

# don't write *that* book!

## Episode 112:

### “Working on Multiple Books at the Same Time”

**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.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Okay, here we go. So, I got a text from Krista while we're talking. I dunno if you saw me hop on the phone.

**AJ Harper:**

I got a text from my wife while we were talking.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Well, mine was a complaint. What was yours?

**AJ Harper:**

Um, it's going to be, because mine said, did you take the garbage out? Oh. And the answer is, I forgot.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Okay. Mine was, don't wear boots in the house, please. <laugh>. I leave a note. So I left. You know, we, we start early. We, you were here 6:55. 6:45 this morning. Yeah. So I got here a few minutes before seven by I, I got breakfast down.

**AJ Harper:**

I, I drive 40 minutes in.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Yeah. So we're both starting early. It's pitch blackout. So I'm, I'm tip toing around the house. And, um, all I have is these, these work boots. So I'm like, just grab the work boots and put 'em on. And I went to the bathroom to brush my teeth, and I looked down and there's one track. I'm like, oh God. <laugh>. Oh God. There's one in my track. I'm like, so I I I brush it under the credenza thing or whatever, the armoire, whatever that thing is. You,

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**AJ Harper:**

You shoved it under?

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Just one. It's 'cause one little track. And then I'm tiptoeing. I'm like, do not drop mud. Do not drop. I blow a kiss at my wife. She's out cold sleeping. I sneak out, I stomp my feet. Once I get out, I'm like, there's no tracks. I'm like, I think I made it.

**AJ Harper:**

You didn't make it.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

I didn't make, I got the text. "Don't wear your boots in the house. Michael."

**AJ Harper:**

Right. But last night I said, my wife said, I need to go take the garbage out. I said, I'm leaving early in the morning. I'm just gonna take it. And she looked at me quizzically, and she's like, what? I said, no, I'm, I'll take it to the curb. And she said, that's not your job. And I said, I know, but I can do it. And she said, will you? This is the key. Will you remember <laugh>? And I said, Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Indignant. Yeah.

**AJ Harper:**

Yeah. And the thing I'm so sad about is that she was so excited. She was like, wow, okay. Mm. Yay. Now I have to, I have not responded to the text.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Oh, no. I know. What do you do?

**AJ Harper:**

I, well, okay, here's what, here's going to what I'm gonna do. Yeah. Thursday the garbage comes again.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Okay.

**AJ Harper:**

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So today is Monday. Okay, I'm gonna get up. No, I'm gonna go out Wednesday night. Mm. And I'm just gonna go do it.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Are you at risk for any kind of animals getting into it? Raccoons or something?

**AJ Harper:**

No.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Oh, then, yeah, I would do that.

**AJ Harper:**

I don't live in, I live in a cute little river village town that's, um, a suburb of Manhattan. It's not like you, you are, you're, you're out there. You've got some woods.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Oh, we got bears. You know, what I found is the secret to proactively addressing this is when my wife does something and falls short, not to be judgmental, but say, oh, don't, it happens to everybody. Because then when it comes back to me, then I've already, uh, deflated the animosity. So recycle comes only once every t two weeks to our house. I've been traveling the last two recycles. So I've asked my wife, I say, Hey, could you bring out recycling? So we've missed, she missed both of those. So we now have a month and a half to two months of recycle. It's filling up half of our garage. And, uh,

**AJ Harper:**

She's, what are you consuming that it's filling up half of your, you are exaggerating.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

You wouldn't believe how many recycles we go through. Yeah. I am exaggerating. It uses a quarter of our garage, but we have four overflowing bins.

**AJ Harper:**

Is it driving you crazy?

**Mike Michalowicz:**

No,

**AJ Harper:**

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No, no. Because you're like, I'm letting it go.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

I'm, yeah. No, no. When she goes, I'm so sorry. I said, oh no. It happens to everybody because I'm the Yahoo forgets to take out the garbage or forgets, forgets to take it out. And she used to speak, you forgot again. But now since I've been priming her with, it happens to everybody. Don't worry about it. When I forget recycle. Next week happens to everybody.

**AJ Harper:**

I, I hope that happens for you. But I'm gonna stick with Wednesday. I'm gonna set a reminder on my phone. Yeah,

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Yeah. Do that. Do that.

**AJ Harper:**

Yeah. I'm doing it.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Um, so today's episode, we're gonna talk about working on multiple books at the same time. I'm joined the studio with AJ Harper, the author of Write a Must Read. Also, she has [ajharper.com](http://ajharper.com) where you can sign up for book retreats and other stuff to enhance your book life writing experience. Uh, well, I admire about you, AJ is, uh, you're not manipulative like I am with my wife. I mean, you're not psychologically manipulative.

**AJ Harper:**

You said it. I didn't say it.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

I'm psychologically manipulative. You're not. You are such a, a stalwart for your wife. Constantly supporting her. Um, and, and blocking and tackling. I admire that.

**AJ Harper:**

Well, um, that's what we signed up for, right?

**Mike Michalowicz:**

I guess so. Yeah.

**AJ Harper:**

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I mean, I did <laugh>.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

<laugh>. Yeah. Yeah, of course. Me too. Of course, of course. Yeah.

**AJ Harper:**

Um, I, I think we, I think we can have a mutual admiration for how we care about our spouses. Actually, I admire that about you as well. I think we have that shared value, um, of trying to grow in the relationship as opposed to being stuck in this, you know, though, I mean, you get, we've both been married almost 30 years. Yeah. That's, that's, there were several people during that time. Yeah. You have to keep reconnecting, keep getting to know. You have to be willing to stick it out. You have to be willing to be there, as my mom would say, when the tide goes in and when the tide goes out. Oh,

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Wow.

**AJ Harper:**

Oh, you wanna hear that? What

**Mike Michalowicz:**

A great metaphor.

**AJ Harper:**

Oh, no, listen, lemme tell you, we got married and, uh, it wasn't legal yet, but it was, you know, real for us. White dress, whole deal. (I love it.) Um, my mom came up and she did the flowers as a gift for us. So she did the flowers for the whole wedding. And she took me aside and she said, okay, look, number one, this marriage is not about you and how you feel or your comfort, it's about spiritual growth. Hmm. And she said, if you understand that, then you can weather storms. And she said, secondly, Mar in marriage, the tide, uh, you will not always be in love. She said, sometimes the tide goes out. Well, you have to remember when the tide goes out, is that it always comes back in. It's like the ocean.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

I love that.

**AJ Harper:**

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So if it's out, don't forget that it will come back in. And she said, 'cause I was a massive flirt at the time. Bad. She said, listen, you can't make your, put yourself in vulnerable situations when the tide is out.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Oh, that's smart.

**AJ Harper:**

Because you, you have to protect the marriage. So you have to remember tide's coming back in, that's a guarantee. It's gonna come. You don't know when, but when it's out, you're gonna shore up.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

That's so great.

**AJ Harper:**

And I tell you what, it's one of the main reasons that we're still married. That

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Is so great.

**AJ Harper:**

Right. Now that's good marriage advice. And so then later in our marriage, we'd be like, oh, tides in. Like, that's a, like, you could feel it like, you know that shift Yeah. When you're like, oh, like you always love your spouse, but then there's a moment when you're like, look at, look at who I married to.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Yeah, yeah, Yeah. You know? Yeah,

**AJ Harper:**

Yeah, yeah. Like, you get that little spark, that's when the side comes in. I love it. But when it's out, you have to be like super protective because you're vulnerable.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

I dunno if it's a tied in moment, but, uh, yesterday, so all of our children are back for the first time at our house, collectively at the same time, perhaps in over a year or two.

**AJ Harper:**

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That's a lot. Lot's. Plus your daughter-in-law, right?

**Mike Michalowicz:**

My daughter, plus my daughter-in-law. So, uh, my la yesterday, which was Sunday, my daughter was there with her boyfriend. (Okay.) For her long-term boyfriend, like live-in boyfriend

**AJ Harper:**

Because it's kind of serious. Right.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Very serious. Yeah. My youngest son was, yeah, they're gonna get married. I, I was, was shocked.

**AJ Harper:**

Was whispering, I dunno, I dunno. Because Adayla is a producer of this show. <laugh>

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Yeah. Oh, that's right. Yeah. <laugh>. She won't listen to this. Uh, he's great. Marco. And then my son, my youngest son was there. He came back from Utah just having a extraordinary business journey. He's loving it. And then my oldest son was there and all this insanity going on. And I went to my wife. I'm like, when are we alone again? <laugh>. Aww. When does this, me and you? So the tide is in.

**AJ Harper:**

The tide is in. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Yeah. Just like, just love spending time with her. Okay. Um, let's talk about writing multiple books at the same time. Isn't isn't that the essence of who you are? AJ? Isn't it like that your life?

**AJ Harper:**

No.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Well, you're working with so many authors in the process.

**AJ Harper:**

I'm not writing those things.

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**Mike Michalowicz:**

That's true.

**AJ Harper:**

But I edit multiple books at the same time.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Well, that's part of writing is rewriting.

**AJ Harper:**

That's not my content.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

You're, you've started a new writing season yourself, though, for your own,

**AJ Harper:**

Almost. So if we define writing season, when you and I talk about it, it's when we started on a new book, and actually specifically, it's not, it's not book development, it's the actual sit down, bang it out is writing season. Right? Isn't that how you define it? Yeah,

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Yeah. No, totally. Yeah,

**AJ Harper:**

Because we're 'cause the book development is always happening. Yeah. But then there's, there's book development and then there's actively in book development. And I need another term for what happens before active book development. Because that's when you're just sort of, oh, that's cool. Or that's in because you have,

**Mike Michalowicz:**

It's a liminal state of, right.

**AJ Harper:**

Well, for you it would be, I would equate it to you get an idea, you see an article, you get it. Um, yeah. And you put it in, you've got your coordinated potentially, what are some books you wanna do eventually, but you're not actually dev actively developing those

**Mike Michalowicz:**

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Is assimilation.

**AJ Harper:**

I don't know. I need a term for it. I'm gonna think of one.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

I like assimilation for the moment.

**AJ Harper:**

But then book development is where you're, where you're actually gathering content, testing content, actively prepping for it would be like in Rocky, when he's like getting ready for the fight,

**Mike Michalowicz:**

He's hitting the slabs of,

**AJ Harper:**

Of, that's a little bit what book development is. And so then there's writing season, which is banging out the first draft. And I'm about to start that.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

So development, you've devoted to the book itself, but you're still collecting and assembling its structure.

**AJ Harper:**

Yeah. So for ex, so yeah. So I'm working on two books right now. Well, I haven't, well, by the time this airs I will have already been doing that. But I officially start, uh, December one.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Okay. Writing

**AJ Harper:**

In writing season on, on one book. And very serious development on another book. And actually behind, behind me is another book.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Does that mean you're, you are literally writing two books at the same time? Do so

**AJ Harper:**

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There will be some crossover. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Does that confuse the books? What's the risks of doing this?

**AJ Harper:**

Well, I will say, uh, <laugh> in my ghost writer years, I, I have multiple, multiple books at the same time.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Okay.

**AJ Harper:**

It's very, it's very confusing. It's exhausting. Confusing.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

How do you switch your mind from I'm working on this subject to that subject or this book to that book? Like how, how do you flip that switch?

**AJ Harper:**

Well, you know, I think part of the reason why it's easier when you're a ghost is because I'm not, it's not my stuff.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Okay.

**AJ Harper:**

I think it's harder to write on multiple books if it's your stuff. Because if it's not my stuff, this is a job. (Yeah.) These are the parameters of the job. Okay.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

So it's easier to separate that stuff out?

**AJ Harper:**

Yeah. But not, I will be honest. Not really when I'm working. Like I wrote Write a Must read while I was also writing. I think two of your books. 'cause Write a Must read took me longer.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

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Yeah.

**AJ Harper:**

So I was working on write read. That's right. But I was also writing...

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Get Different?

**AJ Harper:**

I can't remember. I don't remember honestly. It's a blur. Yeah, it's a blur. But I know it, it went over the course of two of your books. Yes. And I would have to pause my book. Yes. 'cause I was in writing season for you. But, um, because I think I'm so emotionally invested in your stuff. Yeah. You're not, you know, like when I was a ghost writer, that's client work. You and I are not client, it's not a client relationship. It's a creative partnership. So I've become like, I'm super invested in the money ha-- money habit. Yeah. You know, I'm not writing anything else. I can't realistically,

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Hey, personal question, because we're both with Page Two, when it comes to the royalties, and this is way off topic, but is it now quarterly or monthly?

**AJ Harper:**

Quarterly.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Quarterly.

**AJ Harper:**

But once it kicks in, it takes, it takes six months.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Oh, it takes six months to kick in. Yeah. Okay. Okay. Um, back to the topic de jour. Oh,

**AJ Harper:**

You're gonna love that. Quarterly.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

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I'm gonna love the quarterly. Because I was thinking in my head, we're recording this in November. Um, the traditional publishing cycle for me is March and September. Yeah. So I'm like, oh, March is gonna be a nice royalty check coming. And I was like,

**AJ Harper:**

But not for, not for Money Habit.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Not paid. Yeah. I thought the money habit, like, oh wow. That's gonna be a good 'cause that's gonna be all the launch stuff. That's gonna be a good march. Um, but it's really, we're talking about September. Yes. Okay. Of 2026. So I'm on a flight. Uh, here's the secret. If you're flying over six hours and you have the means, um, particularly a sponsor that will pay for it, get the, get the lie-flat. So, uh, my sponsor Relay has me do, doing this new podcast called Becoming Self-Made. I invite everyone to download and get it. I, I'm really proud of the show. So I'm flying to Los Angeles, I'm flying back on a lie-flat. I'm sleeping. I wake up and go, ah, I got AJ's book title. Don't write that book. I'm like, this is genius. So I'm just putting it out there. I think at some point when you feel compelled, you should write the book. Don't write that book.

**AJ Harper:**

I did. It's called Write A Must Read.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

You don't think all smarmy. All right. You did. You did the whole No, but

**AJ Harper:**

I wasn't this a smarmy. You mean sassy. You don't mean smarmy

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Smarmy. You Yeah. Yeah. Okay. Yeah, you're right. That was not smy, that was sassy with a taste of Smarmy.

**AJ Harper:**

What I did, I did write that.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

I think you should write another book. Don't write that book. Like, all the stuff, the mistakes. It's, to me it's the don't Eat This, eat that.

**AJ Harper:**

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Uhhuh

**Mike Michalowicz:**

<affirmative>. I think

**AJ Harper:**

Maybe a little book. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Yeah. Totally. And maybe it's like a

**AJ Harper:**

Little baby book.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Maybe back to a few episodes back the substantive or edit the additional content you can create. Maybe that's that. So.

**AJ Harper:**

Yeah, I love it.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

I was gonna say, you're welcome, but I guess you're not welcome.

**AJ Harper:**

Well, that would have to be another in the back, like, you know, that's

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Yeah, I know, I know, I know. It's so easy to throw ideas at other authors. Um, so you have two books in, in development now.

**AJ Harper:**

So I would argue I have three books in development and I am actively gonna be writing two in, um, well, one in December and then two Oh, it'll carry out. It's gonna cross over based on my schedule. So I'm gonna be actively writing two.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

How do you decide which one of those two is coming first in the writing?

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**AJ Harper:**

There's so many factors. So, um, a lot of it is having to think strategically about your publishing path. For example, if I were gonna self-publish a book, I have a lot of control. I can bang stuff out in terms of, you know, getting the book to market. Not bang out the book, but getting a book to market. But if you are traditionally published or with a top tier hybrid that has trade distribution, you really do have to consider that you're probably not gonna be published for a year or longer. And so the timing, you have to kind of line it up. So this, uh, second book I'm writing, so, okay. I wrote a book called Write a Must-Read. So while I'm talking today, book two means second book with my name on it. Book three means third book with my name on it. So, so book three that I'm working on, I know from talking to our publisher that they want that to have a lot of lead time for marketing because they're very excited about it.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Um, this is, I'm sorry, book two or book three?

**AJ Harper:**

Book three. Book three. Okay. So the reason I moved it to three. Is because I need, uh, to build some more platform around it. Because the book will be for, um, creators, not just writers.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Oh, Rick Rubin. Oh. Oh, I wish we were YouTubing this one. <laugh> Face. The Face says so much. it. Adayla's gonna be so upset. 'cause she wants all these on YouTube. And since we're in our old school studio, we're not filming. Yeah.

**AJ Harper:**

We're not there yet. Oh.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

I finally squeezed the first drop of juice from that lemon. You've been holding it in.

**AJ Harper:**

Yeah. So that's,

**Mike Michalowicz:**

wow. I'm pumped.

**AJ Harper:**

Really?

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**Mike Michalowicz:**

Yeah. Okay, good.

**AJ Harper:**

So <laugh>, you know, um, you know Alex, um, I can't ever, Alex, forgive me, I can't pronounce your last name right? Oh,

**Mike Michalowicz:**

From, uh, books to read. Yes. Uh,

**AJ Harper:**

Do it do

**Mike Michalowicz:**

It. Is it Wakowski? Oh, I'll look him up. But yeah, I always forget his last name. And it's like Michalowicz,

**AJ Harper:**

He needs, I know. And he, I want him to have a, a little gimmicky thing like you do with his name.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Alex loves books.

**AJ Harper:**

No, I know. But that's why it says Alex loves books.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Oh. Like, like, like, like, uh, Mike Motorbike kind of thing. Yeah.

**AJ Harper:**

Like Mike Motorbike. At any rate, Alex came onto

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Alex Wakowski.

**AJ Harper:**

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Yeah. Okay. So Wakowski, forgive me, Alex, I, I stumble over it. Um, all right. And it, I hope it's, is it Wakowski? Yeah. I hope you're right.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

I'm confident of it now, Alex. Right. It's like Wakowski. No, it's Wakowski. It looks, it's Wakowski. And I'm embarrassed. I forget it too. I love him. I love him.

**AJ Harper:**

He's a sweet sweetheart. And he came up to me at an event and said, I think I know what your new book is. Um, so anyway, that was a cute moment.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

And was he, did he reveal, did

**AJ Harper:**

He close? He's close.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

The guy's wickedly smart. He's into it.

**AJ Harper:**

He is. Okay. So anyway, the reason I'm not writing, um, book three actively, um, first is because it needs a little more, it's gonna be probably bigger than I thought.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Oh, okay. Interesting.

**AJ Harper:**

Based on conversations I had with Page Two. And so I need to, I need a little more time to just be very, very, just totally engrossed in it. And we only just turned in a month ago, the final pass pages on the Money Habit. And just also psychologically, I just like, my brain has to disconnect from it. Mm. Like, okay, now it can, because you handed me a physical copy of the Money Habit. Yeah. Um, which I'm thrilled to take back to my office with me. I can't wait. Um, it's like, okay, closure. Yeah. Okay. I'm moving, moving forward. When I was a ghost, I turned that thing in and it go and, and they're done with their contract with me. I am done. I am not even thinking about it. But with your books, I'm more emotionally invested in it. So, does that make sense?

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Yeah, it totally makes sense.

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**AJ Harper:**

So I can pass, pass the Torch. Book two is something that I'm also not gonna reveal right now, but it's something that I, I actually wasn't gonna write, but I feel like I have to, and it's something that I could get out, um, not in a trade distribution kind of way. And it would be of great service. And so I thought, okay, let me just see if I can get this done so that I can really help. Because I'm seeing a very big problem.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

interesting.

**AJ Harper:**

For authors. And so I wanna just, I want, and I've developed it. I've, I've, I've been working on it, uh, for a couple years. Let me explain as an example for how to build a book. So when I teach, I just came up with, ah, well, let me come up with this idea for a book and show you how I would build it to show my students how to build. And then I'm actually gonna

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Oh, that's great.

**AJ Harper:**

Yeah. So I already developed the heck out of it. Um, and the reason I'm doing book two first is because I can get through it. I don't have to do any deep soul searching with it. I don't, I I'm, it's,

**Mike Michalowicz:**

It's just in you ready to, to go.

**AJ Harper:**

It's in me. I talk like, I talk about it all the time. I, there's nothing I need to test. There's, let's go out, go. Whereas the other one is, is I think going to be such a major foundational thing for me. And I'm, I, I need some breathing space to be able to explore it. And so that's why I switched it. But I am doing them both in 2026.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Do you need to get that? I'm gonna use the word blockage. I mean, it's not the right word, but if you skipped book two and just went to book three, would the weight of not getting book two out be a distraction?

**AJ Harper:**

Yeah. Otherwise I wasn't gonna do it at all.

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**Mike Michalowicz:**

Book two.

**AJ Harper:**

I wasn't gonna do it at all. Yeah. But then things happened this year with my students and it kept happening. And I was, I, I, I know what to do about this. Let me just, lemme just do this. And so I'm not rushing anything. 'cause I had already developed it as a learning tool. That's what's so funny. Yeah. I wasn't gonna actually make it.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Why don't you pull The Beatles move and just call your book two Book two and book <laugh>. Yeah. The white book. The Black book The white--

**AJ Harper:**

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Yeah.

**AJ Harper:**

Plus plus, I think, and this is something interesting is because it's been a minute. So I wrote Write a must read. It came out in 2022, which means I finished writing it in 2021.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Okay.

**AJ Harper:**

And, um, I have been only writing for you during the rest of that time

**Mike Michalowicz:**

For the last, the next four years. From 21 to 25.

**AJ Harper:**

Yeah. So I think it's gonna gimme a lot of confidence to work on a project that I can move quickly through because I developed it already. It's cake for me. Um, I'm, it's not gonna be cake to write it any, any time that you write something, it's always challenging. But I think it's gonna gimme writing confidence for what this book three is really gonna test me.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

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Oh, I love that.

**AJ Harper:**

And I'm so excited to be tested, but I think doing book two is gonna help me just like, okay, you, I remember you! Like Yeah, you've got it. You've got this. 'cause it's, it's, um, it's different when it's your own stuff.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

I think the human psyche needs testing as the last, what, two decades or whatever has been the lawn mower parent, I think they call 'em where, you know,

**AJ Harper:**

lawnmower Parent?

**Mike Michalowicz:**

It used to be helicopter Parent. Oh,

**AJ Harper:**

Now it a lawnmower. Oh. Like where you're paving the way for them. Yeah. Oh.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Meaning remember, you know, when you and I were young and you played in the soccer club or something, uh, or whatever the thing was, if your team lost, you lost and the coach was actually yelling at you

**AJ Harper:**

And you were lucky if your parents were there.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Yeah. And your parents didn't show <laugh>. Then it became the, everyone gets a trophy generation. Like Yes. The losing team participated.

**AJ Harper:**

Yes.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

And now there's the, the lawnmower parent where it's like, my child deserves all the attention and must always be the star athlete or star, whatever. And they're just plowing through. Like, they, they negotiate grades for you.

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**AJ Harper:**

Like, clear the room for my child, clear the room for my child. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

If my child didn't get an A on their report card, I'm gonna go in and go to battle with the teacher. It's absurd. Um, so where was I going with this?

**AJ Harper:**

I don't know.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Oh, uh, the psyche needs to be challenged.

**AJ Harper:**

Oh. Yeah. For sure.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

So what's interesting is I think we have the most anxious generation of all time right now. I see it in, in my own relatives. This extreme anxiety because everything's been blocked and protected for them,

**AJ Harper:**

maybe. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

They have no scar tissue. Um, I wonder if your soul is starving to do this. Would you suggest this for our listeners is write what challenges you over or write what you need to write? Like, or is it one and the same? It's

**AJ Harper:**

One, it's one and the same. I mean, don't, I'm, I'm sharing what I'm doing, but don't make that what you do. It's just what I need.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

But you're a writing goddess.

**AJ Harper:**

# don't write *that* book!

But this is what I need right now. You know, there's another book that's gonna challenge the heck Outta Me. That's the book four. But that's a novel. But it's been, I just bought something for it this weekend. So

**Mike Michalowicz:**

What'd you buy? May you share?

**AJ Harper:**

Yeah. So, uh, I bought on thrift books.com where you can find used books. I recommend, it's the only place I could find it. It is a book of Zelda, Fitzgerald's paintings and other art. And, um, it says, has some biograph biography in there as well, because I've been learning about her. Um, you know who she was?

**Mike Michalowicz:**

I know the name, but

**AJ Harper:**

F. Scott's Fitz-Fitzgeralds wife.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Oh, okay. Okay.

**AJ Harper:**

And Muse. Okay. Um, troubled soul, much like, um, F Scott. But, um, well, they didn't say F Scott. They call him Scott, but

**Mike Michalowicz:**

<laugh>, can you imagine? Well, when she was upset with him, she's like, F Scott

**AJ Harper:**

<laugh>. Um, so she was a, um, a lot of bad stuff happened to her. Hmm. And her art and her words were literally taken and used. Um, and then

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Like Pilfered.

**AJ Harper:**

Her soul, her journals. Yeah. And so, um, she's just inspiring to me right now of a character that I wanna write in a novel. So I bought the book and I've filtered through that. That's we in the back.

# don't write *that* book!

So just so we're clear, I'm gonna write two books in 2026. One that I've already developed the heck out of one that I am figuring out what it is. So I'm still in development. And then while I'm doing that in the back of my mind, I'm still in development on the novel while I figure out the characters. But I'm more like playing around. Like, I'll sit and look at all her paintings and see what I see and take notes.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Oh My gosh.

**AJ Harper:**

Um, so that's what is how my brain works, is I've got something in the way back. I've got two that I'm pulling forward. Does that make sense? It does

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Make sense. Yeah. Could everything be in the front? You're in the writing season and then you revert back to development and say, oops, I'm baking this too soon.

**AJ Harper:**

Yes. So sometimes with students I'll say, you know what, let's take a pause and you need to go do a test drive. Let's go see if people, um, can do this process that you've created in this book. Let's get some more, um, feedback from people about what it's like to try this methodology or whatever. Let's go test. Or, you know what, why don't you pause and do some interviews. You need more, you need more stories. You might see how the shape of things shifts a little bit. But that doesn't mean that you're out of officially outer writing season. It just means you're gonna pump the brakes. So you can gather, you need a little more input, whether from a test drive or from interviews or from maybe your own work. Or maybe you need to pause to do a healing draft. So for people writing about deeply personal things, and I write about this in my book, um, sometimes that you have to write about the difficult topic for yourself first, so that you are not always thinking about other people reading it.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Mm.

**AJ Harper:**

When you're writing a, a sad or, or traumatic or whatever, painful story and you've never talked about it. And now it's not only gonna be for human consumption, but something people pay you for. It just messes with your head. Mm. And it can cause a lot of stress. So you might also pause, let me just do a healing draft. Let me just do a healing draft. Then I'll come back and I'm gonna write for someone. 'cause you have to write for yourself first. So these are all reasons why you might pull out of writing season.

# don't write *that* book!

**Mike Michalowicz:**

That's a remarkable phrasing. And I heard you use that before that healing draft. There's that, uh, behavioral, um, component called loss aversion is a theory that once we've started something to stop doing, it is more painful than continuing, even though it's going down the wrong path. Have you seen or experienced authors who really should revert back to development, but they keep on writing when they shouldn't?

**AJ Harper:**

Not so much anymore because I, they were, honestly, this sounds They're just listening to me.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

<laugh>. Yeah.

**AJ Harper:**

No. 'cause they, I'll advise them, you know?

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Yeah. And I think you make it okay. You make it safe. It feels unsafe to revert. 'cause it feels like, I'm not it gonna deliver this.

**AJ Harper:**

It's just our Western society, which says we must deliver on this time, or it's not worth doing. I said, I was gonna be done by this time. You know, what I really need to do is, is write a little pamphlet or something for spouses, honestly.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

There is this just ship it mentality. And now the counterpoint is let it bake properly.

**AJ Harper:**

Well, why I just said that about spouses is I hear from so many people who, you know, their loved ones are wondering, why isn't this book done? You know? Yeah. And they, if you're not in it, you don't really understand. Yeah. A the creative process, which is not linear and unpredictable, but then publishing, which is glacial, glacial pace, <laugh>. So then the people around you who don't understand, they're like, what the heck? You've been talking about this for three years. Yes, yes. Accurate. Um, but, you know, writing multiple books, I think it definitely is the next level. <laugh>. It's not for amateurs. Do you know what I mean? Like you, I see people trying to, you know, they'll come into my program or whatever, and they'll say, and I have, I have six books I wanna write <laugh>. Okay, well, we're gonna try and do one because it's, it is the next level kind of skill to be able to juggle both of them.

# don't write *that* book!

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Um, so say you actually are writing two books at once, not one's in development. Does one always take the lead?

**AJ Harper:**

Yeah. So I will be, there'll be crossover for me in the spring of writing two books at the same time.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

But book two will be the priority. I assume. Like you wake up in the morning and say First book two, then book three.

**AJ Harper:**

Yeah. Because I don't, I'm giving, I gave myself an internal deadline on book two, but I haven't given myself a book three deadline yet.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Okay. Do you suggest that for all of our listeners, if you're going after multiple books, that you actually have a schedule each day?

**AJ Harper:**

Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

And how do you physically

**AJ Harper:**

Do that? I've, I've mapped it out. So I have, I have exactly figured out, so I know how many words I write per hour.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

How many do you write an hour?

**AJ Harper:**

It's between three and 500. A good day is 500.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

# don't write *that* book!

Okay. And that's, that's good content, because you can write, I could do 800 junk words in an hour.

**AJ Harper:**

Mine is pretty junk.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Okay.

**AJ Harper:**

I think it's junk. Really?

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Okay.

**AJ Harper:**

Maybe not your version of junk. My, i

**Mike Michalowicz:**

My version of junk is just, it's vomit.

**AJ Harper:**

Okay. So it's a little more, it's a step up from vomit. Okay.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Okay. Because I think if it is polished good words, maybe a hundred now or maybe,

**AJ Harper:**

But I've got a lot of stuff in brackets in there saying, look at that change. This, this is dumb research that, yeah. You know, that's, it's, it's, it's Swiss cheese.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Okay.

**AJ Harper:**

But I just keep going. So, you know,

**Mike Michalowicz:**

# don't write *that* book!

So, okay. So you can bang out 500 words an hour. I can Max. Max. So you're, you're banking on 400 words an hour. I mean, do you put Yeah. Okay. So do you say, I gotta do 800 words on this book per day? So that gives me two hours. Like, is that

**AJ Harper:**

I usually go conservative. So I, I probably can do 400, but I will plan for three.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Okay, great.

**AJ Harper:**

Because I never ever wanna be disappointed in myself, because that's what releases the inner critic trolls. Oh. So I'm always thinking of troll management, the resistance.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Yeah.

**AJ Harper:**

I'm always thinking of T management. Okay. How can I make this so doable that I hit it every time?

**Mike Michalowicz:**

So I listened to a great interview with Steven Pressfield. Did I tell you Yeah. About

**AJ Harper:**

Huberman

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Huberman? He, I didn't realize this. Oh no. Oh no. Jack Hetfield. Or was it, now I'm conflating

**AJ Harper:**

Everyone. One everyone's talking about right now is Huberman. Uh, the one you sent to me, ,

**Mike Michalowicz:**

who was the Who's the truck driver Was that, uh, Steven Pressfield was a truck driver. I think it was Steven Pressfield.

**AJ Harper:**

# don't write *that* book!

He's done a lot of things. Okay.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

And he kept his typewriter in his truck and he wouldn't write, but he, he would kind of beat himself up for,

**AJ Harper:**

I don't think that's Steve.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Yeah. I, I don't know. Um, but what I'm hearing is you are very deliberate. So is your schedule, like, I'm gonna get up at this time?

**AJ Harper:**

Like, I can show you. I have the entire, it's already blocked off the, to complete the entire first draft is blocked off.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Wow.

**AJ Harper:**

Allowing time for when I even have figured out when am I walking, because I'm, I'm testing something right now. Okay. 'cause there, the, there's a theory around doing the walk before you write like, physical activity. That makes sense. Yeah. But in sunlight.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Yeah, totally.

**AJ Harper:**

It's like I'm being really, like, so I've tried to, I'm testing during this writing season. Is it better to do before or is it better for me to do it after? So I've been, I'm gonna be doing that while I'm okay trying to figure out what works. 'cause I'm always trying to hack this stuff. But I have the whole thing figured out. Accounting for breaks, holidays, other work commitments and stuff. The whole first draft for book two is completely blocked. And now I've gotta go, um, over Thanksgiving and block book three. It actually takes me several hours to block it. 'cause I have to think that, really think it's not just about time blocking. It's this thing. Okay. Energy wise, what am I doing the day before? What's, am I gonna be prepared for this? Does this, am I gonna be too tired because of whatever's happening so that I can always really hit it?

# don't write *that* book!

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Interesting.

**AJ Harper:**

So it's completely blocked.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Do you feel there for, for the new or established author, risks for trying to tackle two books at once? (Yeah.) What are the, what are the risks?

**AJ Harper:**

There's risks for me doing it.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

What are the risks for you?

**AJ Harper:**

Um, diverting your attention, getting stuck on one and, and then allowing yourself to be stuck on the other one simultaneously. Letting the doubts you have that inevitably come up when the inner critic, you know, Steve Pressfield's resistance, whatever I call 'em inner critic trolls, when they show up, you now they're gonna show up in double triple because you're working on two things. I've always said the more inner critic trolls you have, the bigger the army. That means the more you know, you're onto something important. So now I gotta have two armies.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

This may be a dumb question on average to write one book when you devote all your time to it. Just the writing phase. Before it goes into the substantive edits. How long does that typically take you?

**AJ Harper:**

It, well, okay. So it's hard to say now because I have a lot of other things I do. Yeah. You know, what

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Would you expect if you were just working on one book? Six months?

**AJ Harper:**

If I've developed it already? Yeah. Are you talking just writing?

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**Mike Michalowicz:**

Just the writing, yeah.

**AJ Harper:**

Two to three months.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Okay. So say three months when you write, this is maybe a stupid question, but when you write book two and book three at the same time, do both books now take double the time? Or are you doubling each day and you're both y you're gonna get two books done in three months. Like,

**AJ Harper:**

No, I'm not. Okay. I'm gonna, I'm probably, I'm gonna emphasize book, uh, book two, and then bring in book three when I'm, when I'm kind of coasting a little bit.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

So

**AJ Harper:**

Does that mean, so when I feel like, okay, like, so because see, okay, so this is so important that we're talking about this. Thank you for asking these questions. When I get about halfway through a book, I'm good. I'm like, I know this book. Right.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

And I think people confu, I confuse halfway that you've read, you've written chapter one through four in an eight chapter book. Oh no. But you don't mean that.

**AJ Harper:**

No. You know what my master docs look like? Yeah. It's like over here or here? Over here. Over here. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

And you start it, you remember I seen the Matrix where he starts moving things with his hands.

**AJ Harper:**

No. Oh, I'm gonna admit something.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

# don't write *that* book!

Whatever. It's, I've never watched it. He's got a virtual reality headset on. Basically, you, you grab pieces of content and you start moving with your feet.

**AJ Harper:**

Oh, okay. I can visualize that.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Okay. That's what you,

**AJ Harper:**

That's me. That's me. That's

**Mike Michalowicz:**

You. Yeah. So the whole book has stuff. And what I've seen you do is you say, in this chapter, here's just the stuff we're probably gonna put here. Yeah. And then as it starts forming, you say, no, actually it needs to go here. And you start shifting it around. Yeah.

**AJ Harper:**

And I always write to the energy too. So I'm super developed. I, I know exactly what's going in. I have a very expanded, detailed outline. I've considered the reader journey, what I call the progression of understanding the flow of information, how I'm attending to the reader, everything. It is completely planned. And then I just like, uh, okay, let me write what I feel like that day. 'cause I, I know where it's going.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

So, okay. So what's the halfway point then, before you start posting?

**AJ Harper:**

I'm, I'm literally about halfway written, meaning word count wise. So I have an estimation of word count based on how many chapters. Okay. And an average word count per chapter. Okay. And it's just an estimation that helps me block my time. Okay. It's not, I'm not rigid with it. I don't have to hit it, but it just helps me see how much time do I really need. And then I'm about halfway through and I say, okay, I know this book. Now I'm just gotta finish now. I've just gotta bring it home. But they're still in the first part, so much discovery that happens. Wait, I totally forgot about this. You know, you have all these thoughts like, oh, why did you wanna do that chapter? You don't wanna do that chapter. And so until you kind of get past that, I don't feel like you can cruise. So I said coast earlier, but it's more like cruise. I can cruise to the finish line. The first half is critical. I can't think about anything else. I'm just gonna do this. But once I'm

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cruising, I can start writing book two, book three. Gotcha. Does that, you know what I mean? Because my brain has to be like, okay, I got this.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Yeah. Yeah. Right. Okay. So the, the, it sounds like it goes from thought and consideration to more of an output stage. Is that the flipping? Yeah.

**AJ Harper:**

Okay. And it's, there's still a lot of work as you know. I mean, we were moving chapters around during substantive edit of the money habit. And we always, you know, we've, we've even moved stuff around at stages we shouldn't but <laugh>.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Right. Theoretically. Yeah. But you just, I don't almost think, think that stuff could have been moved otherwise. No,

**AJ Harper:**

Because you,

**Mike Michalowicz:**

You just didn't see it

**AJ Harper:**

Yet. You didn't see it. So, but that's not, you are so cruising at that point. Yeah. You know, and and substantive edits for me are just, I love them. They're easy for me. It's super fun. And once we get to copy, edit it, forget it. It's just cake.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

How do you mark, if you're writing two books at once, how do you market book two while you're writing book three? Well,

**AJ Harper:**

For me, um, well, I have a, a little secret. I'm gonna do something for that book that I've never done and I've never seen an author do.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

So you, will you share this one or No,

**AJ Harper:**

# don't write *that* book!

Not right now.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Your secrecy is remarkable. Like you're holding all this in. Well, I got the first insight literally live from you today, <laugh>. Just from a, a glance. From

**AJ Harper:**

A glance.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Yeah.

**AJ Harper:**

Um, 'cause you know me, that other people might not have picked, clocked it.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Okay. So you're gonna do a marketing thing that you, you've never seen done before.

**AJ Harper:**

I'm gonna tell you though, 'cause I'm gonna need your help.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Okay. But you won't tell me until some future point. I

**AJ Harper:**

Just wanna make sure I'm actually gonna deliver before I commit. I

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Wanna give a couple of marketing insights on the money habit when we wrap up to, um, somewhere between our self promotional stuff. 'cause I wanna keep people listening. But I got some really cool updates on that front.

**AJ Harper:**

And are these updates things that keep people can use in their own other journey?

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Absolutely. No. Yeah. Absolutely. So

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**AJ Harper:**

You definitely want to,

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Yeah. So, okay. So when you're writing two books at once, you're gonna be writing book three, but you're gonna be marketing book two. You have to, right? Yeah.

**AJ Harper:**

A hundred percent.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

And have you allocated the time for that? How do you measure?

**AJ Harper:**

Well, okay, so necess everyone should know that I've also structured my life into seasons now. So I'm, as we're recording this, it's the third podcast in a row we recorded on November 17th. We do 'em in batches. That's right. That's right. It's the last week of my workshop. My workshop season is 14 weeks. It's intense, man. Uh, it's all I do. Mm-hmm. It's all I do. Yeah. I mean, I do, I might record a podcast and take some other meetings, but I'm not creating anything. I am just working with my students to create their stuff. Mm. Helping them. 'cause it's use of all my bandwidth to support them in that way. 'cause it's very hands-on. That's a season for me. I have retreat season, it's in the summer,

**Mike Michalowicz:**

And then writing season,

**AJ Harper:**

And now I'm dedicating now. And it's not like I won't, other things. I've got author planning and I've got, um, little master crafts I'll do. And I'm gonna teach editor certification and I'm still doing all those things, but nothing is taking up my major bandwidth. Um, and you and I are on writing hiatus, and that's what, you know, I need that. Yeah. Yeah. You, yeah. 'cause I, I will never be able to get these books done otherwise. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Uh, a little news update. When I was in Australia, I met a guy who's planted a million sunflowers. You met him? Yeah. Ian, right? No. Ivan. No, Ivan. Ian. Ivan. Oh, you

**AJ Harper:**

# don't write *that* book!

Met Ivan? Yeah. Okay, good. 'cause I was hoping you would meet him, you know, he's been at retreat.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Yeah. That, that's what surprised me. So we were hanging out down in Sydney. I had literally 15 minutes, and he's extraordinary. He came, he is in the Sydney area, but he was willing to make the drive down. And I, of course he was upfront. I said, dude, I'm got 15 minutes. It's gonna be this awkward kind of walk around. We were looking at the Opera house, kind of walking around and, and then I got a bulky,

**AJ Harper:**

Did you know he performed there?

**Mike Michalowicz:**

No.

**AJ Harper:**

Yeah. He used to be an actor. He used to be a performer. No. Yeah. He told me that commercially did one time

**Mike Michalowicz:**

A lovely man. Yeah. Um, I knew of now I know, I knew of him before I met him once. Yes. I met him once before. Yes. But ever so briefly, he was in an audience.

**AJ Harper:**

Remember he's the guy who someone took all his Mike Mcal books.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Yes. And I sent him the books. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah,

**AJ Harper:**

Yeah. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Lovely. And, um, he said, uh, AJ said one day I will be speaking at Profit Con. I said, well, then we gotta make it a reality.

**AJ Harper:**

# don't write *that* book!

Oh my God. 'cause you know, he's done. Oh, you're gonna love his, do you know his story? Yeah. And he's writing the memoir. He's in my membership group right now. And he just had live edit the other day. Yes.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

So, so I put him in touch with Billy Ann to speak there. So you did? Yeah. Yeah, yeah. Yeah. So I can't promise he'll speak there yet. But first he has to do, we call it the trial run. He'll speak to half our membership virtually half our membership's invited. Oh my gosh. And to see if it lands, if it lands.

**AJ Harper:**

He is such a dear man, but

**Mike Michalowicz:**

He's such a dear man. But

**AJ Harper:**

He's actually a really good writer. And he's writing this memoir about, um, like it's, it's four people who have hit this point in a life when there's a transition that they didn't want. Like, so their life gets upended.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Like you get a flower farm. Like

**AJ Harper:**

His case. Like he had this incredible, he's a tennis pro. Did you know that? No. Like, he's amazing. So he, he is a tennis pro on this trajectory. It's a great job. And he had got called back to the family farm

**Mike Michalowicz:**

And did

**AJ Harper:**

It. And it was really devastating to him. There were a lot of stuff that went down, which I won't reveal, but he figured out how to make that farm work. And one of the ways that he did that, well, not a lot of the ways, one of the ways his prophet first, he followed that. He also followed get different, which warmed my heart to hear. I never hear from get different people. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Um, for doing these cool designs in the fields. Yes. Did you he tell you about that?

# don't write *that* book!

**Mike Michalowicz:**

I saw, I saw the pictures of them.

**AJ Harper:**

So that, you know, that's sees a different move.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Totally different.

**AJ Harper:**

We're from the airplane. It looks like a, it's got a message. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Messages. It's unbelievable.

**AJ Harper:**

And so he decided to plant 1 million sunflowers. But it wasn't just a marketing thing. It was, you know, deeply held to his heart and he did it.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

So one thing I'm working on behind the scenes is, uh, I'm preparing the, uh, potential interviewee list for becoming self-made season two of our podcast. So we're interviewing these entrepreneurs. I'm like this guy, I don't know if the budget's to fly down to Australia with a camera crew, but Well,

**AJ Harper:**

Maybe you can get one there.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Oh yeah. Well, that's what they would do. Well, yeah. But, but then they gotta fly me down too. Like, you know, there's a budget. But if you going

**AJ Harper:**

Anyway,

**Mike Michalowicz:**

That's exactly, so I'm, I'm trying to work.

# don't write *that* book!

**AJ Harper:**

Oh my gosh, gosh.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Um,

**AJ Harper:**

He's the real deal. I'm so glad you, you

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Met. Lovely. Thank you for, for encouraging that. And, and thank you to Ivan for making the extraordinary effort to be there. Yeah. I felt bad. I just, I had minutes. Um, what are some of the kind of upsides or, or surprises you've had by working on two books at once?

**AJ Harper:**

I mean, I used to work on more than two, um,

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Of your own. Now you're doing it of your own.

**AJ Harper:**

Well, I haven't started, I don't have an answer for that.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

What have you observed or Okay. Working on as a ghost for multiple books. Is there benefits?

**AJ Harper:**

Yeah. I feel like, um, like we talked about earlier, there's a, a sense of confidence. Yeah. You know, I can do this. There's benefits to always writing. So when you get outta writing season, you kind of have to crank yourself back up. Um, you, it's like, it's like the gym. Yeah. You're, you're staying in the gym. You might be working on a different goal in the gym, but if you've got multiple goals and you keep it going, it's gonna be easier for you than if you have been outta the gym for a long time. I like that. That's what it's like.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Uh, reminder, next week from this going live, this episode, the Money Habit is out. So it's a week away, but you can pre-order it today. Um, get the book. I am very proud of what this is. Every book I say this and

# don't write *that* book!

**AJ Harper:**

No, it's that Money Habit's Not Out Today.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

It's one week from today.

**AJ Harper:**

It's one week from today. I'm sorry. Is that what you said? And I just, I think so. Didn't hear you right.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

I hope so. Well, we're clear now. It's one week from this episode being broadcast that it's out. So I invite listeners to pre-order the book. It is our best work. And I say it consistently about every book. And I felt weird saying, how can this one be the best? But really we've elevated our working partnership more and more and more. Yeah.

**AJ Harper:**

Well, I was, I was, I was trying to get better.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

This, this book is a game changer, I think for authors, uh, for authors, families, for anybody who has money coming through their lives. Um, you have a retreat in 2026. Three

**AJ Harper:**

Of 'em,

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Three retreats, editing

**AJ Harper:**

Retreats.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Are they all, are these in person? All Madeline Island? Yeah. You go to [ajharper.com](http://ajharper.com). Yeah. Um, how many people attend a retreat? Typically? Eight. Okay. So it's, it's very intimate. Yes. You work in that studio space. Yes. I love that. A beautiful long table overlooking the Lake. Lake Superior. Yes. It's gorgeous. Will the flowers be in season for at least one of these retreats? June.

# don't write *that* book!

**AJ Harper:**

Yeah. The lupins

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Gorgeous. Yeah.

**AJ Harper:**

Go. It's like a fairy land

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Sign up for the June retreat. And <laugh>,

**AJ Harper:**

If you can

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Get in, you'll go loopy over Lupins.

**AJ Harper:**

Uh, but you, there's July and August as well. Uh, and so you definitely wanna check it out. If it's a plan, it's, you can work toward it too. You can say, you know what, I don't know if I'm ready. We'll get ready.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

And do people work with you in person the entire, it's like full days with you? Yes. The group. Do you guys eat, eat meals together and everything? Yes. Wow. And where do people stay on the Islanders houses? You

**AJ Harper:**

Rent? We, we have two, uh, cabins that we rent.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

And they're, they're walking or driving distance from the Yes. Oh my

**AJ Harper:**

God. Yeah. It's, it's magic.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

# don't write *that* book!

Yeah, it is magic. I wanna get back out there. I wanna bring Krista out there and just hang out. Come

**AJ Harper:**

On. Yeah.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Come on down. Okay. Um, oh, the live podcast. You know, I was talking about it for a while and then I kind of went, so one the thought I had is we could do this for your community life too, because we're doing the virtual ones. If you're ever interested in that, instead of doing, I wanna do one in a theater, ultimately this, this podcast. Mm-hmm <affirmative>. But it's like, oh, maybe we can do it for your own community of authors in my community and just say, Hey, we're doing a live virtual,

**AJ Harper:**

The live stream.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Yeah. Live stream. So that was an idea I had

**AJ Harper:**

How was on a podcast with Robbie Samuels. Um, and he broadcasts live on Streamy Yard to LinkedIn, YouTube, and Facebook. And then it becomes a podcast episode later.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Yeah. Okay. That, that's basically what I was thinking is maybe we could do that. I mean, it's intentionally a podcast episode, but people would see it months before it goes live. They'd

**AJ Harper:**

Have to get up early, man like we do. 'cause I'm, we, this is what works for us.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Yeah. And you have to be on the West Coast. We'll, we'll only say it's only available for West Coasters starting

**AJ Harper:**

Who have to get up at two o'clock in the morning. <laugh>

**Mike Michalowicz:**

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<laugh>. But the stuff you'll see, um, oh, I promise. I'd give two updates on the money habit or I'd give a couple updates on our marketing that authors could use. And then we'll wrap it up. Is there anything else you wanted to share, um, that you have going on for authors?

## **AJ Harper:**

I have so much going on. Just go to [ajharper.com](http://ajharper.com). But yeah,

## **Mike Michalowicz:**

That's it. Yeah. Go to [ajharper.com](http://ajharper.com). Yeah. Get a copy of, uh, write a must read. And if you, I know you already have a copy gift to a friend, um, what a great gift you can give someone is that book. Um, also we have a publishing platform for entrepreneur authors. So if you're writing for entrepreneurs, simplified as a platform, you can email us at [hello@dwtbpodcast.com](mailto:hello@dwtbpodcast.com) and to say, I'm interested in simplified. We can get you details on that. Alright. Here's the two marketing things. I, I've never done a launch party. I'm doing a launch webinar, but it's 12 hours. So it starts on the 27th of January, which is a launch starting at 8:00 AM eastern to 8:00 PM Eastern. We have, as of this morning, 30 guests that are appearing during, you're gonna be one of them. I am <laugh>. Yeah. And by, uh, the launch, I think we're gonna have about 45 guests that are appearing.

## **Mike Michalowicz:**

Everyone's speaking on an element of money and what they can inspire or the production of the book. Mm-hmm. You'll be, and I talk about behind the scenes stuff. I'm gonna be doing readings. Um, I'm really excited for it. So it's a little bit of a filibuster, I guess maybe it's 12 hours straight. Um, but I'm really excited about this. So I invite authors to consider the same thing. Everyone that's coming on as a guest has kindly also offered to promote it to their communities. Mm-hmm <affirmative>. Uh, and so we're gonna be, um, counting down, you know, uh, uh, inviting people to buy the book throughout. Um, because I think it's gonna be transformative for them. And we're gonna also have a count of how many books are sold. So we're gonna start with zero. Uh, we're gonna then integrate our pre-orders and all this stuff. So we'll have those updates and all that stuff. And we'll see how many books, uh, circulate on that day. The,

## **AJ Harper:**

Like a, like on the tally on the screen.

## **Mike Michalowicz:**

That's the idea. So we're seeing if we can pull it off. We, we have a temporary work that's come on board, uh, actually starts today's Monday. It starts today. Who's just organizing this one event because it's so demanding on scheduling. It's Marco, my daughter's boyfriend.

## **AJ Harper:**

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I did see that. I was like, who's Marco? Yeah,

**Mike Michalowicz:**

It's my daughter's boyfriend. Yeah. He's working, uh, he's organizing it. Um, so th and he's come coming to our house on Thanksgiving, so I'm gonna drill him like, what are you doing here? You should be working

**AJ Harper:**

<laugh>.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Um, the other update, I don't know if we're gonna pull it off, but we, we did, we're in process for one, and we may do it with others. So we're getting these cutouts and you call it a, um, book birthday. Yeah. Right? So I'm like, oh, that's such a good idea. And I was,

**AJ Harper:**

I mean, I didn't start that.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

No, no. But I heard it from you first.

**AJ Harper:**

It's a thing in the fiction world. See, so I'm always, since I've al I've been in the fiction world, like I am always carrying stuff over. Everyone says, happy Book birthday.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

I heard it from you first on my flight, where I woke up and said, oh, AJ should write a book title. Don't write that book. And then you saly said, I already write. All

**AJ Harper:**

Right, I'll think about it. I'm gonna, I'm gonna, it's gonna, it's gonna sit in my brain until I decide if I wanna do that.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

The other thing that popped up is like, oh, McMillan, I'm gonna have a cutout of me holding a book in swaddling,

Speaker 4:

<laugh>

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**Mike Michalowicz:**

On that mo and, and a cutout next to it, Uhhuh. And it's gonna say something to the effect like, congratulations, we just had our baby <laugh>. Uh, she weighs in at 1.1 pound woman ounce height, you know, 12 inches <laugh>. And, um, just believe it at McMillan, because we're doing this, this full day promotion the next day. Yeah. I don't know if I can personally go, but I'm gonna see if one of our team members can go put it right at the entrance there. Um,

**AJ Harper:**

I would love to see if they would allow you to do this.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

I, I don't know, but <laugh>, I think with page two's relationship, and I've met enough people over there that we can sneak it in the night before, because I just want everyone to work, come into work one day, you know, look at their phone, whatever. It's a normal Tuesday, and they're like, what the hell is this? And it's gonna have a cutout. So it's, it's me and, and this other person holding the baby, and you can put your face in there. And then <laugh>, you know, like, like it's a, like, it's a

**AJ Harper:**

Amusement park. So like, like at, yeah,

**Mike Michalowicz:**

At the amusement park.

**AJ Harper:**

Yeah. So it looks like, you know, like those would everybody's in later hose in Yeah, exactly. Your face.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Exactly. So it's gonna be this ridiculous photo, but the baby is a book. Um, so that's my idea. I don't know if we'll pull it off, but we did order one of these already. We're testing 'em out with our sponsor relay, so now hopefully they'll have it before this episode comes out. But I was at the Relay offices in Toronto, and everyone there is, there is, what's the newest generation? Gen X? Gen Z Gen.

**AJ Harper:**

Well, it's Gen Z, and now we're getting into Alpha.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

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Alpha. So they're, they're Gen Z and Alpha, and I'm, we're Gen XI guess, or we're boomer, I

**AJ Harper:**

Dunno what, yes. No, we're not boomers. Okay. No. Okay. Gen X,

**Mike Michalowicz:**

My daughter wants, okay, we're Gen X. My daughter once goes, oh, you're such a boomer dad. And then, no, no, wrong. And I went to her, I said, I'm not a boomer. And she goes, that's what boomers say. <laugh>. So I thought it was a good comment.

**AJ Harper:**

Okay, AADE, gen X. So

**Mike Michalowicz:**

I'm Gen X. So, um, I'm, I, I noticed I am like 20 to 30 years older than everyone else there. So I'm like, oh, this is great. And there was like people, it was, it was, uh, Halloween. I was out there and they celebrate it in Canada too. And, uh, people were, some people were wearing like, uh, star Wars stuff. Uhhuh. So I am sending this cut out. It's, it's Darth Vader, but his helmet off. It's my head Uhhuh, and it says, I'm your father <laugh>. And then it says, da da. Do, I mean, not really, but technically I'm old enough to be your father Uhhuh. And it says, I love Relay. Cute. So we are shipping that up there to them.

**AJ Harper:**

You know, I gotta tell you something. What's that? My, we used my mom's friend Athene, who lived in the apartment above us when we were kids, had the biggest crush on Darth Vader. And you just reminded me that the present we gave her was a blow up Darth Vader. And this would've been like 1981.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

And she, she was crushing on Darth Vader with a mask on. Yeah.

**AJ Harper:**

Ooh. We didn't know what was behind there.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Sardonic.

**AJ Harper:**

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Yeah. You just had me totally flash back to a memory I completely forgot of delivering a blow up Darth Vader to her for a gift because of her massive crush.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Darth is a lovely man. Like you, as we find out.

**AJ Harper:**

Well, I don't know

**Mike Michalowicz:**

After the fact. Yeah. Like,

**AJ Harper:**

I mean,

**Mike Michalowicz:**

He comes to the

**AJ Harper:**

As a ghost.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

As a ghost is redeem. He's a lovely, he's a lovely ghost. Yeah. <laugh>.

**AJ Harper:**

Yeah. All right. That's,

**Mike Michalowicz:**

I mean, you wouldn't see Darth Air in the movie Ghost. So like, he wrapping his hand around Luke

**AJ Harper:**

Gross. That's never been a good scene. You would never see that. Why do people replay this? It's uncomfortable. Who wants to sit there with slimy pottery between your hands and then someone's like, grouting your space behind?

**Mike Michalowicz:**

No, I think it's, I think it's very

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**AJ Harper:**

Romantic and then there's a machine. It's not, you know what, that's a head of row thing. That's what it is. Okay. I

**Mike Michalowicz:**

I thought it was romantic. Okay,

**AJ Harper:**

You can replay it.

**Mike Michalowicz:**

So next week we're gonna talk about behind the scenes, off

**AJ Harper:**

The

**Mike Michalowicz:**

Rails of Yeah, totally off the rails. We're gonna talk about, uh, behind the scenes of the money habit. Yay. Yeah. Some more exciting news is coming, um, that I'm particularly pumped about and some surprising things too. Uh, I invite you to go to [ajharper.com](http://ajharper.com). I also invite you to go to [dwtbpodcast.com](http://dwtbpodcast.com) and shoot one more thing on your podcaster. You're listening right now. Type in becoming Self-Made. Listen to the new show I got going on around the journey of authors and entrepreneurs and how they've achieved what they've achieved, but why they're still in the struggle and how they're navigating it. Um, any questions, concerns, comments? You email it. You we're Yeah. To [hello@dwtbpodcast.com](mailto:hello@dwtbpodcast.com). Yeah. And we're done. So remember this, don't write that book. Write the greatest book. You can.