

# don't write *that* book!

## Episode 108:

### “You’re Done, Part Two”

**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. This is something special for our YouTube viewers, but our audio listeners can get it. Best card I've ever gotten from my children. And this is it. I dunno if you can read the text. Can you read it, AJ <laugh>?

**AJ Harper:**

You could, you didn't choose The Stud Life.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

And it's this picture of this dorky kid flexing, and then inside it says, the Stud Life chose you. Happy Birthday <laugh>. So, so

**AJ Harper:**

It's very appropriate for you.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

So funny.

**AJ Harper:**

It could be a picture of you,

**Mike Michalowicz:**

It could be, dorky glasses. It, the only reason I know it's not me is 'cause his hair is red and, um, it's a thick mane, um, <laugh>. But when I was, if I had a picture of myself at this age, I would say he's maybe 12, 13. Um, I wish I was that jacked. Like, like, so it's just, uh, it's just very funny. Um, I adore my children and their sense of humor. So today we're gonna talk about how do you know You're done? And this is a continuance of episode 108, uh, 107. This is part two for, uh, this episode. And we're gonna focus in on marketing. I'm joined in studio for this episode, as I am for all episodes with the one and only AJ Harper. I'm pumped. You're here. And, uh, it was funny, aj, I was listening to one of our past episodes and we were laughing about how many people are, when people, I say people, I should say, agencies are asking us to be on the

# don't write *that* book!

show. And it always starts off with your show's. Extraordinary. Love the show. Best show ever on writing. Um, would you consider this guest or, I'd like to submit this guest. And it's like, we've never had a guest. We have no intentions of having a guest. Except for Stephen Pressfield one day. Um, so thank you for joining us, aj. What I admire about you is you are a show up. No matter what the circumstances are type of person, you just show up every single time, um, that speaks to your character.

## **AJ Harper:**

Thank you. Do you think that, do you think though, that we should probably sometimes not show up? <laugh>?

## **Mike Michalowicz:**

Good counterpoint.

## **AJ Harper:**

You know, we say when we were writing the Money Habit, um, my wife was in the hospital, and then it was very serious. Yes. And then I, because I had been in the hospital with her every day, got the norovirus.

## **Mike Michalowicz:**

That's right.

## **AJ Harper:**

So not only was I dealing with that, I was dealing with the fact that I, have you ever had it? Have you had it?

## **Mike Michalowicz:**

No, I have not.

## **AJ Harper:**

Oh my God. I I, I've never experienced anything like that. And meanwhile, I'm texting you head delirious from my bed with like a bowl sitting next to me, like a puke bowl. Oh. Oh. And, um, I remember you texted me and said, you shouldn't even be communicating with me right now. <laugh>. The, the, the fact that you're trying to work on this in under these circumstances is, um, not right. And, uh, so I love that you're the one who told me that because I think that you're a show up no matter what person, too. But you know something, I admire that about you as well. I would say I admire that about you. The same. Ditto.

## **Mike Michalowicz:**

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Ditto. 'll think of, ditto. Ditto.

**AJ Harper:**

But I bet you could find times when you, maybe, maybe you should have just said, let me pause.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

There was a, uh, award back in grade school called Perfect Attendance. I got it one year. And there's unintended consequences, right? So to get perfect attendance, it means you don't miss a single day of school for the entire year. And I remember as the year was coming to an end, I don't know what grade I was in, but I, I remember being very sick and my mom's like, you need to stay home. And I'm like, ruined attendance. Right? And went in and I, as a result, got 70 other kids sick and through the school, like sometimes showing up when you're not able to deliver, actually compromises everybody else.

**AJ Harper:**

Yeah. Or you just, you or, or

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Just you. Or just you.

**AJ Harper:**

Yeah. Yeah. All right. At any rate, let's, let's, we admire that about each other.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Let's get to meat-n-potatoes today. Uh, this is a continuance, like I said, of, of last week's episode. We're talking about how to know when you're done and people kind of get in this perfectionism mentality, which is the, yeah,

**AJ Harper:**

I didn't expect this 'cause there was this discussion with my students about wanting that Episode 107. Oh, how do you know when you're done with the book? This is a creative question. Okay. I'm used to that question. And then Scott Todd, who, you know, because he's a Profit or Fix This Next, um, derivative author. And also now a Simplified author. But he's also my student. And he was in the discussion. He, and then also another student, Sloan said, well, I wanna know about that, what to do with marketing, because, uh, Sloan said, um, you know, are you waiting too long to perfect what everything looks like and, and how it's gonna come across and how it's planned, and then you're just not getting it out there. So they wanted to know about, and I was surprised to think about how do you know you're done with marketing?

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**AJ Harper:**

Because it, to me, marketing is an ongoing thing. Yeah. It, how, how are you ever done? But I think the question was more around, uh, when can you roll that stuff out? Uh, how do you know you're ready to do the marketing, I think is the question. But I, I wanna know, and I am curious about that. I have a long list to answer this to this question, but I wanted to ask you, have you ever waited too long with a marketing idea and then, uh, or tried to perfect it too much and then you didn't get it out? And I would be shocked if you said yes.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Yeah. I can't think of a single instance. I've under baked things. You know, it's funny, my life, my wife likes eggs that are not runny. It's gotta be like

**AJ Harper:**

Same.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Yeah. So it's gotta be a Frisbee at least be capable of being thrown like a Frisbee. And I'm literally unable to do it this, A few days ago, she said, Hey, I, I was getting ready for work. She was getting ready for the day. And she goes, Hey, can you just make me some eggs real quick? I'm like, absolutely. So I'm like, these things are gonna be like, like, like concrete pads. Um, cook 'em so much, and still they have a little touch of runniness in it. I don't think it's in my fabric to be able to overdo something <laugh>. I mean, I overdo it, but to, to over prepare. So I can't think of a single instance. Yeah.

**AJ Harper:**

I, I would be surprised if you had an answer. But

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Conversely, with, with marketing, which we're gonna dig in today, uh, there's most things I put out prematurely, but with a strategy of do it small, test it, see if it works, or if it fails, if it fails or improve on it or ditch it. If it works, expand on it. Um, how about you? Have you ever

**AJ Harper:**

<laugh> It's too long. The list is, I mean, I probably still am waiting to do stuff from years ago. Yeah. Yeah. I, I sit on stuff a long time. It's bad.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

You know, one observation I have about myself as I'm reflecting on this is because I have the tendency to, to be able to sprint to something, I also then have a tendency to delay. So, this is a

# don't write *that* book!

weird analogy, but, uh, it's the truth. So I played, you know, sports and stuff and, uh, after college, and I used to this in, in, when I was playing in college, but after college, I joined a, a league, uh, like a flag football league. And I was the quarterback. And I just knew that when someone was blitzing trying to tackle the quarterback, that if I would, I can outrun them and outmaneuver them. I would intentionally or subconsciously wait until they're close enough to go for the tackle, and then I could squirm out. Well, that strategy didn't work because this was flag football. It wasn't a physical tackle, it was a pulling a flag, and I couldn't get past it. I was waiting too long to get started on making a move, therefore enabling the defense to tackle me. And I'm like, oh. With my marketing, historically, I've waited because it's so easy. There's air quotes around that. It's so easy for me to wait till last minute that I can just, you know, sprint forward.

**AJ Harper:**

Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh. I see, I see.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

The Money Habit. We've started the marketing, active, outgoing marketing, not just preparing for marketing. That's gotta happen years in advance. But the active marketing component started this summer, I'd say June, July, actively getting sales in marketing. And now we're sitting in October as we record this. And, you know, we have, we shared it on last week's episode. We're, we're recording these back to back. We have 5,000 plus sales already. I've, I've never been in that position before. Um, so preparing and giving stuff a l enough time to, uh, mature and turn into, uh, exit can be thrown like Frisbees is, is my weeks spot. That's hard for me to do, but we've been deliberate and it's working.

**AJ Harper:**

It's working. I think that most people aren't like you, though. I think most people are waiting to throw, put their stuff out there until it's perfect. I,

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Yeah, I a hundred percent agree. And, and that's what I think what this episode's about is like getting past that. How do you know when you're done? So why don't we go through the, uh, some of the marketing components that you listed here. Is there any particular spot you wanna start?

**AJ Harper:**

I mean, let's start with author photos. I think a lot of people don't get marketing out because they haven't done their photos yet. Yeah. But you don't need to have professional photos. You can still get it going.

# don't write *that* book!

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Yes. And they rely on photos from a younger year.

**AJ Harper:**

Right. Which is, as you've taught us, does not build trust.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

It doesn't. Yeah. Right. It, it drives me crazy. So for anyone that missed it in a prior episode, you better be bingeing this show. But <laugh>, um, I've seen, and you've seen this, I remember in Zoom it happens to, to today. <laugh>, you go in a Zoom meeting and, and the person's hasn't, their, their camera's turned off and it's their favorite picture from when they were in college or something. You turn it on, this is like not 30 years later. It's a shocking moment. And it actually compromises trust because you're presenting yourself in one form and your current form is something different. Well, I see this with author photos. I, I know of authors that have produced a sequence of books and they use the exact same photo that they used in the very first book. And it's like, you haven't aged in 20 years. Um, and some people literally are unrecognizable. Like,

**AJ Harper:**

Think about, think about Michael Port and his cover of Book Yourself Solid. He has a full head of hair.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Yeah. And now Exactly. <laugh>, you wouldn't recognize the guy. Yeah. Now he's Dr. Evil, like, and I'm going on the same path, so there's more, there's wrinkles on his face. Now. I got, I'm losing my hair. And

**AJ Harper:**

You've got the beard now. I got, I got beard. Be clean shaven.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

I've got a beard. Yeah. There's pictures of me in my original books, I'm Beardless. I'm like, who is that gnome? And no,

**AJ Harper:**

I miss that guy. Who is that guy? I like the clean sha. I like the clean shape.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Oh, wife likes beard. It stays.

# don't write *that* book!

**AJ Harper:**

Yeah, for sure. Wife is final. Yeah. Wife is final. But you know, the, it, you, you do have, you do have to consider that, but you don't have to if you're freaking out because maybe you can't afford a, a full on photo shoot or because you just like me. I hate doing them. It's, I, it's very confronting for me. It's hard for me. I have to psych myself up. I have to get myself in a good mental state. Thankfully, I found John DeMato, who I think is the best photographer for thought leaders and authors. And, uh, the way he works with me is perfect for my personality, the way that he talks to me and gets me in. But you're not, it took me like five photographers to find that. And it was always a barrier to getting marketing out because I didn't have good photos. So how do

**Mike Michalowicz:**

You, how do people get hold of John DeMato? His website? Do you know?

**AJ Harper:**

It's john damato.com. Okay.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

John damato.com. Yeah. So go check out John.

**AJ Harper:**

But at any rate, at any rate, I feel like you could just, I mean, we all, and iPhones are amazing cameras. Now just, just take a couple pics. Don't let anything keep you from getting the marketing out is what I'm getting at.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

And I, I would, uh, at a couple things, update your photos at least once a year. I do it every six months. Um, we find that favorite photo and we're like, oh, I basically look the same. There's something different. And it's, it's, oh, Mike, I know, I know. 'cause you're, you have a, a couple great photos, but I've observed you're using 'em over and over again.

**AJ Harper:**

I have multiple photo shoots. So, okay. This is an important, okay, so let me tell you this. I did a whole photo shoot with John DeMato years ago. And then my team would say, well, uh, I'm gonna, here's the marketing. I would say, I don't like that photo, so change the photo. So I had a bunch more photos, but I wouldn't let them use it. Oh. Then we did another photo shoot here on the island this summer, and I have hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of photos. And this time I told Sadé, I said, use whatever you want. Good. Don't check with me. Good. Don't check with me. Good. And I don't even, and when I see the stuff, it honestly does make me cringe. Fine. She says, here's a beautiful photo of you. I'm like, what on earth do you see in that photo? But what I

# don't write *that* book!

learned was I was inhibiting the process. Yep. And she needs to be able to do her job and not have to check with me. And so I ha I don't even, I I says, just pull what you want. I don't care.

## **Mike Michalowicz:**

In, uh, if you think about social media, consume it or not, you know, this, it would be crazy to have the same post day in, day out. Like that's the one photo and one post. That's all you do day in, day out. It's the variety in the currentness that makes social media so consumable. Well, everything is social media. Even a picture on your book is a form of media. Um, and it's consumed. And so that needs to be freshened up. Now, I'm not saying once you have a printed book, you update the book in that photo, every print run. No, no, no, no. But I am saying, like, on your website, which I think we should talk about next, and in other elements, you need to have updated photos. There's one last thing I wanna talk about with photos, and it's a concept I call frequency.

## **Mike Michalowicz:**

What I mean is, the more frequently someone experiences you, the frequency in their mind is blurred if they actually know you. So the more often I see you, the more comfortable I am with you, and it, it builds connection. The more variability, then there's an even stronger connection. So if I see the same picture of you over and over, I'm like, oh, I'm feeling with that one picture. But if I see over time, hundreds or thousands of different pictures of you, now I feel greater connection. So that's why, uh, in, in regards to know when you're done with photos, whatever photo you have, I like the idea. Have someone else evaluate it. And, and that's your photo. So you're done. But photos are never done in the aggregate. You gotta keep doing it.

## **AJ Harper:**

Right. But don't keep, don't keep yourself from putting marketing out into the world. Right. Just because you're waiting on some magical photo shoot where you have to have 15 costume changes and all of this nonsense. Just get a, just get your marketing out.

## **Mike Michalowicz:**

Next thing is websites to know when you're done. I, I wanna start off with a radical opinion here.

## **AJ Harper:**

Okay?

## **Mike Michalowicz:**

You're done when you simply have acquired the domain for your, your book title or your name. And I think every author should have their name secured. Yes. And if you, if you can't get Jane Smith, because they've been taken.com already, get the author jane smith.com,

# don't write *that* book!

**AJ Harper:**

Jane Smith author, Jane Smith writes Jane Smith books.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Step two is on the page. You can say, Jane Smith, I'm an author of a, a brand new book or upcoming book. I've devoted all of my resources to creation of this book. So this website at this point will have nothing else but telling you this, please gimme your email address so I can give you an update. When the website has more content and my new book comes out, I will tell you that's my radical opinion, that that's an adequate website as opposed to a partially developed one. Have a completed simple basic website that costs you nothing beats a partially completed or the worst is error 4 0 4 website not found or domain inaccurate or whatever it says. What's your opinion?

**AJ Harper:**

Yeah, I, I agree. I think, uh, what I tell people to do is, once you have your book fundamentals, your reader statement, core message and promise. You can just use them on your to build the Yeah. Fantastic. Just put those, put those three up. Get people, ask them to be on a waiting list and be done. Don't put the book title though, because let me just say that. Don't put the book title. So don't, don't wait for the title to have that. Because number one, uh, as much as you love it, you are like, the chances you're gonna have to change that title are high. So you don't want people to start affiliating, you know, a thinking of that book title. It's more about who it's for and what is the message.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

I learned something new just, just in the last day or two, uh, from a person named Sandy Wagg. Uh, if you don't know who, she's, she does websites for authors and personal brands. It's MSW Interactive is the website. She's like, oh, Mike, is your schema schema uh, updated? I'm like, well, I don't even know what schema is. She goes, an author website needs to have a schema, which is identifying code that the user doesn't see, but the crawlers, the ro robots, if you will see. And it tells them explicitly what the content is about. So it gives context. And she goes, SEO is, so, so yesterday, it's now a EO or something. It's artificial engine optimization,

**AJ Harper:**

G-GEO, I think generative engine optimization.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Okay. It's geo. And she goes, the schema helps educate those systems. And the authors who have schemas on their website, um, are getting discovered by these engines and properly getting proper accreditation for their work. And if you don't have it, you there, the, our AI is gonna scroll or, uh, scan your website, but may not give you proper accreditation. So it's like, oh my

# don't write *that* book!

gosh. So, uh, SW Interactive, ask for Sandy Wat say Mike sent you, and, uh, I'm sure she can help you out. So, so what we do, listen, I've been my website is, you know, however, since we started like 17 years old, um, and it's been updated and changed and morphed over time, and we actually just did a whole fresh release of the website last month.

## **AJ Harper:**

I saw that

## **Mike Michalowicz:**

It's, yeah. And it's getting, and we're testing things out. It's getting even better results for us. Um, and we miss this big scheme of part. So the website I think is done and function, but it, it's similar to photos. It's, it's done, but it's never done. And so my question to you as AJ is when do we say just move on from that and, and tackle something else on our task list?

## **AJ Harper:**

Well, okay. So don't wait and get something up right away. Like we just said something about the book up right away, and then you can evolve from it. But, uh, what do I think is good to have at launch? I think making sure that you have the book cover on the main page that you have, um, a clear book description and book fundamentals that you have endorsements or blurbs related to it. If you don't have them yet, you can get them from advanced readers or from colleague, or not colleagues, but, uh, clients that you serve or people you work with. I think it's also helpful to have a great bio page where you also have downloadable multiple length bios, um, that, uh, people can use to write about you or to learn more about you. I think you need a media page that shows that media that you have participated in, whether it's podcasts or speaking or broadcast or even print media, but also a place for people to download, again, the bios, your headshots, any pertinent information if you're gonna do a press kit, a digital press kit, any of that.

## **AJ Harper:**

I think you should have a media page. Um, and then make sure that you have buy links. This is something that most authors forget to do. They don't put all the buy links on their website for, you can buy the book in multiple locations. And something authors also forget to do is put info about bulk buys. Um, the person who does this, the best I think is Phil Jones. If you go to Phil Jones website, he has a, prioritizes where, how the information about where you can get bulk buys and also custom books. And, um, that's a huge part of his selling strategy. So you wanna make sure that that's really, uh, evident on your website, that that's something that you can do. And here's how you do it.

## **Mike Michalowicz:**

Also note, particularly in the pre-release stage of your book, that all these different retail outlets, they may update and change your links <laugh>. So <laugh>, we created a, a, a page, a sub page

# don't write *that* book!

to Mike Michalowicz dot com. So right now, actually, if you wanna test it out, is just type in the money habit on whatever search media you use, maybe in generative ai, and then ask for the link. And, um, hopefully it'll send you to mikemichalowicz.com/the money habit, which is the money habit page. Well, we test it, we test it intentionally every few weeks just to make sure, is it still going, is it still going properly? Of the eight links we have, which include bookshop.org, IndieBound, target, Hudson, booksellers, books a million, um, I'd say of the say 80% were not working anymore because there's been changes. Uh, maybe there was a BISAC code update or there was something that was changed and it actually changed the pages on those links, so all the links were dead. So make sure you're testing out your links with some regularity.

**AJ Harper:**

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Let's go onto, so, okay, so the author website, um, is an ongoing piece, but, but how there, now you have some minimum, you know, kind of checklist things to get done. What about just branding materials. What, what's your thoughts about logos branding?

**AJ Harper:**

Look, I'm not, I'm not an expert in branding or logo generation, but what I have seen are authors get really, really stuck on that for a long period of time and then not do anything because they think they're lo they don't have a logo. It's, it's so old school to have a logo.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

I'll try to, um, I'm making a note of myself. I, I gotta see if I can run upstairs and get it for our next episode. Um, I got a gift with the logo. So my logo is two m's. It's like, mm. For Mike Michalowicz, it's like McDonald's Meats, you know, McDonald's, McDonald's. Um, but one's gray. One's blue, I think, I can't remember. Um, I got, I was a Gotti gift of shoes. That's why I gotta see if I can find them at an event this past week that they went to our website and they said they, they put our logo on it. So I, it was just, it was awesome. It was fun. A huge fan of my books. Uh, his name was Matthew. Uh, I cannot remember his last name. I'll see if I can find it. And I wanna give him a shout out and thank you. Um, but I'll tell you, when I held those shoes up and said, thank you so much and talked to other folks, you're like, what's that? What's the mm mean <laugh> like a logo doesn't matter.

**AJ Harper:**

Especially for our authors. It's old school. Remember, you know, when you, you start your business, the, you have to think about what's your logo and your business card, and it goes on your business cards. Yeah. Please don't stress over this. Just get your marketing out and No. Who's paying attention to this? Almost no one. At least when it comes to authorship, maybe it's,

# don't write *that* book!

it's probably a much bigger deal. You know, my cousin was the person who designed the Uber logo.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

I didn't know that. <laugh>.

**AJ Harper:**

Well, I don't think I mentioned it to you. Um, yeah, my cousin was the person who designed it. Huh. Um, that's a big deal. Oh, the Uber logo is a big deal. Why is it a big deal? It's in your app, it's what you're clicking on to get your car. Yeah. Right. The, the logo's, everything for an author, it's who cares? Do not get stuck on colors. And I know colors matter. I know images and graphics matter, but people are getting tripped up on this stuff.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

I think what's everything for an author is their name. You know, James Patterson, AJ Harper.

**AJ Harper:**

Were you saying maybe we need to change it? <laugh>

**Mike Michalowicz:**

No, I'm saying that's the what you gotta put out there. You gotta lean into it.

**AJ Harper:**

Yeah. So, so who cares?

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Yeah. I'm saying lean into, I think if you, some people don't worry about their name. They're like, oh, it's, it's the colors, it's the palette. It's like, no, just get your name out there. And

**AJ Harper:**

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

And I think some people put a book title over their name, and if you're a career author, I really challenge that. Um, we talked about this in prior episodes. I started off with the Toilet Paper Entrepreneur, my first book. And I was like, oh, I'm gonna have a Toilet Paper Entrepreneur website and everything's gonna be about Toilet Paper Entrepreneur. Which is great if I, if you're just gonna do one book, it's the second book that now is like, oh, it's got a link into Toilet Paper Entrepreneur. So I have to have the toilet paper entrepreneur expanded or, or number two

# don't write *that* book!

or part two. Number two. Yeah, there you go. Or, you know, all these things. And now I had painted myself in a corner. So halfway through the toilet paper entrepreneur journey, while we're writing the next book, the Pumpkin Plan, I was like, I gotta own my name.

## **Mike Michalowicz:**

I think some authors discovered that too late. Tim Ferris for a while *Gone with the Wind*, but he's such a big name now. It's been rectified. But he was the four hour Work week guy. And so it wasn't Tim Ferriss, it was Four Hour Work week, then they came four hour *Body* Everything was four hour, four hour *Body*, which to me makes no sense. Like, what does that mean? You either work out four hours a day, is that what he's saying? Or what, what, it doesn't even make sense. And then Four Hour Chef, like it sounds like the most miserable cooking experience of your life.

## **AJ Harper:**

<laugh>,

## **Mike Michalowicz:**

He, he painted himself in the corner. How he dug out of it was his name intentionally put intentionality behind it and became so big. But he had a, in my opinion, fill that hole of the four Hour guy to become Tim Ferriss. Yeah. I think own your name from the beginning. That is your logo. That is your brand.

## **AJ Harper:**

Yeah. I love that.

## **Mike Michalowicz:**

What about videos? How do we get stuck there?

## **AJ Harper:**

Um, so, you know, something that's been, I mentioned earlier about the photos and letting Sade just pick whatever photo she wants for me. I'm also trying to do that with videos where I'm just recording the videos and I'm not stressing. And sometimes I don't even look at them. I just get them done. I just get them done. Now, I'm sure there's people who are gonna say, uh, you need to have, you know, you need to kick worry about this or that and make these improvements. Okay. True. But if the problem is that you're afraid to do it, or you keep rerecording, rerecording, rerecording, rerecording, and then your stuff never gets out, that's worse. So, you know, I'm sure there's people who are correct that, um, the background can be improved. The diction can be improved, the breathing can be improved. Everything can be improved. All true. But if what's happening is you haven't put any video out, like me, you know, I don't love to record video. And so I'm hampering Sade, my marketing person, I'm making her job harder. And I'm also not getting my stuff out because I'm worried about how I am on video. So lately I've been, just, let

# don't write *that* book!

me just shoot this thing. Yeah. And here you go. And then on onto the next, and this is kind of, I think the attitude that people need to start adopting, adopting.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

I'm with you. I think a lot of people don't know the most important part of video. So I'm gonna run a little test on you and you tell me. Okay. Okay. So the most important part of video, is it where I am on the screen. So my eye level is, that's option one. Option two, is it the lighting, meaning how well it's lit? Option three, is that the audio track, option four will say, is it all the above? What do you think is the most important part of video

**AJ Harper:**

Lighting?

**Mike Michalowicz:**

It's the audio track.

**AJ Harper:**

Okay.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

People will forgive horrible lighting. And you've seen these videos, graininess, they, they'll forgive if you're way off the screen. So for our YouTube viewers, if you're sitting down here and

**AJ Harper:**

You're just, you, you're doing the grammar thing on Zoom, where you got just top, see, your head can see eye, yeah. <laugh>.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

If people forgive that. But if they can't, if it's not legible, they can't hear it, you're done.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

So the funny thing about video is we worry about everything, but the most important thing, which is the audio, make sure you just record great audio. And to your point, it, they, they don't want polished. In fact, we want raw and real. We're doing it right now, AJ. We're producing content for our respective author sites, our collective project. Don't write that book. Make sure you're a subscriber. And we're producing it right now, live, uh, the video, but it's almost secondary to the most important part, which is the audio. So I invite people, put quantity of content out there with quality components, but don't worry about the quality of the video, in my opinion, unless it's a marquee piece. So when we launched, get different, our launch video was

# don't write *that* book!

this very different launch video for a book. It was a stance and all this different stuff. And that we spent hours and hours nailing it down. And it was a great video. And it did well. When we did the Pumpkin plan, we spent hours and hours doing a video about the one nut guy. We hired an actor.

**AJ Harper:**

Oh my God. We hired an actor.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Hired an Actor. Um,

**AJ Harper:**

He was great.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Yeah. He subsequently passed away. Unfortunately. He, well, he was an elderly guy. He had to play that character. Um, my favorite scene is me spooning him on bed in the bed,

**AJ Harper:**

<laugh>, I still re I still remember that. Shoot, it was a great day.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

It was a great day. Um, Peter was his name. I can't remember his last name at the moment. But, um, there's certain things that will be more key pieces, of course, those you need to spend adequate time on. But if you try to spend a lot of time on every piece, you're, you're, you're not doing it right. You're done. The second, the first pass is completed, you're generally done. That's my opinion. Yeah. Okay. Yeah. Um, other marketing stuff, newsletters.

**AJ Harper:**

I mean, I think you're sensing the theme here, like the theme, you know, like newsletter is another one. People always say, I don't know what my topic should be. I don't know what this should be. I'm worried it's supposed to be perfect. Yeah. Um, I was just talking with a colleague, um, yesterday, and they have a Friday newsletter that's just three things that she likes. Mm. And she said it's not even necessarily, she's, she's a writer. It's not even necessarily related to writing. She said it might be about lip gloss. Um, and then maybe also something about writing, I don't know, it doesn't have to be 2000 words. It doesn't have to be a hundred words. And Perfect. You don't have to do the James Clear. 1, 2, 3 thing. You can do whatever you feel like doing yourself. And you know, with my own newsletter, like right now, it's Thursday, October 23rd.

# don't write *that* book!

**AJ Harper:**

Tomorrow I am, we are packing up and leaving the island for the season and driving back to New York. I'm not sure I can pull off a full newsletter tomorrow because I should have had it written a week ago. But all these preparations to get outta here, am I gonna, I'm gonna put something out, but it might be different. Yeah. And so it's okay. It might just be me saying farewell to the island. Um, I'll be back with my best tips next week. Is that better than me completely skipping? Yeah. Do I have to worry if anybody's really gonna care? No one cares. It's fine. No one cares

**Mike Michalowicz:**

<laugh>. No one cares. You know what's interesting is, I think the biggest value a newsletter offers that we don't even consider is it just, it's a top of mind. It's a, it's a reminder. So it hits someone's inbox and they may simply say, oh, AJ sent her thing. Oh, I'll read it later. And me, they never get to it. But for a moment they said, oh, I haven't forgotten about aj and they haven't forgotten. She hasn't forgotten about me, and she hasn't forgotten

**AJ Harper:**

About me. Yeah. Yeah. And so I think people get a little too uptight about it, something being perfect, and then it holds them up from get, I do it all the time. Listen, I can almost hear my team right now going, are you listening to yourself, AJ? Are you listening to yourself? Can you play this message back for yourself?

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Could you imagine

**AJ Harper:**

It's, I, I'm serious. I'm gonna get a text. Once they listen to this, they're gonna be like, are you listening to yourself? They're gonna just, they're just gonna quote me. Um, because I have this hangup, you know, I can tell people, I can tell other authors, ship it, do it, get it done. Um, and then for me it's harder.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Yeah. It's hard. Very, very human of you.

**AJ Harper:**

Hard, hard to let go.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

# don't write *that* book!

My sister-in-law was here. Um, my, my brother-in-law, I call my brother-in-law. He's not my brother-in-law. It's my sister-in-law's husband. And, uh, he's, he's in the military. He's heading over to Baghdad's in the US Embassy there. And he's gonna, um, be a guard at the embassy, or he is actually gonna oversee the guard. Um, so we're saying goodbye 'cause he's gonna be there for 90 days, and you come back for a 30, you go for 90. And she's what we're sitting down for dinner. And she goes, oh, I love the newsletter. And I'm like, the what, what newsletter? She goes, um, money simplified or, or simplified the Money Habit. Um, and I said, why do you love it? She goes, you know, you send it every week, uh, money Monday, we get it. And I sit down with the two kids, my, my niece and nephew, and we sit down, we go over to these little money tips. Uh, and she goes, it's become like a point of conversation at dinner every Monday. I didn't, I literally had no idea she did that. And, and she's like, oh, well, we've been doing it for, you know, six months now. Um, so it's interesting. I think I've been looking for the feedback, is this newsletter really working? And what I'm looking at is, the only measurement I have is like, is it open rates? Click through rates.

## **AJ Harper:**

Mm-hmm <affirmative>.

## **Mike Michalowicz:**

There is consumption of your content that's out there that's happening that you'll never be aware that's happening. So I think some people give up too soon too. They say, well, the newsletter, I don't know if anyone's really reading this thing. Uh, and they are. And it's having an impact. And then to the flip point, you're done. When you have a piece of content that you feels of service, it doesn't need to be perfect or polished. Um, and shame if, if you're not getting that newsletter out there, because those moments aren't happening. So, so get it out.

## **AJ Harper:**

Yeah. It's, it's the, it's the same with almost all the marketing that you do. Because if you're tracking, I think that's the key thing. If you're tracking to see if it's working or not, then you can always tweak and adjust later. And people obviously are not gonna remember that last week, or sorry, that six months ago your newsletter was like this, and now it's like that. I mean, maybe some diehards would, but it honestly, what you care about, most people don't care about.

## **Mike Michalowicz:**

Which, although, let's give it another, you're done on just general written content. I remember you and I were at the Cookie Factory, uh, I'm sure we've referred to it before, but the quick primer is when I became an author, I wanted a, a space, but I had no money to afford it. So I reached out to a great colleague, uh, and friend Howard Hirsh, and he said, yeah, you can, you can have an office in my factory, which was a cookie factory. And I was right above the ovens <laugh> in a windowless office, uh, that cost me nothing. It was amazing. And the temperatures

# don't write *that* book!

were even more amazing. It would get up to 95, 95 degrees in my office when outside it was like 40. Um, well, one thing, we sat down and you and I were working on that whiteboard, which was actually was a side of a shower.

## **Mike Michalowicz:**

So we, we took a shower. Jeremy Smith, who was working with me at the time, took a shower side and mounted it to the wall and then put turtle wax on it from like, you know, for, for a car. And it became this whiteboard that cost like \$15 to make. And we're sitting there and we're talking about like, what's the, we, I don't think we were calling a mission statement, but what do we do? And it's like, oh, I get in the sandbox. You know, we're, we're, we're entrepreneurs. We're in the sandbox together. And I think, I don't remember what it was, but we're like, this is good enough. Like, let's, we're done. Let, is what we're gonna put out there. And for years it was something like, you know, I'm in the sandbox with you over time. It just, we massaged it and played with it. And I don't know how it ultimately came about, but it's eradicate entrepreneurial poverty. It's on my wall here. It's, it's everywhere. And like, oh, that is the most simplified version of what I do. That's my life's purpose. But it took years and years to get there. And what does shame would've been if I'm like, until it's that thing, I'm not gonna do anything. That would've been seven or eight years of my author career put on hold. So that, to me, that was the most important written content that we just did it.

## **AJ Harper:**

I think you just hit on it. You're putting something on hold when you're, when you're deciding, is this perfect or is this ready? Is it done? Is it cooked? Instead ask your question, what am I putting on hold by delaying this? Yeah. I think that's what you have to do. And I, I'm listening. I'm listening. I'm hearing myself for sure. I'm, I'm such a culprit of this. If I told you right now, the things that I had on hold, you would be like, aj, what?

## **Mike Michalowicz:**

I'd lose my mind. I'd lose

## **AJ Harper:**

My mind. You would, you would. Absolutely. I'm not even gonna admit it right now, but I will say that Sade did say to me in the car when we were driving to the airport this summer after a retreat, all I want for Christmas is a new website. <laugh>. You did say that.

## **Mike Michalowicz:**

I've yet to meet s Sade. I don't think I've even have I spoke with her on the phone. I can't. I got beat maybe,

## **AJ Harper:**

# don't write *that* book!

Or maybe when she first started on a Zoom or something. I'm not really sure. But not recently. You would ab-. You can't steal her though.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Where did No, no, no, no. Where does she live?

**AJ Harper:**

Chicago.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Oh, okay. Well, one of these times there's a meetup in Madeline Island. If you could make sure Sade is there. Uh, at the time, I'd love just to hang out with you guys and Laura. Um, and who knows, maybe, maybe that's our first guest. Screw Steven Pressfield. It's gonna be Sade and Laura. Get the teams.

**AJ Harper:**

The team, the teams behind the authors.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Oh, that. Now that would be a fun,

**AJ Harper:**

That actually would be a fun episode to get your team and my team chatting actually with each other.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Yeah. Minus us.

**AJ Harper:**

Let us off. Let it, we'll be out of it.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

On it, on it. Lemme write this down.

**AJ Harper:**

That's actually really good. I love that idea.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

# don't write *that* book!

Yeah. Okay. We're gonna, we're gonna flip the tables. We let them do it. I love it. That's

## **AJ Harper:**

Actually way more interesting, <laugh>.

## **Mike Michalowicz:**

Yeah. And they're gonna, they're gonna say all this stuff. They're, it's all nonsense. What they're saying is totally wrong. Here's the reality. They. Yeah. Um, bonus offers. What about that?

## **AJ Harper:**

Yeah. I see people getting in the weeds with that. They want all the different types of bonus offers. They wanna list everything humanly possible, and they just get so stuck and they end up giving all this stuff and it gets over complicated. I don't know, man. Just put some stuff out there and see if people respond. And then you'll know. And you can almost tweak it. Like when you do the bonus hours, it's not like when you post it, then you can't change it. You can change it. Hmm. So it's, you know what I mean? Like, you're, so you're not, you're not posting it until you think you get it Right. But you might not know it's right until you post it.

## **Mike Michalowicz:**

Yeah. That's a hundred percent true. You know, the lost content, which I referred to last episode, it, it's one of the most desirable bonus offers, if not the most desirable bonus offer from our consumers. So when we launch, or from our readers, so when we launch the Money Habit in January, um, we're gonna have the multi-book offer that is inevitably a very successful campaign for every one of my books. And, and everyone listening, I really encourage you to explore it and do it. And we found that the quantities need to vary. But basically you have three to five levels. If you buy one book, here's the bonuses that come with it. But if you buy five books, here's the bonuses. We've never done the one book copy, uh, one book version. We always do start at two minimally. If you buy two books, you get so and so.

## **Mike Michalowicz:**

The reason we do that is I emphatically believe the the value delivered by purchasing one book is so extraordinary that I'm actually challenging myself. Meaning saying that the book isn't good enough, you deserve more. And, and I don't believe that to be true. So I'm staunch about that. Um, other authors do do it. So I'm not saying it's wrong just for, for me, I think it is. But these different levels of bonuses, if you buy three books with the idea of gifting a couple or doing whatever you want with those extras, you get additional content. We've been playing the lost content and, uh, people love it. Now this is stuff that got chopped from the book sections, pieces, uh, as a standalone piece. It might not even make sense. Um mm-hmm <affirmative>. Sometimes it's long, full stories, but this voyeurism is really appealing to folks. And so it's so funny, some of the best content for bonuses is stuff you already have. You're done before you

# don't write *that* book!

even got started. It's just there, I think other bonus offers like, uh, anything that's behind the scenes. So sharing some of the journey. Another thing we did was, uh, we did all the covers. I can't remember. Oh, I think for the Money Habit, we're doing it too. A video of where the cover first started and you watch it morph over time. Peter Cochlan, uh, did that video fours.

## **AJ Harper:**

I love that. That's so cool. What did you ditch all? You said before all the titles, but you could do that with all sorts of stuff.

## **Mike Michalowicz:**

With all sorts of stuff. So I think a lot of bonus content is if you don't know where, if you're done yet, you are done. It's all the work you've done building up to it. Just assemble it and get that out there. Yeah. I think it's the easiest lift of, of all. And yet people stay stuck on this one the longest. And it's like, I'm not done yet. I'm not done yet. Oh, no, you're done. You're done. Before get started. Mm-hmm <affirmative>. Yeah. Um, the launch plan, uh, yeah.

## **AJ Harper:**

People are worried about it with reason, with good reason. It's scary. You don't know what you should do. I mean, honestly, I think, um, get some sort of street team together and some, and that a street team, meaning people who are gonna promote your book and go the extra mile doing it, um, create graphics and swipe, swipe copy for them, create some sort of event on the day or during the week. Could be online, could be an hour, could be half an hour, could be, and it doesn't have to be complicated where you're acknowledging it and then put your street team out. And at a minimum you can do that for the launch at a minimum. At a minimum.

## **Mike Michalowicz:**

And I would also say yes to all that if it is congruent with who you are.

## **AJ Harper:**

I for sure. But I, you need to get people out there shilling for you. Like you need to do the street team piece.

## **Mike Michalowicz:**

I don't know. I, I wanna challenge that. So Melissa Alki just launched scar tissue and she didn't have a street team. She's doing door to door-to-door campaigns effectively where she assembles a group of people interested in the subject of trauma and trauma recovery, navigating grief specifically, and just has an intimate conversation where she'll sit down with, you know, five or 10 people and talk about it, and then she'll go to the next home and say, Hey, let's get together and talk about the grief, grief we're going through. It's,

# don't write *that* book!

**AJ Harper:**

I get that, but I just, I still think you need to expand your influence. And that street team is a really basic way to do it. It,

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Oh, it's a great way. If it speaks to you, that's, we maybe have the great debate over street teams. I'm a supporter and fan of street teams. I think it's actually one of the best vehicles as we're talking here. One of our original street team members in, in my email popped up Debbie Hovi, you know who she is? She said, Hey, heard you're in Toronto. Uh, I'm going out there to record, um, my podcast called Becoming Self-Made, which

**AJ Harper:**

Is, where are you in, in Toronto?

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Um, next week. Me, I'm, I'm interviewing me. Yusuf, um, west

**AJ Harper:**

Are you, you going to the page two thing?

**Mike Michalowicz:**

No, it's a I'm a day off.

**AJ Harper:**

Oh, okay. So I won't see you there.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Yeah. And I'm flying down to, uh, Australia, right? Like the next day, uh, for, for some work down there, but speaking gig. But, um, she's been a major supporter and proponent, so I a hundred percent agree with street teams. Unless it's not within your wheelhouse. Some people it becomes very awkward. Um, I think the launch plan is identify from other authors, what's they've, what's worked for them, and then cherry pick the top three to five things that you wanna do and run with those.

**AJ Harper:**

You know what I'm saying? Okay. You know what? We probably have a deeper dive on that. Okay. I'm gonna say. Yeah. 'cause I have defin I have definite thoughts on that. I think it starts in what your objective is because

# don't write *that* book!

**Mike Michalowicz:**

That's true. That's true. That's

**AJ Harper:**

True. You know, and what's gonna get you to the goal? So you would have to set the goal first. You know what, let's put a pin in this one. I think. Yeah. This is, I got the pin

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Right here. Look at this. YouTubers, you're seeing it. There's an actual pin right here.

**AJ Harper:**

Green punch pin. A green punch

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Pin.

**AJ Harper:**

You got the pin. Okay. So let's move on from that one. 'cause I, I think that's too complicated to do, especially at the end of this episode. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Well, behind all this you mentioned in the notes here is perfectionism.

**AJ Harper:**

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

And the funny thing is, everything is so temporary except, except for the book itself. Everything else is so temporary that the perfectionism, I think needs to be deployed to your book. Listen to last week's episode within guardrails and parameters. But with marketing, we're deploying that same kind of scrutiny. Far too much in the marketing, therefore is ineffective. That's my summary.

**AJ Harper:**

Yeah. And you should be tracking the marketing. So if you're worried about will it work or not, put it out and then figure out if it does and then change it.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

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Hey, you have this note about Sloane saying something. What's this all about? What's the saying?

**AJ Harper:**

Oh yeah. So Sloan is one of the people who inspired this episode and she said, do c students do better than a students? Meaning they're not putting as much effort into it. They're not getting worried about perfectionism, but they're actually getting it done. Like, it's okay to be a C student. It might be doing better if you're a C student when it

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Comes to that thing. Yeah. Because a students focused on their grades. The C student is moving forward perhaps. Yeah.

**AJ Harper:**

Because I remember my wife saying to our son, Cs, get degrees, <laugh>

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Cs get degrees. I love that.

**AJ Harper:**

Yes. It doesn't matter. You're still getting the degree. Go get it. <laugh>.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

The big news we wanna remind you about is we now have a YouTube channel and we do, you just see all this stuff going on behind the scenes, including my, my, uh, you didn't choose the stud life card, the, the green pin. I just jabbed. If you have, we're wearing your 3D glasses, which we did ship to our initial subscribers to YouTube. That was a 3D effect. So make sure you're wearing your 3D glasses when I pointed at the camera like that. Um, but please check us out on YouTube. It's don't write that book. You'll find the podcast there. We start broadcasting since episode 1 0 2. And I think I'll give you some more insights into our show and we'd be honored if you check it out. The other thing is I wanna remind you that there is a authorship planning math masterclass that AJ's doing. AJ, just give us a few details of how people find it and sign up.

**AJ Harper:**

Go to aj harper.com. It's on January 16th and 17th. It's a, uh, 10 to four on the 16th and nine to 12 on the 17th. It's a deep dive into planning 2026 so that you're meeting your goals and able to manage all the different things that authors have to deal with, such as developing writing, editing your book, getting it published, and then launching it, continuing to market it, monetization, all those different things. And if you're an author with multiple books, you have one that's already

# don't write *that* book!

out, one that's going, this can get kind of tricky. And so it's, it's how do you manage all that and then also still have a life that you really <laugh> that you really enjoy. You're not in the hospital and you're meeting those goals. It's tricky. It's not simple and it's custom for each person. So we're doing a day and a half and uh, joining me will be a bunch of authors who have done this in their own way to share their experience

**Mike Michalowicz:**

And this. So make sure everyone got it. Those were Eastern Times you referred to. So can you share the dates

**AJ Harper:**

January 16th and 17th?

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Yep. Okay. And those are Eastern times so you can listen in anywhere in the world. 'cause it is a virtual experience, right? It's not a Madeline Island,

**AJ Harper:**

It's on Zoom. It's all gonna be recorded. So if you miss part of it, it's cool. You can have access to the recordings and if you go to [ajharper.com](http://ajharper.com), you can register. And if you use the code DWTB, you can get \$50 off.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Bingo. Okay. Well there you go. Two episodes on how to know when you're done. We would really be honored if you rate and review the show. We need that to get the word out. So whatever your pod catcher is, please do that. Extra materials are [@dwtbpodcast.com](mailto:@dwtbpodcast.com). So check out our website. You can learn a little bit more about what AJ's doing and what I'm doing. If you sign up there and any questions, comments, or show ideas you have, we're taking those. So you can email our producer Behind the scenes for the show is ala that's my daughter. You can email her at [hello@dwtbpodcast.com](mailto:hello@dwtbpodcast.com). She's working with Sade and Laura and, uh, I made the note, aj, we're gonna see if we can convince the teams, all of 'em, to come together and have the great debate over us. <laugh>. Yeah. We'll just stay out of it. I know. And then we just, we just run away. Thanks for joining us. Remember, don't write that book. Write the greatest book you can.