I saw, I was like, oh gosh, here we go. 'cause I see the title of the book.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah. 'cause you get these un-ridiculous requests.

**Mike Michalowicz:** I get a book literally every day. And um, two came in yesterday. A two, two for Tuesday. Um, I,

**AJ Harper:** it's, it's such a, I think Michelle went about it the right way.

**Mike Michalowicz:** I think it's, it is perfect. I think it's absolutely perfect. Um, she goes, I have a targeted audience. Do you recommend I just jump in and start emailing podcasts, asking to be interviewed so I have a little tip about getting on podcasts? Sure. Don't use a podcast marketing company.

**AJ Harper:** Oh gosh, don't.

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**Mike Michalowicz:** Don't they all stink because they all listen. I'm sure there's good intentions out there, but the protocol, as you and I have a podcast, we do not interview other people unless Steve's gonna join us. But we we're not interviewing other people. And yet every week there's an inquiry comes in and says, oh, love your podcast.

Okay. You never listened to it. Um, I have a great guest suggestion for you. You know, bring on so and so. You have not listened to the podcast? Um, we don't take guests. Um, no. And, but it's format the exact same way. Like, like, you know, hi. And then the, the name Mike is inserted, but it's like the fonts 10 times bigger because it says a template they're using.

**AJ Harper:** Well, for us it's a dead giveaway. If you are asking to be on the podcast, yeah. That tells us that you have never listened to it.

**Mike Michalowicz:** But it's not you, it's the, it's the agent for this person.

**AJ Harper:** That tells you that that person doesn't know anything about the podcast. Yeah. Ours especially, because it's very easy if you just listen to one episode to see that we never, or even just, you don't even have to listen.

You could just look at the episode list. Right, right. There are no guests mentioned.

**Mike Michalowicz:** So what Michelle could do, and then what I suggest, 'cause I've, I've interviewed people like this is. To contact, um, the podcast host directly. So first it should be from the author. And instead of asking, this may be on your show saying, I have Sugg.

I listened to your show. Make sure you listen to the show and say, I have some suggestions for a show from based upon expertise I have. Here's some bullets, and give them something to talk about. You're giving them information that. Okay, maybe I'll have Michelle as a guest, or maybe I could just cover this top of my own, but give them the free will of choice.

So I've done that. Um, right now I'm in the process of reaching out to some of the biggest business podcasts. Mm-hmm. And doing that exact same thing, saying, here's a couple, uh. I, I've written a subject, I've written about the subject. Here's a couple bullet points. I've listened to your show, I think may be relevant to your show.

I hope it helps you out and just give free input.

**AJ Harper:** So you're doing that instead of actually asking to be on the podcast.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Correct. Just saying. Yeah. That's smart. Yeah. Another thing is just do something that no one else does get different. So I'm getting the mailing addresses for some folks and sending, um. Uh, gonna send something unique and special to them. So not like, not bribery, like, Hey, here's some candy. Hope you enjoy it. Can I get in your show something

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that's important to them and just saying, here's what my appreciation for your show. And selfishly, I would be honored one day if I could share some of my insights and thoughts on your program.

Um. So I'm, I'm very integral about that, but that is so noticeable. It goes to the top of the stack.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah, of course.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Um, the other one is, do you have contacts or friends? You, you'll be surprised who knows who.

**AJ Harper:** Mm-hmm. Yeah, you should ask.

**Mike Michalowicz:** So I'm trying to get, and I'll make it public, I'm trying to get a hold of Fawn Weaver. She's the founder of Uncle Nearest. And so, um, I wanna interview her for a show I'm doing with Relay. Um, and, uh, my speaking agent reached out. To her representation. They said, well, Fawn doesn't take interviews. She gets so many instant rejection. So I'm like, Hmm. So I, I reached out to another author community, I'm like, does anyone happen to have a direct connection with Fawn Weaver?

And one person writes back, I'm with her now.

I'm like, oh.

Um, and, and I put my ask out there saying, Hey, this, I wanna interview her. And she's like, oh, I'll, I'll deliver the message. It's just, it's so interesting. How many people know people you're, you're often a degree of separation away.

**AJ Harper:** I also really wanna say that I've never had anybody decline an interview with me.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Really? Never?

**AJ Harper:** No. I've probably interviewed over a thousand people. Those are all for books.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Hold on. No one's been declined to be interviewed by you, Uhuh. That's a great way in.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah, so, but I am very particular, so I ask a very specific, I tell, let, I'm not saying, can I talk to you about this general subject?

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I'm saying I have this, this is what I think. Or this is what the author I'm working with thinks, right? And it's a teaching point, or it's a very, very specific question. I heard you in a speech say this, and I'm wondering X, Y, Z. Have you ever thought about that? When it's a question that shows I'm paid attention to you.

And I am gonna ask you a question. Now, you've probably never been asked before. People will almost never turn you down. I'll say almost never. It's never turned me down. But I can't say definitively. It would never happen to you. I think where people go wrong is they're way too general. Yeah. And they're way too general in their outreach for any marketing.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. Way too general. That's a great tip. That is a great tip.

**AJ Harper:** Um, I wanna say a couple things to Michelle. Yeah. And this is about the terrified part. I already said, you don't have to do all the things. I actually think, um, putting together a strategy, even just a little baby strategy, doesn't have to be the whole thing.

Do that part, but then get some help. I think if you're having trouble, if you're feeling afraid, if you feel occasionally afraid to be seen, that's gonna keep rearing its ugly head almost on a daily basis. So you think, oh, I got it licked one day and then a couple days later. It comes up again for you. So the way, instead of trying to, this is sort of a mic thing actually, now that I think about it.

Don't change who you are, work with who you are. Get a, an assistant, somebody who can implement the ask. So if you're gonna be pitching a bunch of podcasts, they can do it on your behalf. It can even be through your email. You can give them access or however you wanna do it so that all those tasks.

That require you to get the nerve up every day. Maybe you don't have to be the one to get the nerve up as long as you have the strategy. I think that is, uh, a thing that you like a little hack to get around that problem.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Great advice to get the help. The one thing I have, uh, I'm at odds with, you said hire an agency to get you on podcasts?

**AJ Harper:** No, a person.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Oh, oh, okay.

**AJ Harper:** A person, an assistant that can go into your email. You do the strategy.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Okay.

**AJ Harper:** You say, this is what we're gonna do.

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**Mike Michalowicz:** Okay.

**AJ Harper:** That person implements because I see no, don't, no, don't hire an agency. Okay. No, no, no, no, no, no.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Okay.

**AJ Harper:** I'm clear that a person.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Okay. I love that. 'cause

**AJ Harper:** otherwise it's you every day trying to psych yourself up.

And maybe you don't wanna be like, oh, I, okay. It's a simulation like you don't, maybe you don't wanna have to try and tell yourself every day psych yourself with gratitude practice, or whatever you need to do. For me, it's a service. That's what I try and remember all the time. How can I help? And that cuts, it helps me.

To be, to do things I don't feel like doing. You know what else will do? It is if you can get a little mad.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah. I love getting a little mad if you can get a little mad.

**AJ Harper:** A little ranty.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** Suddenly you're not afraid anymore. Yeah. Suddenly you're like, Ugh.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah,

**AJ Harper:** I've got, let me tell you.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** And that cuts through a little bit. That works for me.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Anyway, my last piece of advice for Michelle is. I want you to look at your book, hold your book in your hand and say, is the world better off when they discover this? Or is it better off when they don't discover this? And the answer will present itself, and then you'll see what your responsibility is.

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Hey, you have a little note here. It says, let your geek freak.

**AJ Harper:** Flag.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Flag. Yeah, because what do you mean by that?

**AJ Harper:** One of the comments I get most often, whether it's writing a book or marketing a book, is a fear. It's related to a fear of being too much. Too much me.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Hmm,

**AJ Harper:** I'm sick of myself, they say, or am I revealing too much? And we have this desire to hold back because we're afraid. We're afraid of oversharing. We're afraid that people are gonna think we are too much. What's weird about us? What's emotional or vulnerable about us? And actually it's the thing that people want most. So I can tell you. In 21 years in publishing, not one person has been too much.

Not even you, Mike.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Wow.

**AJ Harper:** Yeah. And that's saying something. So if you, I said, let your geek or freak flag

**Mike Michalowicz:** Yeah.

**AJ Harper:** Fly because, uh, actually when you're an author, you're a geek for that thing.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Totally.

**AJ Harper:** And you need to be super geek about it. You need to just own that, own the thing that you have deep knowledge and interest in.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Uh, for our listeners, join us, get a copy of the Guts of Fermentation. Should be out right now, and let's support Michelle.

**AJ Harper:** Let's support Michelle

**Mike Michalowicz:** and Michelle. Thanks for being a fan of our show, even though you didn't know the show existed and now you got a whole dedicated episode. Uh, next week we're gonna talk about publishing is a team sport.

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It's really all about collaboration. Um, I wanna invite you to go to our website, dw tb podcast.com. To get our free resources, check out aj harper.com. She just did a retreat out at her location. It's a retreat center, um, out on the island. You have to go go to aj harper.com.

**AJ Harper:** Can I say something about that?

**Mike Michalowicz:** yeah.

**AJ Harper:** So that's gonna be a 2026.

**Mike Michalowicz:** Oh, is it? 2025 is filled up. Okay, well you better get in the queue for 2026. Uh, I can speak to it. It's one of the most beautiful, peaceful place I've been. And you get stuff done. Um, last little thing is if you are an author in the. Entrepreneurial space. I have an imprint with page two called Simplified.

We're looking for extraordinary authors. You can reach out to us through emailing us at this podcast. hello@dwtbpodcast.com. Any questions, comments, any observations you have, send 'em in. Hey, you make a dedicated episode. Thanks for joining us today. I'm gonna give you the reminder. We can all say this together now.

You've listened to enough episodes, you know it. Don't write that book. Write the greatest book you can.