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Episode 139:

“New Ideas and Developments for Audiobooks”

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:

This episode is brought to you by Page Two, Simplified. I wanna thank them for their support. They've been amazing. And we designed a new author. Yeah. Just two days ago. And my gosh,

AJ Harper:

Do I know the author?

Mike Michalowicz:

Their name slips my mind. Now I'm embarrassed. We're doing this episode again because we messed up the name of the au of the person we're referring to. And now I forgot the person I'm referring to. That's not a good way to start.

AJ Harper:

No, but it's gonna, it's all, it's all up from here.

Mike Michalowicz:

We're doing it right. It feels like a harbinger. Um, so yesterday I'm at the Putin train station, which is shockingly in Boontown. And there looked like there was this person who's un homed and I was like, oh, maybe, maybe they're in need of some help. So I started kind of walking in, in the direction. It just didn't look like a good situation until I noticed it was a teenager so hunched over on his <laugh> phone.

AJ Harper:

Oh.

Mike Michalowicz:

His phone was right in his face. It was inches from his eyes and just hunched over and like, look, look what we've come to. Yeah. There was other people at the train station, not in that extreme

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sitting posture. But all on their phone. And when I walked by 'em, they'd all like jump. Like there was, I was just walking by.

AJ Harper:

Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz:

I don't know. But the reason I said that is 'cause we both got in here. I, this is the first time I'm making eye contact with you. 'cause I was busy reading the notes on the phone.

AJ Harper:

Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz:

How's your trip in

AJ Harper:

Uneventful?

Mike Michalowicz:

Okay. Yeah. We have to redo this episode, uh, because we messed up Dave's name and you thought he would get a kick out of it. Um, and it was interesting. We, we made a mess up in another episode, and if our audience catches us making a mistake, technical or pronunciation, do tell us because we do corrections.

AJ Harper:

Yeah. But David Lawrence is in my community. Yeah. And I said his name 90,000 times. It's not like it would've been easy. Yeah, yeah. Yeah. So I kept thinking if we, if we... Someone listens in the middle, they won't hear the correction and then they'll get it. So I was panicking about it. (Yeah.) Because he's very dear to me. I love that. Um, but also, right before I wrote the outline, I was like, why did I say this other name? Why did I do that?

Mike Michalowicz:

Oh, why didn't you say this other name?

AJ Harper:

I realized I had been reading this article from this noted, he's noted, um, leader on strategy. And I had been reading the article and I happened to know him. And he is this guy out of the UK I'm not gonna say,

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Mike Michalowicz:

Yeah. We're not gonna say.

AJ Harper:

Yeah, no. And I was like, oh, that's why. Because I had just been reading that before I went to do. Yeah, yeah. And it just stuck. It just, that's, and then once I did it one time, I did it all the times.

Mike Michalowicz:

Our mind plays tricks on us.

AJ Harper:

Yes. But I just could not stomach the fact that someone might listen to part of the episode and we would have David's name wrong. So we have to redo it.

Mike Michalowicz:

Yeah. We have to redo it. And that's actually what I'm gonna say. What I admire, what I admire about you is your loyalty to the people that you care for who are in your community. Hmm. And willingness to do some her, her hero. I was gonna say it's not heroic.

AJ Harper:

Not really heroic, but

Mike Michalowicz:

Heroic. Not heroic. I was gonna say Herculean. I was gonna say, okay. Herculean things like,

AJ Harper:

I'll, I'll do

Mike Michalowicz:

That because this is kinda of herculean to do a full rerecord and stuff to honor Dave. Well,

AJ Harper:

But back at you because you're willing to do it. You didn't even question me when I texted you that I screwed up.

Mike Michalowicz:

I did give you alternative. I said, you did.

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AJ Harper:

We you did. And which I've considered. Yeah. Yeah. But again,

Mike Michalowicz:

This is the right thing to do.

AJ Harper:

But the fact that you were just like, cool, cool. Was great. You're kind of like that all the time though. When we're working on a book, if I say this isn't right yet you never, ever, there's not one time that you say cant, you're not Yeah. You're never whining about it. You're never upset about it. You always say, okay, well, yeah. You know, or you'll say, what do you wanna do about it? Yeah. And then we just do it. So I really appreciate that. I

Mike Michalowicz:

Appreciate you. Yeah.

AJ Harper:

We're appreciating our mutual compatibility Yeah. Around doing things the right way. Percent. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz:

Hundo percent.

AJ Harper:

That's it.

Mike Michalowicz:

This episode we're gonna talk about new ideas and developments for audio books. Yes. I'm actually happy we're revisiting it because I really had some deep thought about what I could do with my own audio. And Phil Jones, he's the author of exactly what to say, just yesterday announced something he did with his audio book that's congruent with this.

AJ Harper:

Oh. So it's good we're recording it. Yeah, we're recording. Because we wouldn't have been able to talk about

Mike Michalowicz:

That. Exactly. So that'll, that'll come up. Um, okay. So tell me what inspired this in the first

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AJ Harper:

It we, I, David Lawrence is in my writing community. So I have a writing community. We have writing sprints every day, nine, nine and 4:00 PM But he's also in my step up from that, which is a membership program that gives people access to a lot of education from me and q and as and things like that. And through that I learned that he's actually a voiceover expert. He trains actors in audiobook, narra narration. And then he also helps authors do their own audiobook narration, but also get it all the way through the publishing process. And, um, I didn't know that it was decades that he's been doing this. So he's a, he's a super expert.

Mike Michalowicz:

Now, this may be, uh, his secondhand knowledge, but has he given tips to how to improve your voiceovers? (Yeah.) How an narrat that, that you can recount. Well,

AJ Harper:

What, well, yes. You're like, what are his tips? Because the tips,

Mike Michalowicz:

Because I want, I want him baby.

AJ Harper:

Um, he, I, I invited him to come speak to the group. So he did a little tiny presentation, but then mostly I just grill them, which is what I do. And yeah, we asked him a ton of questions and then I was thinking, oh, I got a couple of ideas. And then he shared this ridiculous thing that I didn't know about the piracy of audio books and something that he brought to the APAs attention. Hmm. Um, which is in development. So I don't know what's gonna happen. And I thought we need to tell podcast listeners about this. And then when I went to go look, I, 'cause I go back to look at our entire history of episodes, I realized the last time we did a whole episode dedicated audiobook was number 17.

Mike Michalowicz:

Oh my God.

AJ Harper:

And this is I think 1 39.

Mike Michalowicz:

Uh, yeah. Thereabouts. Yeah. It actually exactly is. Yeah. So, wow. So we're past it. Over a hundred episodes back. I do want just dump a few of my tips, uh, on our audience. One is I read my books standing and that's been a significant impact, has had a significant impact on the

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energy levels and the, uh, voice, um, the degrees of voice I can bring about when I read my own books. The second thing is, this was the biggest tip I got, was to read the material you're gonna read the night before you read it. I didn't, when we were first recording this episode, I was like, oh, should I share a story? I was like, nah, maybe not. But now I'll share it. Okay. So when I read the Pumpkin Plan, I got a call from Penguin. We published it through Penguin. And they had secured a audio studio in New York City, which I didn't realize. There's extraordinary audio studios here in New Jersey. I recommend Common Mode. I think they're in Parsippany is The Town. I'm not even sure

AJ Harper:

That's right. No, no way. No. I don't know one of those,

Mike Michalowicz:

One of those, one of those. But in New Jersey's called Common Mode. It's very old school. Excellent quality.

AJ Harper:

Love them.

Mike Michalowicz:

So Penguin says, all right, we're gonna send you to New York. So I go to the studio there as I'm walking in, walking out is Michael J. Fox. And uh, he was just recording. I mean, when I say walking out, it wasn't like we crossed paths. He was in the studio prior to me and they were doing, so some of his materials were left over and stuff. So I go to the producer and I said, um, what's it like working with Michael J. Fox for audio books? And she says, it's like working with a thoroughbred. He wants to be whipped near the finish line and runs faster.

AJ Harper:

Oh.

Mike Michalowicz:

And I'm Like, that's amazing. Oh. And I said, this is after I've been doing some reading. I said, what's it work like working with me?

Mike Michalowicz:

She goes, and there's a pause. She goes on.

AJ Harper:

Yeah.

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Mike Michalowicz:

I swear to God. She goes, and we had a little rapport. She goes, kind of a Clydesdale. She goes, you got heavy clumpy feet, <laugh>. And, uh, it was funny. It was true. And I started to invest a little bit more time in preparing for my audio books accordingly. The one big tip she gave me then that I used ever since going forward is read the material. Even if it's just a skim the night before you actually do the read. For me, it's far more fluid. I'm far more prepared. I don't stumble. I know how to do the inflections, stuff like that.

AJ Harper:

So, yeah. Um, well, David gave a bunch of tips. I mean, I'd encourage everybody to look up David Lawrence. He'll, his info will be in the show notes. He has a program and he coaches people. But, um, you know, he talked about the importance of ha letting your emotion be part of it. So people are always trying to sound very stoic. Maybe, maybe stoic, maybe formal, maybe that's maybe, you know, standing on business, you know, like I'm Yeah. Like you're at a podium almost. Yeah. Um, but that's not what people really want. It's, think of it, it's in your ear, whether it's in your car or you're jogging and it's in your ear earbuds. It's pretty intimate. So the last thing you want as somebody that sounds like this, and now we're doing this. Yeah. You know, you want someone who sounds like they're next to you.

Mike Michalowicz:

100%.

AJ Harper:

Yeah. So you need emotion for that. He gave so many good tips. But, um, what I really wanted to talk about, you know, was kind of like what's happening in audiobook now, that since, 'cause it's been over a hundred episodes since that episode, we've had, um, double digit percentage growth. Yes. We'll continue to have it. Yeah. From 25 to this year, 2026, there'll be over \$3 billion in growth in audiobook since we did that episode. FindAWay Voices, which was is the alternative to Audible. Meaning it's how you're getting onto all the other platforms like, um, iPhone, you know, Spotify, iBooks. Yeah. Well now it's Spotify, but you find a way Voices. Oh, they became Spotify. Spotify. Spotify bought them. Okay. Okay. And so they've been streaming books and then, or the, the data shows that more people are streaming books because of that.

AJ Harper:

Because they're, it's easy to just shift over from the music you were listening to, to the podcast, to the book, whatever. So then also since then, Amazon introduced a new model also related to streaming. Probably brought about by Spotify's acquisition of Find A Way Voices. And so Streaming's gonna be the future. And that changes the revenue model. For authors. So that's a new thing. And then also new is a lot of fiction authors are using AI for their narration, which, you know, where I stand on AI. Um, but at the same time, when I was listening to Joanna Penn's

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podcast and, uh, it's called The Creative Pen, and yeah. <laugh>, and it's a great podcast, by the way. A lot of fiction on there, but it's still very good for everyone to listen to. And she's using AI narration for her audio books, um, for fiction.

Mike Michalowicz:

Okay.

AJ Harper:

But not for nonfiction, which is the right choice. She's doing her own voice for her nonfiction. But the thing is, for indie authors, meaning they're not traditionally published, it is way too expensive to record their own books. Especially when they're, and I'm not talking nonfiction, I'm talking fiction. Especially when they're turning out multiple books a year, maybe in romance or mystery or something like that. And, um, so it's helping them be able to afford to do it. Yeah. You know, which I, I think I'm kinda, it's always like, what, this isn't, this isn't great, but also Yeah. It's an equalizer. Yeah. So they're able to get there because not everybody is gonna have the talent to be able to pull off a novel.

Mike Michalowicz:

Yeah, that's true.

AJ Harper:

You know?

Mike Michalowicz:

I, I would also argue perhaps you can find human voices on the cheap, maybe at your local theater. And these are some actors who are willing to do it.

AJ Harper:

Good point.

Mike Michalowicz:

Grad in exchange for recognition or something like that.

AJ Harper:

I love that better. But I do think it's an advancement I wanted to talk about.

Mike Michalowicz:

I love it. I love it too.

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AJ Harper:

But I don't want anyone in nonfiction to not read their own book, if you can. I agree. Because sometimes publishers won't let you. And I think the reason they won't let you is because it's probably not gonna be great. And or 'cause you're not trained

Mike Michalowicz:

Skittish. So,

AJ Harper:

Because, because they know most people are not trained to do it, it's not gonna sound good.

Mike Michalowicz:

So we were rep, we represented it, and, and it's a, she's a client of ours. It's Dr. Amy Apigian. She wrote *The Biology of Trauma*, and her publisher, uh, Ben Bella came back and s they were, they outsourced the audio. I can't actually remember how that part worked, but said, uh, we'd like to propose certain voices. Uh, we said we'd like to insist, we're, we're encouraging Dr. Amy to read her own book. They asked for a sample. They came back and said, now we really want a professional. So we went with Dr. Amy coached her through reading. Submitted a second sample and they said, we accept it. And she read her own book. Yeah. So she just wasn't prepared. Uh, and that's a little bit egg in our face. We didn't prepare her properly to do a sample reading. She just read like, she guess, I guess she normally would.

Mike Michalowicz:

Um, but thank God her book is crushing. It's, it's top 8,000 all the time on Amazon. And it's been like that for over a year and a half now. Um, in part, 'cause she did her own audio reading. I read my own audio. I would say 55% between 52 and 53 to 55% of our sales are audio books. What was interesting thing, and I'm, I was gonna ask you a moment ago. I have, and I'm curious if you do readers of my books approach me and say, I feel I know you so well. 'cause I know your voice. (Yeah.) Particularly when I'm on stage, like I know that voice. Have you had that same experience?

AJ Harper:

Yeah. People do feel like they know you and from also from this podcast.

Mike Michalowicz:

Uh, yeah. Touche. Right.

AJ Harper:

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I've had people who I, you know, if I'm say having a meeting somebody wants to maybe come and join workshop is a big investment. So I always have a call to see if that's the right fit after the audiobook came out. Well, it came out at the same time as the book, but at, you know, people will say it's okay. And, you know, they're coming and saying, can I please be in your workshop? Versus before where I'm trying to explain what my workshop is. They feel like they know me. So they're already decided by the time they come on the call. Hmm. Now it's me just trying to figure out if they're gonna be a good fit for community.

Mike Michalowicz:

Hmm. That's so interesting. Yeah. I, I, I've turned a few folks on this podcast and now it's kind of seeping out into the author community of a very established authors. So I know some folks who in the prescriptive face space are pretty recognized. And I go, I love that show.

AJ Harper:

I know. It happens to me too. I hear from some, isn't that cool? Why are you listening?

Mike Michalowicz:

Yeah. What's your problem?

AJ Harper:

With you <laugh>?

Mike Michalowicz:

Um, okay, so, so we, we kind of set the stage here. I wanna learn more about why we need audio books.

AJ Harper:

Well, as we established, we have a growing market and you just need to be part of it so that, that by itself is reason enough to do it, but just 'cause it's a customer in a demand. Hello. Yeah. And it's just gonna increase. Yep. So that's a number one. I and then I'm a big believer in accessibility. Can a person get your book in multiple formats? Is it easy for them to get it in the, their preferred way of reading? Um, so if they, if they mostly do audio books and you don't have one, you're missing out. Because some people who do audiobooks only do audiobooks. Mm. They're not, they're not doing print and they're not doing eBooks. Yeah. So you're missing a reader. And then also you're missing a chance for people who, um, uh, people who have limited sight. So. Right. You know, that's another accessibility issue. Love that. So love that they can listen to the audio book. You know what I'm saying? Yeah. Is your book in braille? Probably not. So here, like, just do it. Just that's that, those two reasons alone, actually, those reasons on their own growing market and accessibility are enough. But there's more

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Mike Michalowicz:

Consumption speed, I'd say, too. So I, I listen.

AJ Harper:

Oh, sure. 1.5. 1.5.

Mike Michalowicz:

Is that your speed? No. What is your go-to speed?

AJ Harper:

The regular

Mike Michalowicz:

Really? You start, you, you're a One-r. You're a One-r.

AJ Harper:

I am a purist. I wanna know, what did you intend for me to listen to? Hmm.

Mike Michalowicz:

I'm a 1.5 or,

AJ Harper:

Okay. I mean, I guess it, if it was a book that was starting to annoy me, meaning I want Okay. Get ah, yeah. Get there. Get there, get there. I might do that.

Mike Michalowicz:

And the speeding read rate of the author also.

AJ Harper:

Okay. Fair.

Mike Michalowicz:

There's some authors who read notably on one very quickly. And I think listening on 1.5 might be tough. Uhhuh <affirmative>, I mean, need 1.2, but there's some authors who read

AJ Harper:

You like Alvin and the Chipmunks.

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Mike Michalowicz:

Yeah. Yeah. Right. But there's some authors who read so slowly, it's like, gosh, I gotta put them at 1.7, maybe two.

AJ Harper:

Okay. Fair. But I don't listen to a ton of audio books, so, you know,

Mike Michalowicz:

So you still default to traditional media more than

AJ Harper:

Oh yes.

Mike Michalowicz:

I default now more to audio.

AJ Harper:

If I'm dri Well, maybe because you travel more than I do. (Yeah.) Yeah. If I'm driving, I will. But I love the feel of a book in my hands. I do love that too. And that's always gonna be the case. Um, then there's Findability and Discoverability, and we've talked about that a little bit on this show, that in publishing there's findability for your book, which is, can a person find the book they're looking for? And there's, there are things we need to do to ensure that they can find it. And this is what we just said earlier. If a person is looking for your book on say, audible or Spotify, and it doesn't exist, then you have a findability problem. But then there's discoverability where someone happens upon it, where, uh, an example in, in, in person would be you're walking through the bookstore and you see a book on the table and it catches your eye.

Mike Michalowicz:

I see. So discoverability is stumbling upon it effectively.

AJ Harper:

Right. Which is usually happening because of an algorithm, because whatever platform you're using is sees you like this book and you searched for that book. And so they're giving you, you might also like this, and your book pops up on those recommended lists.

Mike Michalowicz:

I was meeting with an a EO expert that's AI search engine optimization effectively. And he said the biggest mistake people are making in a EO and SEO is they'll test their own brand name. So I'll search for profit first. And when I see it there and it's listed well, I'm like, oh, is the SEO is

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maximized? And he goes, that's for Findability. He goes, but, but discoverability is where the majority of your new opportunity comes from, of course. 'cause people don't know your brand yet. Sure. So how do I make my business profitable is where you wanna list it goes, type in that search term and see where you come out

AJ Harper:

The, the long tail terms. Yeah. And

Mike Michalowicz:

This feels very similar for our, our books.

AJ Harper:

Well, this, and, and so in person, it's, that's what all of the effort is done. When you have, you know, where's where are the, is your book front facing? Is it on the shelf walking in? Is it on the table? Yeah. Is there a display? Um, and then of course other, there's other ways of for discoverability. But again, um, that's another factor. Yes. If it doesn't exist, less, fewer people can discover it a hundred percent. Then also, I really think it's a great marketing tool. So I use my audiobook, you know, I've used it to bundle with other things. I've used it as incentive. I sent it out for anyone who bought my book as a pre-order. I use it now. Um, if I am, if somebody wants to learn more about me, I'll say, do you want to have a free copy of my audio book and listen to that? And I'll just send it on. You could put it in your email signature, just a free download of your audio book. There's, there's so many things you can do with it. Um, so that's another reason, no

Mike Michalowicz:

Question. Brian Harriet Yeah. Came up with such an innovative idea. Now John Briggs is using it. I, uh, will use it for my future books as a pre-order. He said, uh, to encourage people to pre-order his book on print. He said, if you pre-order now, I'll send you the audiobook. Yeah. He's been doing this like six months in advance of the book's release. Yep. Uh, so Brian Harriet's book's, time Freedom, John Briggs, who wrote Take Breaks Work Better is now doing the same thing and seeing measurable results. Yes. Now I wanna talk about Phil Jones. So, you know, we have this author for authors group. You're gonna be, uh, presenting this year to the group. And Phil posted in our WhatsApp, WhatsApp.

AJ Harper:

WhatsApp.

Mike Michalowicz:

WhatsApp, yeah, I guess WhatsApp. Yes. He, in our WhatsApp group, which I, I barely follow, but I occasionally go in there. Just yesterday he posts, um, he recorded his audiobook and put it

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all on YouTube for free download. And I'm like, Hey Phil, I did that. I'm back in January. Tell me the results. Now what he's doing that I didn't do is he is promoting to his entire list, get my book for free. I've been talking with our team, and when we came out the money habit, I said, we should put it up line. There's many reasons for kind of preemptively beating the pirates, you know, piracy. I said, we should promote our entire list. And they said, no, people are making an effort to purchase this book and to then announce that it was available for free the whole time may be counterproductive. Okay. So I said, let's just put it up there for natural traffic. Um, and we're not gonna hide the fact we're doing this by a certain point. Once the market is consuming this regularly, we're gonna announce it, see how it goes. So we've had 700 maybe thousand downloads on it. Accolades from people saying, oh my gosh, I've never seen this before. Thank you for doing this. Um, Phil is gonna promote to his list. So we'll find out how it surface audience, now his book's been in the market exactly what to say.

AJ Harper:

So he just, he just did the, his anchor book.

Mike Michalowicz:

Yeah. Which I think is his only book, to be honest.

AJ Harper:

No, it's not. Yes.

Mike Michalowicz:

Oh my God. Doesn't have like, derivatives of it, but

AJ Harper:

Yeah. But he has other books that are in that same vein, but they are their own books. He just, I, he just leans in. He

Mike Michalowicz:

Really, he leans in so well. He,

AJ Harper:

Yeah, he has exactly what to something. I can't remember. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz:

He should write a new book.

AJ Harper:

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If he's listening. Sorry, Phil. I think he's good.

Mike Michalowicz:

His new book should be, please Don't Say This, <laugh>, he's got exactly what to say. And please don't say this.

AJ Harper:

I think he's, I think he's killing it.

Mike Michalowicz:

He's crushing it. Oh yeah. I dare say he's moved over 2 million. Exactly What to Say.

AJ Harper:

Yeah, it's up there. Yeah. But what was unique about what he did, the fact that it was an old book,

Mike Michalowicz:

Old book, it's him reading the entire book. It's him providing, um, samples and tips and, and tricks. So he does a straight read of the book, takes a Pause, so it's not a straight read. Breaks out says, here's a worksheet, here's how you do it.

AJ Harper:

Okay. All for free. So it's, it's okay. Did he say why he did it?

Mike Michalowicz:

No,

AJ Harper:

Just visibility. Exposure.

Mike Michalowicz:

Yeah. I'm sure it's for that. Yeah.

AJ Harper:

Yeah. Okay. Yeah. And then there's also, I do wanna say, I think some people test books with audio. This is what I believe. I have no data, but I do it. I know a lot of people telling me they do it, so they wanna try out a book because they have all these audible credits. And so they just, they just wanted to see. Maybe I'll get that book correct. And then if they fall in love with the book, then they're gonna get the print book. So again, another reason to have it.

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Mike Michalowicz:

When you, when you, uh, pre-amp or or sample an audio, what are you looking for or listening for, do you think?

AJ Harper:

I can usually tell within the first chapter if it's for me. And

Mike Michalowicz:

What do you think the triggers are?

AJ Harper:

Well, I'm unusual. I'm not, you're, yeah.

Mike Michalowicz:

I know this is personal.

AJ Harper:

Okay. Well, for me it's bad wri... It's bad writing. Yeah. You know, if I, if I, I can tell just, just because I'm an editor, so I can tell, and it's almost like, am I gonna be able to stomach? Am I gonna be able to hack it through the things that bother me? Yeah. Is it just too much? Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Because I'm actually willing, I'm willing to read what is probably not the greatest writing. If there's some nuggets, if there's something cool, if I'm looking for something specific, I'm like, okay, I'm gonna do it. But then sometimes it is, so I cannot do it. So yeah. It, I I have to just check real quick to see.

Mike Michalowicz:

I listen if it's a professional voice, and if it is, I usually don't buy the book because I know really. Yeah. Not, not to, not to discount the value of a professional read, except for it frustrates me because they notably get the stuff that they mispronounce because they don't understand the context or they put it in wrong inflection.

AJ Harper:

Oh. Or So you're not actually listening to novels?

Mike Michalowicz:

Oh, I, no, no, no. This is in the prescriptive phase. Yeah. Space. Oh, in a novel. I, I have listened to novels. Oh, I, there, I do like a professional read. Yeah. I read one. Oh, that was about, uh, stars. I can't remember the name of the book. The Something Stars, whatever. It was a novel. And I love, that was a professional read. They even actually did voice, the person did voice in

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AJ Harper:

British was a contemporary novel.

Mike Michalowicz:

It was during the 19 hundreds. Is that considered contemporary? Early 19 hundreds? No, no. It was like 1930. No.

AJ Harper:

Okay.

Mike Michalowicz:

Okay. Okay.

AJ Harper:

By the way, that's just a couple years from now. That'll be a hundred years from there. So

Mike Michalowicz:

Yeah. But I don't know if like what class, what, what defines classic versus contemporary?

AJ Harper:

Well, there's not, classic is not actually a term.

Mike Michalowicz:

Oh.

AJ Harper:

I mean, it's a term like you classic would be say, you know, a book that stood the test of time.

Mike Michalowicz:

Okay, I see.

AJ Harper:

Versus a time period.

Mike Michalowicz:

So what, what would be historic then? Historic. Yes. <laugh>. Okay. Okay. Oh,

AJ Harper:

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Interesting. Unfortunately, historic is turning into like, our childhood at this point. Oh my, my gosh. Like, don't even talk about it. Don't

Mike Michalowicz:

Talk. Yeah. I, I saw a Volkswagen Beetle or bug call. Yeah. And it had a history plate on it, like it said, like a historic vehicle. I'm like, how does a historic vehicle, I used to ride around in those things.

AJ Harper:

<laugh>. The last one I wanna give credit to David Lawrence. He's, and I totally agree with him. He said, there's a perception when you go into an Amazon listing and you see the different formats for the book. Yeah. If you don't see an audio book. So if you see, then, then you, it seems less legit. So you see the print book, you see the ebook. Maybe you even see two versions of the print book, hardcover and paperback, but no audio. It's a signal. And I, I'll argue that if you only see the print book or you only see the ebook, it's a signal with exception. Again, if you're talking indie fiction, there's a lot of people just doing eBooks in indie fiction. 'cause they're just churning them out. But we're talking prescriptive nonfiction. You've gotta have the formats.

Mike Michalowicz:

We did a book just in audio called Recession Response, and we're actually gonna redo it. And we did only audio to see what kind of engagement.

AJ Harper:

Oh, to test it. Yeah. Cool. Yeah. What, what happened,

Mike Michalowicz:

Uh, we're we're now gonna go and redo it as another audio and a training class. There's been enough demand for it

AJ Harper:

And a training class.

Mike Michalowicz:

Yeah. It's really more about the training class now.

AJ Harper:

But why don't you do a workbook?

Mike Michalowicz:

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Um, we, it doesn't necessarily apply to that. Okay. Um, but it was very helpful just to test the market. 'cause we get out very quickly. Um, I also wanna share, I I share this on the last episode we did of this. And, and I wanna share a story again because I think it's significant is they call it the, uh, I think it's called the paradox of choice, or the dilemma of choice. So the story I shared, you'll remember this is in a book, I think it was Robert Till Dini's Influence. There was a sample of people walking into a food store, and they had one of those sampling bars when you arrived. And it was for jellies. And they had a large number of variants. I think it was about 24 variants from the classic strawberry and Concord grape to marmalade mint mix. Oh God. I made that one up. That sounds disgusting. Oh my God, that sounds horrible. And vomit. One was, was called Just Vomit. Oh, no. And, um, the test, that was the control. And then they ran a second test where they only had three options. Strawberry, concord and, and grape. Or maybe that is the same thing. Same thing. They had three choices. Three choices.

AJ Harper:

Well,

Mike Michalowicz:

They found is when people came in and they saw the most choices, most people were attracted to that. So say of the 10, they're making these numbers up, but 10 people walked in. 50% of the people approached the sampling stand when there was a live of choice. So there's less people going when there was less choice. But the purchase rates skyrocketed when there was less choice. And they call this, therefore, the paradox of choice, or the dilemma of choice is that there's overwhelm. And so when we have too many choices, we freeze. When there's just enough, we feel empowered, we can make the choice. And they ran. Another test is where, where this one sample. And now people, people feel cornered. So with your book, if you have just a print book, it's like, Hmm, I want it. I wanted the freedom of choice of how I want to consume this, and you're not giving it to me. I'm not gonna do this now. Mm. So giving people a choice of their formats actually may increase sales in your print. Yeah. So the fact you give them audio, they may say, I choose print.

AJ Harper:

I feel like we have effectively made a case for why you need an audio book. Yeah. I mean, we have, if you are not convinced now, oh my God. Nothing can help you. Nothing. Nothing. So you wanna talk about the piracy thing first? I did.

Mike Michalowicz:

Yeah. I,

AJ Harper:

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Or do you wanna talk about the PDF thing first? They're both juicy and they're from David Lawrence.

Mike Michalowicz:

You lead the Way sister. Okay.

AJ Harper:

And he gave me permission to talk about this stuff, everybody. So, um, I'm a

Mike Michalowicz:

Gimme the download.

AJ Harper:

I am a site, site site. Now, I don't wanna say the N word. N-A-Z-I-I hate saying Nazi for that. Now. <laugh>. Oh, you've, oh, that sounded bad. I don't wanna say any n word actually.

Mike Michalowicz:

I know. That's when you said, I was like, what the hell are you going?

AJ Harper:

I don't wanna say Nazi. I, I'm like a citation. Um, super citation. Super cite-er.

Mike Michalowicz:

Super cite-er. Oh, I like that.

AJ Harper:

Super cite-er. It is me. That's what I am. I wanna always give credit where credit is due. Yes. Good grief. <laugh>. I don't know.

Mike Michalowicz:

That's probably the best highlight. I hope, uh, Matt clips that out for our reels. That was hysterical

AJ Harper:

That I, that Nazi. I don't like saying Nazi anymore because I feel like it's, uh, yeah. It like it's, we're using it too much for things. And it's a very eighties thing. Remember we, we would always say it Jerry, like a sl It's like a slang thing. Yeah. I'm trying to be very careful with my words in general. Um, there's this zero chance. I rarely

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Mike Michalowicz:

See you get trapped in your own words.

AJ Harper:

There's zero chance that I would ever use the other N Android. No, I know. Oh my God. I know. Zero. I I would turn into a puddle of ash

Mike Michalowicz:

<laugh>.

AJ Harper:

Seriously. That that is, that is a no. Um,

Mike Michalowicz:

All right. So give me the PDF. Is that where you're starting with or are you gonna start with the YouTube? I don't know. Just go. Just go baby. Go. What do you feel called to talk

AJ Harper:

About? I wanna talk. Okay. Let's, let's build some anticipation. Anticipation on the piracy thing. Okay. 'cause it's the coolest thing. Lay it on me. Okay. So let's do the PDF thing. So I was talk, when David came to talk to my group, he talked about, um, oh, you can do a PDF on the, for the audio book. And when I shared this with you, when we were first recording, you actually didn't know that. Yeah. You, so you can upload A PDF with resources, with the images from the book, with whatever you want. And you don't it all, it goes automatically to whoever bought the audio book. And so I immediately interjected and said, but I don't want people to not buy the print book. So I don't want the PDF to be enough for that reader. Right. So that they don't even think, oh, I should get the print book.

AJ Harper:

And he said, well then you just need to change what the PDF is. You know, so it doesn't have to prevent somebody from buying the print book or, or cause them to feel like they don't need it, rather, and that really got me thinking because he was talking about checklists and he was talking about, um, of course your graphics, all of those things. That's great. And then he said it could also be, um, let's say you had photos of that were from a story that you talked about. And my mind just went like, wait, what? Yeah. Like a photo album.

Mike Michalowicz:

So good.

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AJ Harper:

And then I started to think about your book and I started to think about, well, all your books, but I specifically thought about

Mike Michalowicz:

Money Habit.

AJ Harper:

Well, first I thought about All In because I thought, oh my gosh, you're reading the Call to Greatness. The Conclusion of All In, where it's about your dad and Helen Fuller and the tenements in, in Manhattan. And, and wouldn't it be cool to have some images there of, of your dad and the neighborhood where he grew up and all of that. And then I thought about Money Habit. You've got so many personal stories in there. You've got your son's wedding. You've got, um, you guys went to, um, canyon Ranch. Um, you've got the, the revised piggy bank story in there. You've got a story about Adayla and the rock climbing and there's all those pictures of her Oh,

Mike Michalowicz:

In the hospital and everything. Yeah.

AJ Harper:

Well, not in the hospital like the nice ones where she's got good rock climbing pictures. Yeah. Her own. Yeah. And so you could make that the PDF. So it's almost like show and tell. It's

Mike Michalowicz:

Brilliant.

AJ Harper:

Then I thought, I've always thought of the PDF or not the PDF, but the audio book is driving sales to print. That's how I think of it. But what if in the print book, you drove sales to the audio book by leaving Easter Eggs to say, you can see pictures of this if you, but only in the, if you go get the audio book. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz:

So, brilliant.

AJ Harper:

Come on now. It's so brilliant. Now, instead of this one way feed, it's a loop

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Mike Michalowicz:

Two way street.

AJ Harper:

And so for super fans are gonna do it. You know, people who really love your content, they're gonna get it. They probably get it in all formats anyway. But if someone is curious to see what your dad looks like, you're not gonna get the photos that if you Googled, these are the personal things Yes. That you're allowing people to see.

Mike Michalowicz:

I really like that idea. Right. Yeah. I really do. I remember one of my publishers, one of my publishers Penguin, or I can't remember it was page two, but I'm, I'm like 90% sure it was Penguin said, oh, we can upload your PDF to audio. And that was like, oh, you can, and then subsequently there was all these problems. So I don't know if those has been resolved, but there's these downloading issues complaints from readers. So we make the PDF that compliments the audiobook freely available on my own website.

AJ Harper:

But you're talking, is it a PDF of the book?

Mike Michalowicz:

No, no. It's all the supplemental material. So the graphics and stuff. So when I'm reading the book, I'll say, I'm referring to figure 1.1. This is freely available for you go to

AJ Harper:

Mike. Yeah. So you still wanna have drive people to your resources. I don't know why Penguin wasn't able to get that. Right. Yeah. But people would do it all the time. Yeah. So a, it's not that hard to get it right.

Mike Michalowicz:

There was avid. I wonder if you could put videos in PDFs. And I think you can actually, my father, this was my, the best. So this is, um, maybe, uh, I can't remember a book. It was, but it was one of the books we've finished. It was Get Different. And I give it to my father. And so I'm, I'm filming him. I go, dad, what do you think? And he looks, he's like, yeah, it's a good looking book. And he kind of flips a few pages and I said, what do you think of me as an author? He's like, yeah, I'm very proud of you and stuff. I said, uh, have you, have you read this book? He's like, no, no. I'm, I'm like, will you? He goes, no, <laugh>. I go, what? He's not, I don't, I like, have you read any of my books? He's like, no. I go, I, I don't like to read this stuff. <laugh>. It was so funny. It was so funny. Oh God. It

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AJ Harper:

Was truthful. That, that's cute.

Mike Michalowicz:

It was cute. So I think we put it on social media, but I think that'd be better in A PDF. Okay. So that's a great idea. Um,

AJ Harper:

That got me really excited. That got me thinking about all the things we're not doing that we could be doing to make that, make that, um, purchasing loop.

Mike Michalowicz:

I love when authors share pictures and in, in the print books, traditionally there's like, in the center of the book is where they can do high.

AJ Harper:

Right. Because this is certain you're changing the, the paper. Yeah. It changes. It changes. That's why. So they're not putting them throughout. There's a reason for that. Yeah. Um, but, you know, it's not that easy to get good picture, you know, it's a process. So yeah. It's better to just put it in the, in the pdf. F

Mike Michalowicz:

It, it surprises me how often I look at those pictures in, in a book and say, wow, the, those images are not why I expected. So with the picture I draw Drew in my head are a little bit different. Yeah. Yeah. So I really enjoy that. Yeah. I think it's

AJ Harper:

A great idea. I do too.

Mike Michalowicz:

Tell me about, um, the YouTube situation.

AJ Harper:

Okay. Yeah. This is, this is the, the thing that made me wanna do this episode in the first place. Oh. So I mentioned to David, uh, when he was talking to our group, I mentioned that you put your whole audio book up on YouTube. And I didn't remember the context of how it got going, but we discussed that and he said, um, 'cause Oh, because I said you people were doing it anyway to your book, so you just went ahead and did it. So then, okay, I got, I wrote this to, he sent me an email so I would get this right. So I'm gonna be quoting David Lawrence, just so

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we're clear. But basically he explained that he's part of the APA and he brought to the president, maybe it's not the president, director, president, whatever the official title is of the APA

Mike Michalowicz:

I, it's all of those. I'm the director, president, leader, <laugh>.

AJ Harper:

But, um, so he's, he serves for on whatever committee for the APA and um, or council committee, council, director, president, leader didn't obviously double check this before I started this and recorded it again and still didn't check it. <laugh>. So that's on me. But anyway, David Lawrence said that he brought to him, why don't we use these same codes that music and film use for audio books? And David's not entirely sure that they don't, but he assumes they don't. Because what happens when you, these codes that are embedded in music and films and television alert, YouTube, that there's a copyright infringement, um, automatically.

Speaker 5:

Wow. And I've witnessed that.

AJ Harper:

I've experienced that. So if you've ever tried to put a YouTube video up and it has music on it Yeah. And they take it down right away, or they don't even let you load it, it's because it spotted the code. And yanked it. If if audiobooks had these codes, wouldn't they, they'd already been yanked. So he's not a hundred percent sure, but here's what he brought. Um, he's, I wanna explain this some. This is David's language. Uh, YouTube checks for copyright primarily through an automated system called Content id, which scans uploaded videos against a massive database of files submitted by content owners like labels, studios, networks, and streamers. If a match is found, the system can block, monetize, or track the video Mm. Based on the content owner's preferences, including immediate automated takedown. Mm. Additionally, YouTube provides a copyright match tool for creators to find re-up uploads of their content alongside a manual takedown platform.

AJ Harper:

And those methods are content ID rights holders submit their audio visual content to a database. And every new upload is compared against this database. And the matches are flagged instantly. There's also a copyright match tool, um, that automatically scans to see if your songs, shows or videos have been uploaded by others. Then there's manual copy, copyright removal requests where they can submit a legal request via web form. And then there's even pre-publication checks. So YouTube checks for potential issues when people upload videos, which that happened when Laura tried to upload your Monday night reading because you, when you did your Monday night reading, you actually showed the book. And it YouTube. So we couldn't use

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video. So Exactly. Could only use the audio. Yeah. The only way we could put your Monday night reading up was to just do the audio. Fascinating. Yeah. So then, um, let's see.

AJ Harper:

I wanna skip down, and this is what I really want you guys to hear. So he says YouTube is simply listening for ISRC international standard recording codes that are usually embedded with Digi mark that has existed for years in the music and film industry to track sales and airplay. So like Nielsen, which is fascinating, the same codes that are embedded in a major label music and major studio films can be used not only to create charts like billboards Hot 100. But also for copyright infringement. And the bottom line is if we're not embedding similar sub audible codes in audio books, we certainly could. And then, um, then it's, he says, certainly there are tools that exist that could possibly remove these codes, but the music and film industry likely has resources that we can take advantage of that could minimize that possibility. And I just thought That's so cool. Who knew? I, can you put your own ISRC codes in, do you have to, how do you do it?

Mike Michalowicz:

ISRC And is it, uh, an inaudible audio code effectively?

AJ Harper:

Yeah. So it's a, he called it a sub audible code,

Mike Michalowicz:

So we can't hear it. No, but it's, it plays it and the systems can identify. Yeah. So it's almost like a thumbprint it sounds like.

AJ Harper:

So if YouTube's already doing it for all the other types of content, it

Mike Michalowicz:

Sounds like a no brainer.

AJ Harper:

Right? Yeah. So how does, can an individual, can an indie author get an insert an ISRC code?

Mike Michalowicz:

It seems so simple to do, but also because we, your material's copyrighted and you can submit it to the copyright authority.

AJ Harper:

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So you can do a manual claim, but the code will grab it. Yeah. Will block it.

Mike Michalowicz:

No, no, but I'm saying when I, when I write my book, this is going a little on a little tangent, but how copyright law works as, tell me if I understand this correctly when I write it inherently or there's implied copyright, but I can also submit it to a central authority

AJ Harper:

Yes. The US Copyright Office. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz:

And I wonder if, if they could give you, in return the IRC, uh, to be embedded. 'cause because if I'm producing the audio on my own, how do I get that? I,

AJ Harper:

I don't know that the I-S-R-C-I is provided by the US Copyright Office. Yeah. I think it sounds like it's something he said that it's embedded by Digi Mark.

Mike Michalowicz:

Yeah. I wonder what triggers that. So if someone just, if I, if I jam out my guitar and play it, um, make up my own little melody, I wonder how I could with music, get it registered. Like what's the steps are, do I reach out to Digi Mark directly? I wonder,

AJ Harper:

Well, you're talking about two different things. You're talking about registering a copyright and then you're talking about the code.

Mike Michalowicz:

Yeah. The reason I'm talk about registering copyright is like wonder if that's what happens with music. Is there a copyright that gets registered and then that goes to the ISRC or

AJ Harper:

I don't know. Yeah,

Mike Michalowicz:

I just, it's curiosity.

AJ Harper:

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Yeah. But what I, I think it's, first of all, I think it's amazing that David's, uh, the person who's trying to say, can we solve this? Yeah. You know, because it should be an automatic take-down. Yeah. And it is for music. Yeah. It is for if you try to, you know, to do your own version of Ferris Bueller's day off

Mike Michalowicz:

And loop back to what Phil Jones is doing, I don't know if this was his primary reason for doing it, but posting his book online is a way to compete with people who are ping you anyway. Yes. That's the reason I did it.

AJ Harper:

Yes.

Mike Michalowicz:

Um, wouldn't it be so it would be superior? Because what, here's my concern is people are gonna go onto YouTube and type in the money habit. And they're gonna find these pirated copies of it, start consuming it. That pirate could modify the content if they wanted to. Uh, they could, they surely are redirecting anyone that goes to that page to go somewhere else. They're monetizing it. They're getting ads off it. Yeah. It hurts the, the artist.

AJ Harper:

Right. So maybe it's a combination of putting your own audiobook up and trying to figure out this whole ISRC code thing. Yeah. Yeah. You should go just find out how do I get an I-I-S-R-C code? Maybe you could actually do it yourself because what about indie? What about indie labels and stuff? Well,

Mike Michalowicz:

That's why I was saying if I write my little tune on my guitar and I'm an indie, how, how do I get the IS rc? That's why I thought, does it go to copyright, copyright?

AJ Harper:

Just Google it. How do I get an IS rc? I'm gonna do it.

Mike Michalowicz:

Just Google it. Just Google it.

AJ Harper:

Just google it. You've got your whole,

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Mike Michalowicz:

All right, well we're gonna start wrapping things up. You, I'm

AJ Harper:

Googling what? But oh, we have to do the David Pogue thing too. But why don't you do, I've got a juicy, juicy tip from David Lawrence. Uh, actually it was from some book he listened to. But why don't you do your, whatever you wanna say it. I'm my rap.

Mike Michalowicz:

Well do your rap while you're, you're Googling I'm gonna do my rap. I wanna invite every single listener to buy AJ's book. It's right behind her, over her should, it's called Write a Must Read. It is the definitive Bible for the authorship industry. So if you don't have a copy, get a copy now, and if you do have a copy, get another copy. It supports the author, but it also spreads the word. And you can share it with your best friend who's also aspiring author themselves. Um, and AJ has classes going on. You can go to **AJ Harper.com**, you can join them in sprints and all that stuff. Now did you find, uh, I did.

AJ Harper:

Okay. What do you I mean, I, it's the first thing it says ISRC recording code isrc.com. Get your is SRC code. Come on. Okay. Why don't, why don't you go get one for the money Habit?

Mike Michalowicz:

I got Well, during break I gotta look into this. Yeah. Okay. And I will, and I'll show you how I'm gonna do it and we'll talk about it in the next episode. Okay. Uh, tell us about the David Poe situation. Yeah,

AJ Harper:

So this was, um, David Lawrence said that he's been reading David Pogue's book Apple, the first 50 years. It's apparently 27 hours

Mike Michalowicz:

Ha-ga-gow.

AJ Harper:

Yeah. Also, David told me that the good rule of thumb is 9,300 words is an hour. Oh, isn't that a good little thing to remember?

Mike Michalowicz:

It's very specific. 9,300.

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AJ Harper:

He said it works, it works out almost every time. Huh? Okay. Yeah. So you can tell how long your Yeah. Audiobook will be. That's a great tip. So 27 hours is a long book.

Mike Michalowicz:

9,300 words. Yeah. Wow.

AJ Harper:

Okay. So at the 24 hour mark when that, or the 25 hour mark, I guess when you've listened for a full 24 hours, David Pogue comes on in the audio book and says, you Wow, you've listened to my book for a whole day. You get a, you get a gift. Nice. And so there's an Easter egg in there. Yeah. And those are the kind of things that are you can do with your audio book that you can't do with a book. Yeah. But you could in the book say that there's an Easter egg in the audio book. Yeah. But that's also the stuff that gets people talking. Did you make it to

Mike Michalowicz:

Yeah.

AJ Harper:

Now why? What

Mike Michalowicz:

Are we talking about?

AJ Harper:

You know? But think about how we want people to finish.

Mike Michalowicz:

Yeah.

AJ Harper:

So now you're actually staying the course. Yeah. Because you're waiting for the thing.

Mike Michalowicz:

I like that. Yeah. I love the Easter eggs. And

AJ Harper:

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So I told you in the last episode, this is for television, but the Bridgerton, season four, after the credits, there was a wedding scene. Yeah. But if you weren't, if you didn't stay on with the credits, you missed it. So all these people didn't know, it wasn't just like, it wasn't bloopers or anything, it was like a full on scene and everybody else, some, some people who watched the credits said, oh, the wedding was so cool. And other people, whoa. Wedding. And then that got people going back to watch. Plus everybody was talking online about it. What do you mean what a wedding? Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz:

Yes. Because after the credits, have we done an episode on Easter Eggs?

AJ Harper:

No, I think, do we need to do an episode?

Mike Michalowicz:

I think so. I used

AJ Harper:

Do you feel like we could have enough for an episode?

Mike Michalowicz:

Absolutely. 'cause it's more than just a book an author can do on their website. That's where we've exploited it the most. Oh

AJ Harper:

Yeah. Let's, let's

Mike Michalowicz:

Do that. Yeah. And it's a great way to reveal, uh, your humor. But our website engagement is notably up. Oh, two ways. Time on site of a lot from Easter Eggs. Secondly, new visitors, and this is a little more subjective, we hear people like, I went to your website because so and so said I had to, I had to find the anger management. We have a little anger management thing.

AJ Harper:

Oh, I think I've seen the, the picture. It's a picture, right?

Mike Michalowicz:

No. No. Oh, okay. It's a different Lily's. Okay. Um, I think we covered everything.

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AJ Harper:

I think we actually, and just for the record, since you didn't get to hear the original, this episode was better

Mike Michalowicz:

<laugh>. That's true. It is. It's

AJ Harper:

True. It flowed better.

Mike Michalowicz:

Um, next week we're gonna talk about when your book needs to change in big ways. And uh, that was a really fun episode to record.

AJ Harper:

So we technically have already recorded it.

Mike Michalowicz:

Yeah. Yeah. We already recorded it. Yeah. And it was a really fascinating, it was good discussion. It's

AJ Harper:

One of my favorites.

Mike Michalowicz:

Actually. It was one of my favorites. We did three back to back episodes. They were all like killers. Yeah.

AJ Harper:

But that, that one I really love.

Mike Michalowicz:

Alright, my friends listening to that. Thank you for listening to our show. Our website is dwtb.com. I always shared AJ's site, but gotta mention again, **AJ Harper.com**. Go there, sign up, register if you want an immer in authorship, she is the person to guide you through it. She's your make the word go.

AJ Harper:

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No,

Mike Michalowicz:

No. I

AJ Harper:

Don't like it either. It's the G word. Yeah. <laugh>.

Mike Michalowicz:

<laugh>. You don't use the N word. You don't use the G word.

AJ Harper:

I don't use, I use a lot of words. There's a lot of words I don't use.

Mike Michalowicz:

Um, also you can email us at hello@dwtvpodcast.com. Aade, who's producing a show, uh, is monitoring that. So if you have any questions, you want us to talk about something, tell us there. And also we have an imprint at page two. Thank you for sponsoring this called Simplified, so you can maybe apply to be a simplified author if you're in the business entrepreneurial space. Remember this, don't write that book. Write the greatest book you can.