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Episode 131:

AI is the Kiss of Death for Authors

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.

AJ Harper:

I, there where nothing happened. That was the pleasant part of the drive.

Mike Michalowicz:

Was that Nyack? Yeah. What, so what's, what's the route you took? Because you, I wanna get the, you tossed in the brain.

AJ Harper:

Yeah, I understand. I'm just trying to get my brain on online. I don't know, 45 AB. 45 AB and then it, I don't know, goes to 23.

Mike Michalowicz:

Yeah. So how does it take a while to get out Nyack during rush hour?

AJ Harper:

No,

Mike Michalowicz:

Just bing. Get right out.

AJ Harper:

Yes. Easy. Well, I'm going the other direction. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz:

Is there, is, do a lot of people work in Nyack, meaning commuting in, or is it just local? Kinda like Boonton? Not, people don't commute into Boonton necessarily than any volume

AJ Harper:

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People are commuting in n they're commuting into the city. Yeah,

Mike Michalowicz:

That's what I thought. Okay. Yeah. How far are you from New York City?

AJ Harper:

20, 22 miles.

Mike Michalowicz:

And does that mean an hour drive roughly?

AJ Harper:

No, it's like half hour.

Mike Michalowicz:

Really? Into Manhattan.

AJ Harper:

It's like a half hour to the GW. Oh, I see. If you were stuck in traffic it would be an hour.

Mike Michalowicz:

Yeah. Okay.

AJ Harper:

You know, I think my wife, she used to work in Harlem, so it was the first exit. Oh, that's hundred 25th Street. Yeah. And I think it was probably 40, 40 minutes for her.

Mike Michalowicz:

Okay. That's easier than

AJ Harper:

She's pretty good.

Mike Michalowicz:

Yep. That's, Harlem would be a better spot to be like, if you had to go downtown h how would you even do that? Still the gw or do you have to go?

AJ Harper:

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Yeah. Well, depending on where you are downtown, you might

Mike Michalowicz:

Go Well, finance financial district.

AJ Harper:

Yeah. But if you're closer to the west side versus

Mike Michalowicz:

Oh, yeah. Okay. So you'd cross closer to the

AJ Harper:

East side,

Mike Michalowicz:

But you still take the GW to get onto the New York City side, or do you go down to Lincoln Tunnel or Holland, or is that

AJ Harper:

No, you don't need any tunnels from us. The bridge is The exchange.

Mike Michalowicz:

The bridge. Yeah. Okay. For us, it's, it's literally a fork. And so you're going from here into Lincoln Tunnel, but you can make the choice of going north to the GW or south to the Holland.

AJ Harper:

Yeah. It wouldn't make sense for, we'd have to go into New Jersey. Extra.

Mike Michalowicz:

Yeah. Okay. That's so interesting.

AJ Harper:

But you could take the GW and then either take the West Side Highway, Henry Hudson. Okay. Or the FDR, depending on where you needed to end up. Which side? The city. So like, my son lives in Brooklyn, and so he take, comes across on the GW. And he goes on the FDR.

Mike Michalowicz:

Okay. Do you ever take the Tappan Zee over and come down that way?

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AJ Harper:

Sometimes. It depends on where you wanna end up, but it's mostly what GW to Westside Highway. That's so

Mike Michalowicz:

Interesting because

AJ Harper:

I'm honestly, I can't even think, I'm not even on the east side that much.

Mike Michalowicz:

Interesting.

AJ Harper:

West Side was easy, huh? It's faster for me to get into the Midtown from Nyack than it was when I lived in Brooklyn.

Mike Michalowicz:

Wow.

AJ Harper:

Because I lived in, I had to take two subway stops.

Mike Michalowicz:

Yeah. Oh. Meaning...

AJ Harper:

From Brooklyn. Okay. So it, I can get into the city faster from Nyack.

Mike Michalowicz:

That's wild. Mm-Hmm <affirmative>. From then from Brooklyn.

AJ Harper:

But you know, Nyack, if you're on the Tapan Z, you can see Harlem.

Mike Michalowicz:

Yeah. Know.

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AJ Harper:

I know. And did you know that they actually count us in the metro area? So when they (Nyack?) Yeah. When they say 8 million, they include us.

Mike Michalowicz:

Huh?

AJ Harper:

I didn't know that until Metro

Mike Michalowicz:

Area. Does that include New Jersey? I mean, I know you're in New York. Does that include New Jersey?

AJ Harper:

That, I don't know. I don't know when they say 8 million, if they're counting Jersey.

Mike Michalowicz:

It's so funny. The, the, the property disputes between New Jersey and New York. Like Statue of Liberty. Remember that? No. Oh. So Statue of Liberty's the most like, iconic New York thing,

AJ Harper:

But it's in New Jersey part of the water.

Mike Michalowicz:

It's in New Jersey. And so New Jersey's claiming it now. It's about ta you know, it's really about tax money and so forth, not

AJ Harper:

Like, oh yeah. All the tourism and Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz:

Yeah. It's New York's iconic thing, but it's in Jersey is what New Jersey says. Okay. And so we deserve the tax money. Okay. It's kind of the Giants and the Jets playing in New Jersey. Same thing. Good.

Matt:

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We are, we are good. Yes. We record was dialed in, so I've been recording the whole time. Oh, so you got some cool B roll and some backstage access there.

AJ Harper:

He always wants to start with some sort of, I start boring conversation about how my drive was.

Matt:

Did you say boring conversation? Or morning conversation.

Mike Michalowicz:

Oh, cute, cute, cute. I'm gonna pull up our notes. It's the first time I'm gonna do notes on an iPad, so welcome to Don't write that book in our studio.

AJ Harper:

I'm excited.

Mike Michalowicz:

And you had the most harrowing commute ever.

AJ Harper:

I did think about going back. I thought I was, forget it.

Mike Michalowicz:

It's not meant to be.

AJ Harper:

It's not happening. Yeah. How's this mythical studio?

Mike Michalowicz:

Wasn't it a a two hour drive for you?

AJ Harper:

Yes. Normally it would be for about 40 minutes. Oh my. Like, there was, you know, we sh it's not funny because a person was in a serious car accident. And I just happened upon it just a few minutes after. And there were plenty of people there, so I wasn't needed for any purpose, but a car completely flipped, so it was upside down. And then the GPS kept, like, I couldn't get out at first. Then when I could get out the GPS sum up landed me back there, and then I couldn't get out. You know, it just was like a, it was like the Twilight Zone. Yeah.

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Mike Michalowicz:

And you and I invented a GPS solution effectively.

AJ Harper:

I feel like it's a winner.

Mike Michalowicz:

So why don't you explain to our audience what that is?

AJ Harper:

I wanted to be able to reroute. There's gotta be another way to your house. I tried to reroute, but it just kept, it just kept putting me back

Mike Michalowicz:

To the shortest route.

AJ Harper:

Yeah. So you should be able to say accident. Yep. Meaning you ju there's a new accident that it hasn't picked up on yet. Reroute me.

Mike Michalowicz:

Right. That should be basically indicating the road is blocked. And this is not a pathway in.

AJ Harper:

Exactly.

Mike Michalowicz:

And I'm surprised because it happens with enough frequency. I've experienced that too, where there's emergency work on a sewer system or something where the road's blocked and they have these detour signs that take you wherever. But the GPS is not aware of this. And there, there should just be a button.

AJ Harper:

There should be a button.

Mike Michalowicz:

There should be a button.

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AJ Harper:

But maybe that's, is that what weighs is?

Mike Michalowicz:

Well, no. Wait. What, what were you using? GPS is Wayze. Like there're,

AJ Harper:

I don't use Wayze

Mike Michalowicz:

Which one do you use?

AJ Harper:

It's on my phone. Whatever. iPhone GPS.

Mike Michalowicz:

Yeah. So you're using the iPhone. It's called Maps, I think. And there's, there's the Google one. And so it's, it's very doable and actually kind of speaks to what we're gonna be speaking about today. You came up with the most salacious title ever for an episode clickbait. Which ironically, did you use AI to get that

AJ Harper:

Title? No. The answer is always no. Did you use AI, Anjeanette? No. No.

Mike Michalowicz:

The title for today's episode is The Great Debate. AI is the Kiss of Death for Authors <laugh>. So I'm joining the studio with my friend, my colleague who inspired a great conversation this weekend. I, I just want the public to know how grateful I am for that. It was great. It was tearful, it was powerful, and it was integral. And that's what I honor about you, that you have integrity in, in saying what needs to be said from your heart. And you also respected what I needed to say from my heart. And that's the definition of great friendship in my opinion.

AJ Harper:

You think so?

Mike Michalowicz:

It absolutely.

AJ Harper:

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Because sometimes, I mean, sometimes it's hard to say things. It doesn't mean you're not friends.

Mike Michalowicz:

It doesn't mean you're not friends. But I have a deeper admiration for you today than I did three days ago. And I had an extraordinary admiration for you.

AJ Harper:

Yeah. Actually. Same. Also, you know, you get caught up in things that you wanna say, but you don't say them. And then you have assumptions. And then you get caught up in the assumptions. Yeah. And then now you're not actually communicating in, you're in two totally different realities. Right. And it's doesn't have to be like that.

Mike Michalowicz:

It does not need to be like that. Yeah. I have a few friends that are very long-term friends, but not deep friendships. And I never appreciated what a deep friendship was until maybe my thirties or forties where friends like yourself showed up. And it's a whole different level. And it's rooted in integrity not trying to avoid uncomfortable situations, but actually immersing into it because it's necessary.

AJ Harper:

I mean, I'm glad you think that, I think I avoid uncomfortable things a lot. I think most people do

Mike Michalowicz:

Well,

AJ Harper:

But anyway, I admire you also because you're, you are a good listener.

Mike Michalowicz:

Oh, thank you. Thank you. Um today's episode, I, I, I'm really excited about this because I think we have strong opinions and I think they're, they're complimentary at the end of the day, but we'll see.

AJ Harper:

Complimentary? I was gonna say polar opposites.

Mike Michalowicz:

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Well, in some, yeah. I think at surface level they are, but maybe they're complimentary. And the last debate, I just want to acknowledge you've crushed me twice. Once was in the great debate that we had around bulk purchase and so forth.

AJ Harper:

Bulk buys.

Mike Michalowicz:

And in that crushing defeat I experienced in the debate, I was converted to your side. Yeah. Your suggestions. I deployed it, it resulted in *The Money Habit*, which is somewhere over my shoulder here. We sold over 8,000 units during the launch, and 5,000 units were bulk purchases. But the magic in adopting what you taught me was subsequent sales. We've sold thousands of additional books through bulk purchases, including a keynote I just returned from a few days ago at ATI. It's called Super Conference. These are all bookstore owners. 700 units to that group.

AJ Harper:

Bless.

Mike Michalowicz:

Now here's what's so interesting is I, I still feel, I'm convinced that less people will read a book when it's gifted. Sure. Yeah. But some will. And that's what kind of clicked in my head in our debate starting to give an update on *The Money Habit* starting this weekend...

Mike Michalowicz:

It is a coincidence whenever I'm starting to get the emails from readers who are reading the book, incon consistently one every like 12 hours or so, starting on like Fridays our pop pop. What I do in every one of my books is I say, if you're reading this effectively, email me and make a commitment to me. And with *Profit First*. It, it comes in every hour. There's an email. It's, it's constant ever since it started, but I didn't remember how long it took people to adopt it. We are now, we launched in January, so we're two months out. Two months,

AJ Harper:

Yeah. From the launch

Mike Michalowicz:

Mm-Hmm <affirmative>. And the first emails are coming in, which to me shows a, a form of adoption. And some of the accolades are coming in and there's accolades coming in from people who didn't want to read the book or didn't think it was necessary 'cause they thought it was just gonna be *profit first* all over again.

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AJ Harper:

Yeah. Yeah. It's not, it's

Mike Michalowicz:

Not.

AJ Harper:

Hey, so what are you gonna do about bulk buys with the other books then?

Mike Michalowicz:

That's a good question.

AJ Harper:

I mean, the, you know, I was pushing you on it in part because you know, you wanna sell books, especially if you have a traditional deal. Yeah. You, yes, you want people reading books, but you also have an obligation, you know mm-hmm <affirmative>. To sell them. So for example, All In to me was a missed opportunity for bulk sales with the corporate, you know? Yeah, yeah. But I still think you could do it.

Mike Michalowicz:

I think you're right. Yeah. It's never too late.

AJ Harper:

No, It's not.

Mike Michalowicz:

Working with Page Two/Simplified the, the ability to do bulk purchases is so much easier. It's so much more friction free. Mm-Hmm. Because we just notify Page Two. Say we need 700 books. Like where do you wanna deploy it? They charge us the printing cost plus perhaps a minimal administrative fee. Where 700 books, probably my cost was 2000 bucks, 3000 bucks. Where if I had to do this for All In, or any of the ones I did with Penguin, I have to pay the author discount, which is 50% off retail. So I'm talking about \$15 a book as opposed to three or maybe \$4 a book. That's, that's, that's a discount of 300 or 400%. So it's a profit center. They still— I don't know if they still register it in book scan with the bulk.

AJ Harper:

If you run 'em through Porch Light, Book Pal, one of those, it will. But you know, if you're just focused on money, a you know, the only time to really worry about that is if you're trying to get a national bestseller or something in the, in the buildup. But now that the book's out Yeah.

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Mike Michalowicz:

Yeah. I don't care about that. Yeah. Why care is that it gets some more reader adoption. It's in circulation. Yeah. Okay. Let's get into our debate. Okay. So you called the Kiss of Death.

AJ Harper:

Yeah. Oh, that's not clickbait for me. I believe that. Sorry.

Mike Michalowicz:

Yeah. But, but you named it because of the story of Jesus and Judas, right?

AJ Harper:

No, I just went, no, I named it. 'cause I think it's the kiss of death. But then I went and researched, wait, how do we know? Why do we say kiss of death? Yeah. So, you know, 'cause that's, I'm a geek like that. I just wanna know origins. And then I discovered it's very appropriate.

Mike Michalowicz:

Lay it on me.

AJ Harper:

Yeah. I gotta use my paper. Yeah, yeah. Because I don't have it memorized.

Mike Michalowicz:

Got coffee outta your way.

AJ Harper:

Okay. So it originates in the Bible. So Judas betrayal of Jesus kiss of death. But it's evolved to mean something that will cause you your efforts to fail. So like a kiss is nice, but it leads to your doom.

Mike Michalowicz:

So interesting.

AJ Harper:

Yeah. So then Random House Dictionary describes it as the thing that signifies impending failure. And I wanted to say, share this one from OED online, a seemingly kind or well-intentioned action look association, which brings disastrous consequences. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz:

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Yeah.

AJ Harper:

So to me it's apt.

Mike Michalowicz:

It's so

AJ Harper:

Kiss of death.

Mike Michalowicz:

Kiss of death. Yeah. That's so interesting. I also look up the story and blood money may have originated from that too. Yeah. And what they said is that after Judas betrayed Jesus, he turned him in for ultimately his execution. Yeah. That Judas was paid for this, I think it was 30 silver coins or something. And then Judas had regret and threw the coins away. And they now caught blood money because he, he had earned money for the blood of someone else. And that money then was used to make, I think a cemetery called the, the blood cemetery or something.

AJ Harper:

Okay. You went deep. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz:

It was just super interesting. Yeah. Super interesting. Okay. So that's how, you know

AJ Harper:

Why I'm calling it that it's apt for AI for authors because it, it seems like a nice thing. It seems like it's helpful, but it's actually leading to the impending doom. I'm gonna give you a little kiss. A little kiss on the cheek. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz:

It feels good.

AJ Harper:

Uhoh marked for death.

Mike Michalowicz:

So are you using AI to any degree for any purpose outside of writing?

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AJ Harper:

If I'm using ai, it's against my will. Meaning it is forced. Everything is changing now. So at the top of Google, it's the AI search. Mm-Hmm <affirmative>. I usually scroll down beyond that. If I'm using Google, it's probably happening to me on my phone. It's probably do a little, I'm sure I'm using ai, but I don't know that I'm using ai. But I'm not intentionally using AI for one thing, nothing.

Mike Michalowicz:

And AI is such a ubiquitous term. It could be search enhancement. This, this Air Studio. We're using AI to do some of the effects, possibly clean up our voices. Mm-Hmm <affirmative>. It's even in Word now. Microsoft Word. Use

AJ Harper:

Ai. Yes. Turn it

Mike Michalowicz:

Off. Grammar checking though. And spell checking is using AI to do that better. So where is your kind of wall when you say, this is ai or this is just an enhancement of a tool that's serving me, but not distracting me,

AJ Harper:

Or, I don't want it to think for me.

Mike Michalowicz:

Okay. And that's, that's your line.

AJ Harper:

I don't want it to think for me. I love that. I also wouldn't, not that it, it affects me at this point. I don't want it to impersonate me. I don't want it to do like, be my voice literally or figuratively. I, I don't want any of that.

Mike Michalowicz:

How do you know when AI is thinking for you? Like, what's the, is there an indicator?

AJ Harper:

Yes. If you ask it a question that you can figure out on your own? <Laugh>? Yeah. Yeah. Yes. Yeah. You can think for yourself.

Mike Michalowicz:

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Okay. So just getting into minutia. So Google Docs does this. Microsoft Word will make word suggestions. Mm-Hmm <affirmative>. That's kind of thinking for me, it's, yeah.

AJ Harper:

I have that turned off.

Mike Michalowicz:

You're even that turned off. Hell yeah.

AJ Harper:

Okay. I am a writer. Yeah. I don't want it to fill in the blank for me.

Mike Michalowicz:

Interesting.

AJ Harper:

Why would I want that?

Mike Michalowicz:

Interesting. So I see it as an augmentation. And so what I do is live echo you. So now you can do it. Are you echoing one of the most common traps... I, maybe it's not a trap I get into is using the same words.

AJ Harper:

Ev all writers do you just, that's an editing pass that you check through.

Mike Michalowicz:

Yeah. And you're like, what are you doing? I, I found on writing the money habit, that echo alarm, if that's what it is, was helpful for me to, to kind of wake me up to You're, you're going into pattern writing.

AJ Harper:

Okay. I mean, I think if it's, it's, if it's helpful for you, that's cool. I think part of being a writer is identifying those patterns on your own. Mm. And working through those patterns yourself and not falling into the patterns.

Mike Michalowicz:

There's a lot of--

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AJ Harper:

There's also a process when you go through the editing process and you follow this. Okay, now I'm gonna look for all my echoes. You're also noticing other things that you wouldn't notice. So if AI's doing everything for you, you're missing an opportunity that you, you're gonna realize other things. But now you're not gonna do that because AI fixed the pattern problem.

Mike Michalowicz:

There's a concept called intellectual atrophy. Mm-Hmm <affirmative>. And it's exactly what you said is that you, you kind of dumb yourself down. 'cause It's predictable. I, I didn't think about that perspective of when there's echo is happening, happening and you identify it, you're actually looking at the full context around it.

AJ Harper:

Yeah. So, okay, let me give you an example. I'm gonna go through, as you know, in write, I must read, I have a 17 pass editing method that's self edit. And it seems tedious and long at first. But there's, it's not just about fixing those things or addressing those issues. It's about taking the time and using your own brain to process what you've written, allowing yourself the space to make it better. And if everything is about productivity and faster and easier, we're missing something really critical, which is the natural evolution of a creative work. Like the natural evolution over time, as you keep making it better yourself. You did it in a weekend, you did it in three weeks, you did it, whatever. You've lost all that. It's gone because you're not actually taking the time to make your creative work better.

Mike Michalowicz:

We have a, maybe we have time after this. We'll walk outside a little bit. There's a mini orchard. I call it the micro orchard outside. And what I've noticed, what's so interesting is how the trees are morphing around the other trees to optimize photosynthesis, I guess. And capturing the light. It's very, it's a very natural process. So, so the, the, it isn't a perfectly built trunk. It's not perfect stems. What I noticed is the trees that are taller block the light until they kind of wrap around it. It's, it's morphing on its own. And I wonder if that's an analogy for AI, is AI puts you in such a straight line that you miss the natural curves. To optimize it loses. Would you argue that AI is, is kind of watering down all writers that leverage it and is, is making this kind of homogenous style?

AJ Harper:

Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz:

Have you, can you sniff it out?

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AJ Harper:

Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz:

And what would you say identifies a clear AI?

AJ Harper:

It's just too tidy.

Mike Michalowicz:

Too tidy.

AJ Harper:

It's just too tidy. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz:

Yeah. Does that mean it loses the human?

AJ Harper:

Yeah. You can just, you gotta feel, it's like there's no soul. You can sense it.

Mike Michalowicz:

So is it fair to say you, you argue that AI rips out the human soul from writing?

AJ Harper:

Yes. You are not doing it. Yeah. You think you're doing it because you're prompting it. You think it's you because you put your ideas into this blender and told the blender what to do. But it's still not, that's not what's happening. It's a robot that did it.

Mike Michalowicz:

Right. And, and it, it doesn't, it doesn't know your character. It doesn't know your inside stories. It just knows a very surface level.

AJ Harper:

I think part of the problem is if people are thinking of writing, you know, a writing project, a book or whatever, you're thinking of it like a product and you're not thinking about how it changes you to work on it. You're not thinking about how you get better and evolve and have more insights and deeper understanding of yourself and the world and art and, and, and how your

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brain works and how things connect. And you're losing all of that because you're thinking of this as a product that you need to get produced more efficiently.

Mike Michalowicz:

Lemme ask you some of the questions that aren't necessarily my feelings, but I think a skeptic, not skeptic, someone may argue, is that AI allows you to do things at an exponential speed compared to <crosstalk>. Sure. So say there is a news, some books come out because they're triggered by news. And that they get fast tracked by the publisher. Is that a justifiable reason?

AJ Harper:

We've always been able to fast track a book.

Mike Michalowicz:

Yeah. Yeah. Does that put you at risk of, if there's something that's newsworthy or topical and someone's using AI they're gonna come down the water down version, you know, there, there's these, there's these fash flash in the pan events. That you can write about, and it's gonna be hot for the moment, and then it's gonna be gone. And that book will fade. Is that a justifiable reason for AI?

AJ Harper:

No. You're just not gonna get me to--No.

Mike Michalowicz:

Good. No, I don't want, I don't want you to No. Like a debate. I want

AJ Harper:

It's a debate. You're as your inner, like what's the, what's your debate part? Because

Mike Michalowicz:

Well, I have my list of uses. I I want to hear your anti uses first, Pete.

AJ Harper:

We can turn out books quickly if we need to. Yeah. They're super fast writers. There's journalists who know how to, they're on deadline. They know how to get that work done. Let them do their work.

Mike Michalowicz:

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We did it with the money habit. Like we were near the deadline. And you, you were going through some significant health challenges in your family. And personally, if I remember correctly, you were in the hospital writing on your phone, I think.

AJ Harper:

No, you're mixing up stories. But my wife was in the hospital and then I got Norovirus from being with her in the hospital. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz:

Okay. And the deadline was pending. And it's interesting. I think it's human nature. It's, it is called Parkinson's Law that when there's a lot of resource time, you take more. When there's less time, you find a way to crank it out.

AJ Harper:

Yes. And that book could, I mean, that wouldn't have been something we could do if all the other work hadn't been done before, that it's not something that could have been cranked out in a couple weeks, just with no development at all.

Mike Michalowicz:

Tell me about the biases built into AI.

AJ Harper:

Yeah. So these are my, can I share my three main.

Mike Michalowicz:

Yeah. I wanna hear. Yes, please.

AJ Harper:

Okay. My three main reasons for being more of an analog person and being against AI, and there are others, I have other reasons having to do with climate change and the data centers that are eating up farmland. And all of those things are really relevant and important, and we can't keep ignoring them in the name of progress. But I think if we're talking about for authors, remember that AI is pulling from a source, all the written content, right? All the spoken content, what's on YouTube, what's, what's in books, what's in periodicals, et cetera, what's on what's online, which is inherently white, male, straight, and western, western civilization. So therefore you're pulling from this, this pool that is not diverse, in fact is inherently racist. And so now you're getting just that. So that's what your AI is telling you is a source of truth. Hmm. So we don't have enough diversity of thought to feel like AI is actually pulling from the world in a way that is representative of, say, the people of the global majority. It only represents this actual minority of

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basically white dudes. And it's not like there aren't other voices in there, but they're just minority voices. And so AI is pulling from this pool that you think is like the world, right. But it's not,

Mike Michalowicz:

It's not the world. It's the wealth.

AJ Harper:

It's the wealth. And it's, it's the what the people who have traditionally had an easy time being noticed, recognized, published, et cetera,

Mike Michalowicz:

Which maybe we can talk about at the end of this, is kind of set you on a mission to represent the unrepresented people in the authorship space.

AJ Harper:

I mean, I've had that, I've been working on that for a long time. Yeah. You know, 15 years plus. Yeah. But AI is just making the issue even more important. But the second reason, so that's number one for me. Number two is theft. Like with, you know, about the anthropic settlement.

Mike Michalowicz:

This tell, educate our readers on it.

AJ Harper:

They used copywritten books Yep. To train AI and, and the judge found them liable. And so, and guilty of that. And so people are getting some money. Maybe it'll only be a few cents. I think the cutoff for that is March 26th. They're recording this a couple days before the cutoff for philanthropic. Did you by the way? Yeah. Follow your thing.

Mike Michalowicz:

We've recovered we, we have submitted for over \$6,000 of damages to recover from. So, so substantial. It's, it was about \$2,000 per buck that the settlement is at.

AJ Harper:

Yeah. So here's the deal. It's it's theft. Yeah. You know, it's whether it's for writers, but also I feel so bad for so many of the visual artists. Oh my gosh.

Mike Michalowicz:

Yeah.

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AJ Harper:

And, and so I just enga- ethically knowing that it's theft, I can't. Do you know that I can't remember. I think it's, Grammarly was using sta how do I wanna say this? The style of certain editors had trained itself to like, based on, so for example, like me, I have a, I have a set methodology in style. It's taking the style of certain editors and you can choose edit me using this editor style. And I had to go and write a letter to them to opt out of that,

Mike Michalowicz:

To opt out?

AJ Harper:

They did it without anybody's permission. They just studied these editors and how they work, and then gave you the option to, to have your work edited based on a person.

Mike Michalowicz:

So I could theoretically say, I want AJ Harper as my editor. You would opt out. So what, how, how do you even know you could opt out.

AJ Harper:

Well, thankfully I have Laura Stone, who's like a pit bull for me. And she's always keeping on track of all of these things. And she said, you need to opt out of this because Yeah. Which then, then they ended up canceling the program. But this stuff is happening all the time. So not just theft of other people's writing that's copyrighted, but theft of people's style. And way of doing things, which is our humanness. And the third, the third reason is the one that I think is the kiss of death, which is cognitive ability. There's three major studies most people have heard about the MIT study, which shows that you losing about 55% of your cognitive ability. But there's other stories too studies too that are peer reviewed studies showing that using AI and writing is diminishing your cognitive ability. And so, for example, people are writing things in that, remembering what they wrote. Hmm. So imagine if you're going on a podcast now and you need to talk about your Substack article or your Wall Street Journal column, or your book that you wrote, but you used AI to do it and now you don't even remember what the heck is in there.

Mike Michalowicz:

Have you seen that? Have you seen people like on stage or put in a position where

AJ Harper:

I haven't seen that, but that's probably because I'm not looking for it. Yeah. I'm not paying atten, I'm not seeing a lot of speakers right now. But I have something, an interesting thing happened. I was at a mastermind and the woman who was running it, awesome person challenged everybody in the room. I want you for the next 90 days to only write your own stuff and don't use AI. And

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I'm over in the corner like, okay, done. I'm, that's, I don't need the challenge. People were absolutely scared to, to try it. I mean, we're at that point now, they've only been using AI for, right. Helping them with writing for a year maybe. And now they're at a point where it terrifies them to do their own writing for 90 days and they aren't even sure how to get started. I witnessed it. A whole table full of really successful people just stunned, oh wait, what?

AJ Harper:

How am I gonna do that now? Becoming so dependent on ai. But I think, you know, I tell this story, I actually told it to authors for authors last August. You had asked me to do this talk on ai, but I really only did four minutes on it. And then I switched it up and did that whole <crosstalk>. It was great. It was great. But the four minutes I did on AI was to tell this story about this. And I just told this to my students recently as well. Here's the thing. There is this, there's this story I have about when I was a ghost writer. I wrote for this very famous, famous thought leader. And we were supposed to have a meeting where I would, you know, those were back in the day. We didn't do Zoom. It was all phone. And I would record the calls.

AJ Harper:

Yeah. And we were supposed to have a call where I would get to talk through with this person what was gonna go in the intro. So I have all my questions prepared, and then I can, you know, pull the stories and all that stuff. But this person said, I can't actually do that now. I only have a short amount of time. I'm standing in the line to get on my plane. And you have basically from the time it takes me to get on the plane and seated before they take off. So I had something like 12 minutes. So I had to take it because we were on deadline. I had 12 minutes because that person was so good. Like they did their own. They did not, there was no AI then. Yeah. Okay. I could ask targeted questions. They knew what I needed and they, I was, they were able to give me just like that, connect the dots.

AJ Harper:

Oh, you need that, this, this, this. Oh, you need an anecdote about this? Sure. B ba, ba ba, ba. Right. And they were able to connect all the dots. Give me what I needed. I wrote the intro. It went in basically untouched after for 12 minutes. Could a person do that? If they were using AI to write all their stuff? Could they do the 12 minutes and give me what I need? I don't think so. Because the thing that I know about thought leaders who are really successful is they can connect dots immediately. If I say, do you have something on you? Do it, do you have a teaching point on X? Yeah. Yep. Do you have an anecdote? Do you have a story? Do you have this? Do you have that? Do you just grabbing it? You know what to do? You, you can pull it. You don't need AI to help you organize, sort through all your data. Figure out what's the appropriate framework for this or analogy. You got it immediately.

Mike Michalowicz:

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So my, I love this. My counter questions, not a counterpoint, is ghost writers, you and I started our relationship. You were a ghost writer for me, effectively in the first book. And then from that point forward, we became co-writers in, in all my books. And my thought is, isn't AI serving as a ghost writer?

AJ Harper:

No. I mean, you know, the relationship, I mean, we're, we're having con we're having conversations. I don't know. I don't think, I don't think it's the same. I'm a human being. I'm a human being listening to you in a different way. Yeah. Yes. The AI can pick up patterns and can do your voice. But again, it's that soul factor, you know?

Mike Michalowicz:

So I think AI, and this is, this is was my counterpoint, is that AI is an advancement of a ghost writer. And let me phrase it like this, I want to hear your arguments against it for with it is, I agree, AI is an accumulation of all knowledge. The risk I agree is, is waters it down the, the knowledge and and impacts the other stuff, and it steals things. I agree to all that. But I was thinking, isn't that what a ghostwriter does? Doesn't a ghost writer take her collective knowledge and, and intentionally or not has an inherent bias? Aren't they stealing, not intentionally, but taking ideas they've had and maybe deploying it again? And are there authors that, wait,

AJ Harper:

Let me hit, let me hit on that, that second one. Oops, sorry.

Mike Michalowicz:

No, these microphones, we're gonna, we're gonna optimize the positioning <laugh>. No. Hit it on right away. Go

AJ Harper:

A good, a good ghost. An ethical ghost isn't stealing anything. We're not, we're not taking, we're very careful. We don't, how

Mike Michalowicz:

How do you do that? How do you know you're stealing as opposed to this is your own thaw. Can you d Yeah. Distinguish it?

AJ Harper:

Of course, you have to remember the work that you've done. You have, and you have to care about sourcing, ethical sourcing always. If you have good ethics in place there, that's not an issue at

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Mike Michalowicz:

All. Is there a protocol for ethical sourcing?

AJ Harper:

Well, make sure that you've, so, I, I mean, it's very simple. Make sure you know the source that you've done the providence for it. And then you cite them properly. And if you need permission, you ask. It's not complicated. Hmm. Well, you know, not everybody's ethical. Not everybody's on the up and up. But a good ghost knows, I mean, there were times when I was working on projects that were similar to each other. And so I had to be very careful about, okay, this person said that, but I can't say that to this person over here. Even though it might help them, 'em. Right. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz:

That's

AJ Harper:

Interesting. So I can't do that. I have to keep it, this is your book. This is this other dude's book. And so, and I don't wanna cross any streams. There were also times when I would deliberately not read things just so that it didn't infiltrate anything. But there was a ghost writer who got into a lot of trouble a couple years ago, wrote some pretty significant books, and was pulling from other, like, literally lifting Yeah. And putting it here. You know, you get, you get, ghosts can get caught up in that when they're have too much work. I, I definitely got caught up in having too much work. But the solution is not to pull, pull one from one project and give it to the other.

Mike Michalowicz:

A hundred percent. But you also have a history, a and i I assume things blend together. So I was just wondering if you have a way to document or something to bifurcate these things out as a ghost, because I, 'cause I'd argue AI does have that ability. Is it invoked? And can we direct AI and say, if you're serving me as a ghost, do not take from anyone else to the intellectual property. Ask me the questions. So it's all source for me. I wonder if it can be serve service.

AJ Harper:

Yeah. But then now you have the cognitive ability. Now you're not now you're not now you're not the one doing it now. You're not the one that's altering and changing and growing as, as a writer. You're just the, the robot's doing it for you.

Mike Michalowicz:

Y yes. And I'm back to ghost. Don't ghosts often serve that way. I'm not saying that's the right way. But don't author, some authors use ghost writers to do that.

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AJ Harper:

Yeah. But let's look at you for a second. Yeah. Would you say you're a better writer than when we first started? A hundred

Mike Michalowicz:

Percent.

AJ Harper:

If you, would you still be a better writer if I was doing all of it and you were doing none of it?

Mike Michalowicz:

No way.

AJ Harper:

Okay. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz:

You know, and I would say you're a unique bird. Like finding an AJ Harper for a guy like me is one in a million. I think.

AJ Harper:

I, I think you're right. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz:

So I, I, I think you, you, you need to acknowledge you are the absolute exception. And you transformed me intentionally or just through the natural course of things from that concept. Oh, ghost writer. Give her the content so she can make the book to, this is a collaborative effort. And it was by the pumpkin plan, the second book that we did together that I said, oh, we're, we're co-writers, we're partners in this. It was different. I just think that's a very atypical experience.

AJ Harper:

It is an, it is an atypical experience. But I also didn't do that with anyone else. So Yeah. You're saying how I'm one in a million, how many people, mostly dudes try to get me to work with them in the way that I work with you. Yeah. Null. Because there's a, it is a, you're also one in a million.

Mike Michalowicz:

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So what I'm trying to address in this debate here is that you're not representative of a ghost writer in that in any capacity. You're not anymore. But you, you, you were never representative of a, what a ghost writer is in the typical scenario. I

AJ Harper:

Sure was just not with you. Okay. I mean, I was with you in the beginning,

Mike Michalowicz:

But did you see, okay, okay. For other people that you were ghosting for at that time mm-hmm <affirmative>. Did you see and did you do work for them where they just kind of dumped it and said, just write the book for me. I don't care. Did you ever have it?

AJ Harper:

Yes. Okay. All the time. All the time. But the point is that that's the kiss to death for them too.

Mike Michalowicz:

Them That's what I wanted to hear.

AJ Harper:

Yeah. But I mean, you are deciding that you don't wanna be a participant in this. So you're deciding that you don't actually wanna be a writer. I, the title of the episode is a Kiss of Death for Authors, meaning people who actually wanna have that identity, you know, as opposed to, I'm gonna get a book done.

Mike Michalowicz:

So there are ghost writers that an author can go to and will just write the book for it. It's the ghostwriter's cognitive ability that's being deployed, but not the authors.

AJ Harper:

Yeah. I mean, sometimes they need to lean on the author, but Yeah. Understand things. But yeah, ultimately it's the ghost writer that's figuring out how it's all gonna go together. Because that's really what's happening when people hire a ghost. They aren't really sure how to put a book together. Yeah. And it's understandable. Why would you know how to write a book? Why do we think people should know how to write a book? Right. It's not like they teach it in high school. Right. So, you know, fair.

Mike Michalowicz:

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So my argument in this debate is that it's really a choice by the author of *They Can Hire a Ghost Today*. That could be a human, or they could hire a ghost. That's AI. And I, I can't distinguish those two mm.

AJ Harper:

They would need to do some tests on, because don't forget that cognitive ability, that their test, that those peer reviewed studies came back. I, I would bet that, I would bet that my clients can remember their books that I wrote for them versus the books that AI would write for them. I would bet

Mike Michalowicz:

I would be, I would be curious about that. I think you have, I think, I don't know who your authors are, and I've said this on a prior podcast. One of the tests I ran when we first met, and you remember this, I said, Hey, who else are you written for? And he said, I will never, not your words, but I'll never share that. That's not within the ethical code. I spoke with other ghosts and I'm doing air quotes 'cause there weren't true, true ghosts. I said, who'd you all you write for? And they said, oh, so and so, and check this out and do this, and you can get a sense for my writing. I'm like, oh, I'll never engage with that person. I mean, they

AJ Harper:

Might have had permission

Mike Michalowicz:

And they may have, but they didn't say, I have permission first. They didn't disclose that. Oh,

AJ Harper:

Fair.

Mike Michalowicz:

So I'm thinking that there are authors out there that choose to assign a book to a ghost, and the ghost writer just does everything. And I would sense that you have some authors that don't know the content because you did make it for them in their its entirety. Yeah.

AJ Harper:

I wouldn't actually call them authors, to be honest with you. And I

Mike Michalowicz:

Agree with that too.

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AJ Harper:

I I, I don't, and I, and I, I have tracked a bunch of them. They're not doing anything. There's not, nothing's happening with that stuff.

Mike Michalowicz:

So my argument is that Ghost writing and AI and perhaps we're considering unethical ghost writing or where the author is not contributing. I, I can't distinguish a difference and that's my,

AJ Harper:

Hmm. I don't, maybe, maybe not, maybe, I don't know. I still think AI is too perfect. I just think this is soulless

Mike Michalowicz:

A hundred percent.

AJ Harper:

So I couldn't distinguish that difference. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz:

I wish I read some soulless ghost books though. That you're it's so clear they're ghost, dude. You know, there's some books out there,

AJ Harper:

But you're not, and a, a ghost should not, no one should be able to tell. I mean, I can tell you most of the books I wrote, no one had a clue that they used a ghost

Mike Michalowicz:

In your case. A hundred

AJ Harper:

Percent. Yeah. Who would

Mike Michalowicz:

Your, your writing and Ability is so superior to, I know if Few Ghosts that I've worked with or referred to other people in some capacity, like just blog writing and stuff. And it is nothing like the level of writing that you do, and there's nothing like the level of engagement that you do. Hmm.

AJ Harper:

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Well, I just didn't know any better. Like, I wasn't a school for ghosts. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz:

Yeah.

AJ Harper:

Just, I just did what I had to do. But I, I, I still think you, you, I don't know. I I think there's also that danger in, in, when AI is making everything go fast, like I said at the top. So this natural process of developing a book Yeah. And thinking things through and testing things on your own and going through a rigorous editorial process. I, I still firmly believe that you need to do that. And, and AI is not, AI isn't gonna change you. The writing changes you.

Mike Michalowicz:

I love that. Let me give you, so that was my core argument. I wanna give you some more points. Okay. Lets, and we'll go through, let's go kind of rapid fire.

AJ Harper:

I've given you all my

Mike Michalowicz:

Points. Okay. AI can do voice to text and you can produce a rough blurb of what you want very quickly by just speaking to an AI system that translates it to text and then have it bullet point out. So when I was writing the Money Habit, that's what I did. I just spoke into it. Said, here's a story. My wife Krista she was buying shoes and she was scared of going to thing. And then I had it bullet pointed out and then I was able to start writing from the bullet points. Do you think that's a good use, bad use?

AJ Harper:

I don't, I don't have any trouble with voice to text. I think that's fine. Okay.

Mike Michalowicz:

Then bullet pointing. So I would, I would take that text transcription, I think it was transcribing and put input it in, say make this into the bullet points just so I can refer to it before writing.

AJ Harper:

Hmm. I probably wouldn't do that.

Mike Michalowicz:

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Oh, interesting. Okay. Um so I used it that way. The next one is to find stories. So it, it was better than Google Research because I could ref keep refining. So I, I was relying historically on Google search, like I need a story about a time in US history where there was a sudden drop in income. That's how actually I found the Dust Bowl story. Like there's wealth and there's no wealth for the entire community overnight. And that, that was the story I was looking for. So I would do a Google search. In the past I was using an AI search to say, give me stories. And then I was, I was able to keep building on the search to kind of narrow in quicker. Do you think that's a good use?

AJ Harper:

I mean, I don't, I don't trust the, I think research can be a good tool for AI and there's a couple of different apps that I think are more ethical.

Mike Michalowicz:

Oh. What would you suggest?

AJ Harper:

Well I think right now I like Perplexity.

Mike Michalowicz:

Yep.

AJ Harper:

Yep. So I think just be careful about where it's pulling from. And then also know you're not getting the diversity of stories there, so you are gonna have to go get 'em. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz:

It's gonna be slanted again toward white male. Right. Yeah. Title subtitle testing. So I've used FU Pick fu may be using AI behind the scenes. It argues they're real humans. Oh,

AJ Harper:

They're not real, they're not real humans.

Mike Michalowicz:

They say they're real humans.

AJ Harper:

Okay. But there's, well, where are they using AI then?

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Mike Michalowicz:

Well, you can, you can do AI modeling of real humans. So you can go into, and I've done this with title. I've gone in and said I want you to emulate my readers and it profiles all these different readers. And I said, based upon this, here's the titles. Query those AI readers to tell me what titles the best. And it gave me the same results as fu So we ran the exact same test and they were very similar. Hmm. So I'm like, Hmm. Is fu using AI and not admitting, ,

AJ Harper:

Gosh I hope not. 'cause I'm always recommending it.

Mike Michalowicz:

Yeah. So what's your instinct, your gut for title testing? So I use it AI that way I would

AJ Harper:

Use real people.

Mike Michalowicz:

Yeah. Would you use, but you'd use fu assuming it's real people?

AJ Harper:

Well, I guess I'm believing them.

Mike Michalowicz:

Yeah.

AJ Harper:

Otherwise they're lying. Right?

Mike Michalowicz:

Otherwise they're lying. Yeah. A hundred percent. Yeah. A hundred percent.

AJ Harper:

So if they're liars, I won't mention them again. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz:

And I'm not saying they are. I I'm not saying that. Okay. It's just, it was interesting how the results, when we ran the test of using, we used Gemini in this case, which is AI from Google versus PickFu, the results were similar. Ask it to do the comments very similar. Huh. So,

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AJ Harper:

Well wait a minute. How do you know it's not pulling from that?

Mike Michalowicz:

What pick fu is? Or how do you

AJ Harper:

Know your AI isn't pulling from stuff like that? From

Mike Michalowicz:

Pick fu. Yeah. Yeah. I don't,

AJ Harper:

Yeah, so,

Mike Michalowicz:

But it was just interesting that the output was the same. I don't know how the AI was. And

AJ Harper:

That, just for the record, we do not, we're not saying Pick fu isn't using humans.

Mike Michalowicz:

We're definitely not saying it. They say they, they use real humans. They say they use real humans, so, okay.

AJ Harper:

So they have to

Mike Michalowicz:

Yeah, I would, well,

AJ Harper:

They're gonna get sued.

Mike Michalowicz:

I've used AI to translate a manuscript into supplementals business models education courses. So we have a course coming up on clockwork. And so I wrote down stuff I want to teach. I've been teaching on stage and so forth. And then I used AI to summarize my book and say, what are the

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teaching points? And I was like, oh, there's some three or four ideas in there I didn't have. I'm inserting that to my coursework. Do you think that's a good use of AI?

AJ Harper:

I mean, I can't, I'm not gonna come down hard on that. I wouldn't do it. I like building curriculum. I like thinking through what the people need. That's fun for me. And I like the way that it's the way that I get better at it. See, that's the thing is I like the way I get better at it. So you would have to value that as a person. You would have to be like, I wanna get better at this. Versus I would like a machine to do this.

Mike Michalowicz:

That's a fantastic argument. With guitar. You know, I got really into it in the last two years in amplifying it. And it is a very time consuming process with incremental gains, but it is fulfilling,

AJ Harper:

Right? So if you don't wanna get better at say, curriculum development or something like that, then, you know, using that to sort, sort, it makes sense. I just, yeah,

Mike Michalowicz:

There's joy in the pain. So I'm just going back to guitar. I can go onto some AI models. They make a song for me and I've created air quotes a a song within seconds and it sounds generically amazing. Or I can learn to play it on my guitar and figure it out. And it is a grueling long process. And that's joyful because it's,

AJ Harper:

Yeah. You know, I have this thing I do with my students called Live Edit, and I share screen with their stuff and I can quickly figure out where are we off with the sequencing? What might need to happen here? And I've had people say to me before, how do you, how are you doing that? How do you, how do you see all that? And it scares me that if I were to use AI to help me in any of that, that it would lose my ability to do the thing that makes people think I'm doing magic. Like, I'm not gonna be able to do my magic anymore. 'cause I'm not gonna, I'm not gonna pass my magic off just because it might be faster.

Mike Michalowicz:

And that points back to cognitive atrophy. Mm-Hmm <affirmative>.

AJ Harper:

Yeah. Because I earned that magic to just decades. You know what I mean? It's, anyway, that, that concerns me. People losing some of their mojo.

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Mike Michalowicz:

Yeah. There's there's no question that's happening. You have a summer camp that is an immersion in doing the process. So just tell us a little bit about the summer camp.

AJ Harper:

Oh, nice. Nice segue. <Laugh>, that was very host of you. It was very host like. Yeah,

Mike Michalowicz:

Very host. Like it was about Tell me that. I thought,

AJ Harper:

Oh, tell me about your summer camp. Yeah. It's a free thing that everyone can do. So we, us we tend to lose momentum in the summer. And for a few years now. I've done summer camp last year we did it and we had people who finished their whole book in the summer. And it's just an accountability piece. You sign up for it, it's free. You can go to [aj harper.com](http://ajharper.com) to sign up for it or get on my mailing list to hear about it. And when you sign up, you get weekly prompts from me. And we have three live events associated with it. All of it's free. And we're doing something cool. We're doing marketing focus this summer because I'm getting really annoyed with the fact that people wanna do marketing, but they, they just aren't sure what to do or they aren't making time for it.

AJ Harper:

And I'm also have the same issue myself. Mm. So the first month we're gonna talk about building, we're gonna do building content. The second month we're gonna do video. How fast and the third month the challenge is pitching. Well, it's really, well we're calling it outreach. So what is the writing you need to do to pitch podcasts? Endorsers sponsors? Because people are afraid to do that writing. So you could come and join summer camp and work on your book, or you could also do this marketing stuff. It's gonna be super fun and it's total free.

Mike Michalowicz:

I love it. I love it. I love it. I wanna invite our audience also to purchase your book. Right? I must read It's over your shoulder back there. And I couldn't wait. For this day I've been holding on that mug Readers first, reader first for five years, 10 years. I've had it always displayed in my office to remind me. And I was like, it's gotta be over your shoulders. So I hope it may blurred out behind people, but get a copy of Right. Must read. I'm looking to you and our listeners right now get a copy immediately. And now some people are saying, I don't even have a copy. Get it for your friends. Because it brings you back to the non-AI ized immersion approach. It guides you through it

AJ Harper:

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For sure, because it's established frameworks. And if you can follow those frameworks, I mean, I get why people are, I get why people are leaning on AI for writing a lot. Writing is scary. You wonder if you're doing it right. You have a lot of trauma related to somebody telling you you're a terrible writer or you don't know what you're doing. Or you're, you've got English teacher hanging over your shoulder or, or you're dyslexic and you have some real challenges. You know? But I, if you have the right frameworks, if you can find tools that are analog tools that you can use that will help you. There's a don't, it doesn't have to be just you in the blank page.

Mike Michalowicz:

Mrs. Strucko was my English teacher. I got a D in the class because I was never destined to be a writer. She said, because I wrote too much of like a common folk voice, like just my own voice.

AJ Harper:

<Laugh> You mean the reason people read you now?

Mike Michalowicz:

Yeah, exactly. <Laugh>. And I remember I wrote to Ryan Washburn a friend. It was like, it almost like a pen pal letter. And when I wrote it, I read through it, I'm like, oh, this is like, we're sitting in a room together. And I was like, I think this is who I am. And so I ignored you.

AJ Harper:

You, you ignored her.

Mike Michalowicz:

I ignored Mrs. Strucko. I said, I got D but I said, I don't know if she gets it. Isn't that wild?

AJ Harper:

But that's unusual.

Mike Michalowicz:

And it wasn't in the moment, by the way, when I got the D you know, this is in high school, I'm like, oh my God, my school's ruined. I'll never get into college and so forth. But somewhere between high school and college, I wrote this letter to Ryan Washburn. And before I mailed that, I read it. I'm like, this is like, this is how I wanna write letters. Like, we're in the room together talking. Yeah. Like, and then that's where those parentheticals came about for me. I, I can't stop using this. 'cause That's like the little side comment you need

AJ Harper:

To train yourself about. Stop doing it. Really?

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Mike Michalowicz:

Yeah. Train myself not to stop doing it?

AJ Harper:

You have to stop doing it so much.

Mike Michalowicz:

Oh. Yeah. Thanks.

AJ Harper:

But I, but I like some. It's good to use 'em sometimes. Yeah. Yeah. But you know what? That's unusual. What you, what? That's unusual. My experience with people is that, that d and that voice Yeah. Of Ms. Truco stays with stays. So like, when I come, people come to work with me. It's like me battling Ms. Truco. Yeah. I'm like in a hand to hand combat with Ms. Strucko. Leave my offer alone.

Mike Michalowicz:

Yeah, a little bit. If it's like an f you to Ms. Strucko. Part of it too is thank you for doing that because you made me conscious about this concept.

AJ Harper:

Okay. You're very, you have a lot of, I still think you should write to her. You should send her your full, I think catalog

Mike Michalowicz:

Long passed. She, she was old back then. Oh. Any final comments about the AI?

AJ Harper:

Well, just... Conversation. This was a debate, so

Mike Michalowicz:

Maybe our readers should give us conversations.

AJ Harper:

No, but you, you're not declaring a winner.

Mike Michalowicz:

I don't, I don't want, do you wanna declare a

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AJ Harper:

Winner? I feel like I, I was prepared that we be a winner.

Mike Michalowicz:

I, I wanna give us a,

AJ Harper:

Is it a draw?

Mike Michalowicz:

I, I think if it's a draw on this one, I, because I, I think the argument that I made that I think is kind of an interesting point is, isn't this a ghost writer? And I think the argument you're making that, that was just my main point. I think the argument you're making is cognitive atrophy. And in that ghost writer response, what I hear you saying is you're not an author if that's the way you're using a ghost writer to, to, to do the cognitive thinking for you. Is that a fair summary?

AJ Harper:

I don't really wanna call out all my old clients to be honest with you. Hmm. But I think my points were more, there were other points though.

Mike Michalowicz:

Oh, yeah. I'm just trying to pick the big ones. I think I made other points too. You know, I listed off some stuff, how, how about our readers decide, and, and maybe there's a middle ground, maybe there's not a winner, maybe there's a middle ground. I don't know.

AJ Harper:

Well, it was supposed to be a, a freaking competition. Should

Mike Michalowicz:

Matt, Matt, our producer, pick a winner

AJ Harper:

Mac and pick a winner?

Mike Michalowicz:

So for the first time ever, we have a producer in the room. Matt, you gotta throw in your voice here.

Matt:

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Yeah, I guess so. Does that sound okay?

Mike Michalowicz:

You sound remarkable.

Matt:

Good balance there.

Mike Michalowicz:

Who would you argue?

Matt:

Well, I'm, I'm thinking AJ did most of the talking on this one. So she deserves to win for that. But fundamentally though, like, what's the point? Being a human being right? Is to learn and to enjoy the process and enjoy the journey. AI is a great shortcut, I think, for a lot of things. But you're missing out on the experience of actually doing the work. So I think AJ is right on the money with that.

Mike Michalowicz:

And I think, I think I won. I think Matt assigned the, the win to you. Matt's also an author himself went through an extraordinary journey that you read the book. What, what's the name of your book?

Matt:

My book. It's that was another good segue there, Mike. Thank you Host. Yeah, it's <laugh> Understanding Happiness the Pocket Companion Workbook.

Mike Michalowicz:

And did you use AI to write your book

Matt:

At all? I did not. AI wasn't even a thing. I mean, maybe in its bare bones basic form, but no, I did very poorly in English. I speak English, that's my native tongue, but I did really poorly in English class in school, and so I actually found it a bit of a struggle going through the process. And having talked to AJ for a little bit since I wrote the book, I realized I did literally everything wrong from, you know, outline to publishing and self-publishing. Yeah. But it was, again, it was a wonderful experience. I definitely improved me as a person. I wouldn't call myself a stellar author, but, you know, it was just a great process to sit there every morning and just jot down a few notes and and kind of go through the process of putting it together.

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Mike Michalowicz:

I love your book. I have it on audio. I love the storytelling. In your book, you talk about that transformative moment. So understanding happiness, and it is, it is a very accessible book. It's a, it's a companion sized book. So get that purchase, write a must read, and hey, why don't we go for the trifecta, get the money habit too. And maybe the three together can serve you in your journey as an author. Alright, next week we're gonna talk about creating special editions of your book. Mm-Hmm <affirmative>. You don't mean derivatives necessarily. No. Yeah. What do you mean by special editions?

AJ Harper:

So it's the same book, but it's a limited edition, so it has some, some additional or different qualities to it.

Mike Michalowicz:

Oh Phil Jones, a mutual friend, is, is the master of this. I'm looking to do it with the money habits, so I can't wait to learn from you. I wanna remind our audience, and we hope you enjoyed this. Tell us what you think about the new setup. We're in our new studio. We wanna do more video based content just so you can see and, and feel the, the experience a little deeper. What did you think about the studio? What do you think about the audio quality? We're using a professional producer and Matt Robinson available for hire, by the way. And what do you think? Instead of us doing this remotely and then how are we gonna do this when AJ returns to Madeline Island for the summer? So we gotta figure that out.

AJ Harper:

I had that whole studio that you'll put together for me.

Mike Michalowicz:

Yeah. So maybe we have to, I have to come out there and we gotta do 'em live out there. Yeah. The studio's nothing like this.

AJ Harper:

No. This studio is amazing,

Mike Michalowicz:

All designed by Matt Robinson. He does design studios. He actually got engaged in a project, or at least considering one to do this soundproofing. Believe it or not there's people in the house right now and you don't hear a single thing in this room. Soundproofed sound augmentation. And it's not even done yet. Did all the lighting, all the video. All the audio. If you like the show, go to dw.tbpodcast.com right now. Download the free resources all prepared by aj. They will transform your life. Please rate and review the show. That's how we get the word out, that will

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service us deeply. You can email either of us at hello at dw tb podcast with any questions, comments you have. We love to hear them. We do read them all. And the last and final thing, never forget this. Don't write that book. Write the greatest book you can.