

don't write *that* book!

Episode 151:

“When to Give Away Free Copies of Your Book”

Mike Michalowicz (00:01.282)

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. Welcome back to Don't Write That Book. Today we're gonna talk about when to give away free copies of your book. AJ, I love that you have so many authors' books displayed behind you.

Now, Write a Must-Read is prominent over your left shoulder, but in my case--

AJ Harper (00:35.638)

Let me let me move my camera. Look what's up there.

Mike Michalowicz (00:40.246)

Hey, all in all the Michalowicz books. Yeah, but all in's front facing. Have you noticed or have you done this? I should say. When I go to like a Barnes and Nobles or an airport bookstore, they have the majority of books are spine displayed. And I would argue the most overlooked design element is the spine. I rarely see a good spine. There's one that really pops on your display case up there.

AJ Harper (00:42.754)

Those are my catalog.

Mike Michalowicz (01:09.804)

Bookcase because it has like a multicolored, almost like a rainbow effect.

AJ Harper (01:14.094)

That's called Buoyant by Susie deVille.

Mike Michalowicz (01:17.144)

Susie DeVille, well done. The but the majority of books are just it's a white spine, it's a solid spine, it's hard to read, including my books. So what I've done is I've started studying side spines. When I go to these bookstores, I used to think, you always want to get front facing, but that is one one thousandth of the books that are displayed are front facing. It's the rest, the other

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nine hundred and ninety-nine are spine facing. So I'm looking for great spine facing, and I I'm starting to take pictures of great spine facing books.

So that in future books I do a better spine job.

AJ Harper (01:49.742)

A spine job. okay.

Mike Michalowicz (01:52.056)

Just so you know. How you doing today?

AJ Harper (01:55.872)

I'm do-- you what? I'm doing well. I just realized we haven't been doing our what I admire about you thing on our last we miss is we forgot to do it.

Mike Michalowicz (02:03.352)

I forgot. I did on the first episode we recorded in this batch. I didn't do it on the second one.

AJ Harper (02:08.536)

But I didn't say you didn't say you know what I know, so anyway I did.

Mike Michalowicz (02:11.884)

Say what do you admire about me? I should be that ego.

AJ Harper (02:14.646)

You should. Tell me about me.

Mike Michalowicz (02:17.614)

All right, enough about me. Let's talk more about me. so I first of all you're doing well and when are you coming back to New York?

AJ Harper (02:29.976)

Well, we're recording this the day after Labor Day. Yeah. And I will be leaving in about a week and a half.

Mike Michalowicz (02:37.646)

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Do you have to go through a shutdown of the house, like do you have to winterise it? It's September.

AJ Harper (02:43.07)

So we do. It's a little complicated here, but we've decided to have someone stay and in our place. as opposed to shut it 'cause it's a big production to to shut everything down and you have to drain the water. It's a whole thing.

Mike Michalowicz (03:01.122)

that's actually super interesting. So this person is a house sitter effectively for the winter season.

AJ Harper (03:08.428)

Yeah, so what so here on the island, there's a lot of people who live in the summer and they camp or they have their little camper vans or and that's kind of how they roll all summer, but then it's too cold for that in the winter. So they need a place to stay. But it's there's so many summer residents here that there's housing for people is so they can then move into someone's house for the winter, watch it, make sure everything's fine. And then in the summer, the summer people come back and they go back to their camper van or their camping site or yeah.

Mike Michalowicz (03:40.318)

Brilliant. Yeah. And it feels like that's almost like a barter. They're getting a roof. Yeah. You're getting someone to mo-- That's brilliant.

AJ Harper (03:48.066)

Yeah, it's a good deal. I'm hoping my fingers are crossed. We're waiting to hear from the guy that is considering staying here. So he has like a lot of options 'cause there's a lot of summer people who leave. It's kind of a good gig, by the way. Anybody who's looking for something like I need a place to stay over the winter. You just need to hook up on Madeline Island because there's a bunch of houses that are empty.

Mike Michalowicz (04:09.088)

Yeah, it's a winter caregiver or or property maintenance person is an extraordinary gig except for the shining situation. Is that? That's a winter caregiver that's gone wrong.

AJ Harper (04:16.791)

I don't do that. Don't stay at a big scary hotel with ghosts.

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Mike Michalowicz (04:23.884)

Yeah, that that you gotta avoid that. What I admire about you is you're constantly promoting your authors in your community. and you're displaying them, you talk about them. It's it's nice to see someone that's a master at their craft. It's extraordinary to see someone that doesn't just teach the craft but elevates those students to become masters themselves.

AJ Harper (04:47.596)

Thanks. I appreciate that. I admire about you that you are always learning, that you're trying to take on new things all the time. When we first met, you would only read certain kinds of books and you were studying them mostly to see to make yourself better, yes, but also to see how you could be a better writer. But now you just read for the joy and pleasure and curiosity. And I've loved that. well

Mike Michalowicz (05:12.472)

Well, thank you. Yeah, I'm really getting into history. I never anticipated I would get into that. we're gonna dig into an interesting topic today. First, I wanna thank our sponsor, which is Simplified, is an imprint with page two. If you are an author in the entrepreneur space, check out Simplified. I think it may be a platform to consider. And your next writing sprint, if we time this episode properly, is on October seventeenth. So it's imminent now.

So two days. Two days, yeah. So it's a free writing sprint. Where do people go to sign up for this, AJ?

AJ Harper (05:47.864)

They can just go to AJ Harper.com and there will be a little navigation tool on the navigation panel. If if for any reason you feel confused by that, I'm always I'm always sharing it on my LinkedIn and talking about it there. So you can go to my LinkedIn, which is Anjanette Harper, my actual name, not my nickname.

Mike Michalowicz (06:13.742)

We got a listener request. This came in from Lindsay, so I'll read it off. She's a schoolteacher and author from the great state of Utah. And she said this. She goes, I'm a big and newish fan of your podcast. I found it about six months ago and have loved listening as you share your wisdom and expertise. I purchased and devoured AJ's book after hearing Mike praise it so many times. It's fantastic. AJ, I've even added a

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By the time you turn the last page of this book, Promise, into the intro of my latest work, thank you so much for all you do. When is a good time to give out free copies? When is it not? How do you handle people who ask for a free copy, especially when you're a little hurt by the request? Do you politely decline? When and how do you do that? Ignore the request or oblige them? I've done all three.

What an interesting inquiry to get. So Lindsay, hopefully you're listening in right now. Thank you so much for submitting this. Also, we made an executive call here. Lindsay, you did share your last name, but we wanted to protect your privacy. So you know who you are, but we didn't want to share your last name without your permission. AJ, what what a fascinating question. Have you have you personally given away free books?

AJ Harper (07:31.864)

Sure, I do it all the time.

Mike Michalowicz (07:34.05)

I give it away too. just your overall has this worked in your favor? Does it ever work against you?

AJ Harper (07:42.424)

Doesn't work against me. I mean, I guess against me would be say if, you know, somebody used it for nefarious purposes. But I think one of the reasons I wanted us to do this episode is because Lindsay had her feelings about it. And I don't often hear that. I'll I'll hear, is this a good strategy? How do you go about it? But you know, we didn't read her entire email, but she sometimes feels hurt when someone asks for a copy for free.

Mike Michalowicz (08:10.392)

Yeah. I I totally get it. 'Cause I I think one interpretation, and I've felt this, if someone's like, I like to get a free copy of your book, it means that they don't see the value in the book of spending the twenty-five bucks of something I spent a decade working on. So I I can feel that. I've been scammed. I've had book clubs, I'm putting air quotes around the book clubs reach out, ask for copies of say Profit First or something, only to find out it's a fake

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club and they wanted those fifteen copies or whatever to re resell those. It's instant inventory for them and they're putting on eBay or whatever. so I I think you can get schnookered by some of these folks that are asking for nefarious reasons.

AJ Harper (08:56.3)

I don't think you should I don't think you should give free copies to book clubs. I think they should buy them.

Mike Michalowicz (09:03.84)

Okay. So w let's start digging into the meat here. Are there categories where you suggest free copies are advantageous and in addition to book clubs, are there other groups or other asks that are not advantageous or could take advantage of you?

AJ Harper (09:19.194)

it's not so much about taking and I mean, I guess I that would be taking what you just talked about for sure is taking advantage. Yeah. But I'm thinking more about what is the rightful exchange. You know, a book club, you do something in exchange for them buying those copies. Maybe you get they get a special reader guide or a video, or maybe if it's big enough, you're even willing to zoom in and say, Hey, book club for their discussion. when they buy multiple copies. Nothing wrong with doing a 10 minute convo.

in exchange for the copies, but I don't I that should be a point of sale for you. It should not be a gift to a book club.

Mike Michalowicz (09:57.174)

Yeah. I I think the way I phrase it as a currency exchange, there always needs to be some kind of exchange of value for value for one party to see value. I I've given away free copies, hopefully to inspire someone to do something, and it really was a nuisance to them. So maybe there is a a podcaster I ran into at an event, and I'm like, hey, here's my book. I I I hope you enjoy it.

they're almost obliged to say, so kind, thank you and then kind of like

used to be in the airports in the seventies. I can't remember what religious denomination was doing this, but they were handing it. Who who was it? Harry Krishner, yeah. Where they this is a true story. They give out those poppy flowers and people were obliged to take because they're

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forcing them into your hand and then people would throw in the next garbage can. Well they had another one, another person stationed there to then empty the garbage can to recycle

AJ Harper (10:41.582)

Hare Krishna?

Mike Michalowicz (11:01.1)

These poppy flowers, and they were forcing you to feel reciprocity. And I see that I've given books to people and I walk by the trash can, my book's in there.

AJ Harper (11:10.163)

No, you haven't. Have really?

Mike Michalowicz (11:11.97)

Well, proverbial Th yeah, there's been circumstances well, it's not the trash can, it's left behind. So you give the book and you go to the back of the room and there's a stack of your books that you just handed out to folks just sitting there. and maybe it was unintentionally put it down, but it wasn't significant to them so they forgot it. And I think, w that's a waste. But it's also awkward I've I've pushed it upon them. So

AJ Harper (11:32.886)

know, I'm gonna I'm gonna tell you a s can I tell you a little story? Yeah. I was at Book Expo, which is now has been dead since twenty twenty. I was at Book Expo at an event and I heard an author speak. And so when they do these at these events, there's and there's a book on the chair, that's from the publisher. So the publisher is giving the book away for free for a reason because it's an industry event and they

they they want people to know about the book. So there was a book on every seat. And I'm telling you, there was probably at least twenty-five people who just left their book on the seat. What do you think I did? Took Like Ms. Pac-Man. Yep. Picked them all up and and took them and distributed them. I was like, what are you doing? I'm gonna take these. So I I told you I sent them all over. So you because I can't stand that I felt bad for the author.

No, but also I I knew people who wanted that book because it was an early read, right? You because when you go to these big industry book industry events, those are usually frontless titles that haven't been released yet. So I was like, I know people who need this.

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Mike Michalowicz (12:45.11)

I'm gonna let you into a little evil secret part of my mind. I do speaking events and I've done this even recently, where the event buys my book in advance and they will distribute the book and put it on everyone's seat. So it could be the money habit or it could be get different or profit first or whatever it is. And they have an obligation to buy X hundred copies, whatever. and same thing, the empty the room empties out and there's all these abandoned books.

And so I'll go to the host and say, Hey, I see Ly's books weren't taken. Do you mind if I if I grab And if they say yeah, I I walk out with inventory. and then I r I take I either put in my suitcase or in some cases we'll ship it back to our office. And now we have distributable distributable inventory. it's a great way to get your own book for free because you know, when you publish through any kind of publisher, there's gonna be a cost associated with it with a traditional publisher.

You're maybe getting a 50% discount and getting your own book for say 15 bucks, 12 bucks. If you're doing it through like someone like page two, you still have to buy your own books. It may be four or five dollars a print. Well, if someone else paid for it and they're gonna be abandoned, which means they're gonna go into the garbage, I'll take those puppies. So I I I purloin my own books.

AJ Harper (14:03.722)

So afterward it's just you and like the janitor. Yeah. And it's just you're just walking around picking up books while somebody picks up the garbage and sweep.

Mike Michalowicz (14:14.327)

Yeah, the janitors like a step in front of me trying to throw the books in the garbage, like, Hold on, my friend. I said, Let me take those books.

AJ Harper (14:21.324)

I love that you have no shame about that. It's like let me get my book.

Mike Michalowicz (14:24.014)

I have no shame. I've no shame. Cause listen, I understand human nature. Here's the ironic thing. If someone goes on Amazon and buys the money habit for twenty-five bucks, the likelihood that they're gonna at least value the book increases magnificently. The chance that they're gonna read

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it also increases. But if that exact same book, the exact same content is gifted to them, saying, hey, here's a book that you'll enjoy. It's totally free. There is no value exchange, there's no currency exchange, it gets devalued instantly.

So they don't see value in it. It's it's a throwawayable, it's a it's a tchotchke, it's a squeeze ball, and they are less likely to read it. Ironically, if I take that book that the event host paid for and with their permission, take it and then sell it back to the person that didn't keep the book, they're more likely to read it. It's ironic.

AJ Harper (15:14.71)

That's ironic. Okay, so I wanna just point out that Lindsay did talk about the book clubs. She had an incident where someone asked her for quite a lot of copies. that would be no. But then she also asked about influencers asking for free copies. And I had this is a pretty common practice and I don't I personally think that's a good use of a free copy. An influencer.

Mike Michalowicz (15:38.06)

Yeah. Is there other way other groups or things that you suggest is a good idea for

AJ Harper (15:42.936)

But can we just point? I just wanna I know I know Lindsay might feel like that's an influencer shouldn't ask for it. They should buy it. I just want to make sure if this is a very common practice and if it's an influencer who's gonna genuinely talk about the book, then that's worth it. That is worth the free copy for sure. Consider considering that a lot of people pay influencers other the actual money. so if it's just the cost of the book.

Mike Michalowicz (15:50.04)

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

AJ Harper (16:13.073)

that's pretty great.

Mike Michalowicz (16:14.594)

You know, in promotions, it is commonplace for authors to send out a free read of their book, a free copy. I receive them daily is a little bit strong, but multiple books a week for for years now. And I will come into the office. I'm recording from my home studio today. I'll go into the office

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this afternoon, definitely tomorrow. There will be a stack of books. I don't know from who, but I know there'll be a stack of books. It's overwhelming. So

The approach if you're trying to promote your book is don't send your free copies. Ask that influencer permission to send you a copy. It's a whole different receipt. So occasionally people send me an email or a letter, by the way which is far better, saying, Hey Mike, would you like a copy of my upcoming book? If I say yes, I am now looking for that. And that goes right to the top of the heap and something that I'll minimally skim through.

Maybe we'll even read through. But these unsolicited copies I get, ones that are just pushed upon me, go right to the book bar and I hate to say it but

AJ Harper (17:24.224)

And and you're even biased against them because you're annoyed that someone did it.

Mike Michalowicz (17:27.881)

Yeah. They didn't even ask permission. Yeah. We we have a couple hundred books that Amy brought to the book barn and the book barn recycles these books or does other things with them. Should they'll try to resell them occasionally but often recycles them. And it's a shame. It's a shame. It's it's such a waste of s of so many resources if they just ask for permission first.

AJ Harper (17:51.086)

But let me pause for a moment because I think we are using the word influencer different than Lindsay's. So you're saying influencer as in say a person, a notable person that you want to say market your book within your in a notable person in your industry. So an influencer for you would be so for the money habit, you had some financial advisor influencers that you connected with. Some of them you already knew, some of them you cultivated relationships with, right? Mm-hmm.

Mike Michalowicz (17:56.653)

Okay.

AJ Harper (18:20.92)

Garrett Gunderson, Tiffany Alice, et cetera, right? Yeah. Yeah. Okay. That's what you're thinking of when you say influencer. And that's true, but that's not what she means in this instance. She means an online influencer, like on TikTok or Instagram. That's what she's talking about. So that

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exchange for a free book for them to talk about your book, their your book on their channel is a fair exchange, in my opinion.

Mike Michalowicz (18:37.728)

Yeah, I gotcha now.

Mike Michalowicz (18:48.216)

Where when are other times that you want to give away a free copy of your book?

AJ Harper (18:52.854)

Endorsements, you gotta be ready to do it. And but I would always

Mike Michalowicz (18:56.158)

Could imagine charging someone like, Hey, would you want hey, would you be willing to endorse my book, AJ? And you're like, Yeah, I'd be willing to consider it. Okay, send me a check for twenty five dollars, please.

AJ Harper (19:04.706)

I here's a link. Here's my Amazon link. Yeah. endorsements expect to give it if they want it, but I always tell my students do a Cliff Notes version, a PDF of the book so that it ha I cli Cliff Notes meaning full introduction, yes, general description, but then say three to five paragraphs for each chapter. So it's a really in depth.

Mike Michalowicz (19:06.776)

Here's my Amazon link, yeah.

AJ Harper (19:32.206)

But it's not the book and say, I can give you that, or I can give you a digital copy of the book of the entire book, or I can send you a print book and give them those three options. Don't just say, I'm gonna send you my book. You want them to hold the book. You fantasize about them holding the book, but they might prefer to have one of those digital options.

Mike Michalowicz (19:53.054)

I love that because I am asked to endorse books regularly and I like to oblige simply as reciprocity for the first author who endorsed me, Barry Moltes, I'll never forget it. I was writing T P. E. I I of course I was unknown because I hadn't produced a book yet and he was an

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established author and was willing to endorse. And I feel that it's a great way to support authors. But gosh, some people make it such a burden for the endorser.

Setting them up that way is very helpful. And we did a full episode around endorsing what about other ways other situations.

AJ Harper (20:25.046)

Mm-hmm. Yeah.

AJ Harper (20:30.006)

You might need it for media. They might expect to get it. And if if a if a television show or a big big podcast or some other media wants it, you should just give it. Just don't hesitate. That's not rude. That's normal. That's a normal exchange.

Mike Michalowicz (20:48.022)

You it's interesting, I I have a podcast called Becoming Self Made that's really exploded in popularity. Albe

AJ Harper (20:55.062)

It has it? Tell me. Give us a give us a little update.

Mike Michalowicz (20:57.844)

so Becoming Self Made is a podcast where I go on site and interview entrepreneurs about their journey and it's some very notable names. this last season we interviewed David Stark of Stark Design, who is internationally famous for putting on these extraordinary events, like like massive conferences or dinners or whatever, but they're just so unique. I remember one

One th thing he did was for the subway system in New York Metro or whatever it's called, and they made a tunnel out of metro cards. But he has this philosophy of no waste and if you walked through this tunnel as a guest walking in, you could pull a metro card and they were active Metro cards and then they were inviting people to give it out to people that could use the cards for travel or if the cards weren't picked they would

distributing themselves. So it's just really kind of cool stuff. Well that podcast that not that episode alone, but that and all these other great interviews we did, the the just a couple samplings here is the largest banjo manufacturer in the US, it's called Deering Banjos, is in s the San Diego

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area, flew out and interviewed them. It's it's kind of the last bastion for U.S. manufacturing and may actually be bringing it back. Like they they may be the catalyst for the renewal of manufacturing in the US and it's just fascinating interviews. It's now

It was the top ten percent downloaded podcast last season. It's the top one percent downloaded podcast in the world this season. That's that that's no easy feat. It's not the elite like diary of a CEO or something like that. It's now one echelon below in the last season. And Relay, who is the sponsor for the series, just reached out and we're gonna be doing another season. The whole

AJ Harper (22:51.854)
congratulations.

Mike Michalowicz (22:53.146)

Thank you. The hope was to do fifty-two episodes so we can do a weekly and we're not there yet. B they're so involved. These are literally three day commitments to get one episode flying out, interviewing. Th the the reason I was starting to talk about that is what I've discovered in interviewing as as the interviewer, the more I'm educated on the person I'm interviewing, the better. And so I consume all of their stuff in

the weeks leading up to the interview, media and online content. And some of these folks, David Stark, had a book and I read through his book. It was so helpful because I got these nuanced components on him. And when I interviewed him, I got the nicest thank you note I've ever received at the conclusion of the interview. And he's like, I I've never written this to anyone else. That was the best, most well prepared interview I've ever experienced. Cause I consumed it. That long story points to

The right media will consume your book and they'll be so prepared because you provide them the book for free.

AJ Harper (23:57.474)

Yeah, absolutely. also there's colleagues who support your book. I think that's a nice gesture. They're, you know, if they if you want to give them a book to say thank you, if you wanna give a signed copy, hopefully they're buying it, but I think it's a nice gesture.

Mike Michalowicz (24:15.224)

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John Briggs, he has 290 employees. he gifted the book to his team. It's a system they use. It became a great enforcement mechanism, too, because he wrote Take Breaks Work Better. It's about the break philosophy for business. And so by distributing this to his employees, his colleagues, it's kind of the manual. It's the SOP for how they operate. So that was pretty cool. And my own books too. I we're small. I think collectively we've now it's twelve or fifteen employees, somewhere in that range.

Of course everyone gets a copy of them. Could you make you gotta buy this?

AJ Harper (24:47.352)

Yeah.

and then I think if you're gonna have a street team, even though the street team might be buying books at as part of being your street team to help you promote, I think it's a nice gesture to say, thanks for supporting it. Here's a special sign copy for you. Maybe you can gift the ones that you purchased as part of being my street team. I think that's always good. of course, there are mark book marketing people who suggest giving away a lot of them. we just saw Tim Gral in Nashville and

I know he talks about giving away thousands of copies of books. He's not the only one who talks about that. I don't know if I agree with that, but it's a strategy some people do.

Mike Michalowicz (25:29.932)

Yeah, I I think there's a there's a big risk f for most people, just reiterating a point I already made, is when you don't invest in something, there is l no value in that something. so I th I think there's a risk associated with that. But I I get it. And and and it can work because I have stumbled across books that were gifted to me or just presented themselves because they were sitting on someone's coffee table and I started skimming through it.

And all of sudden I'm consuming it. So normally not happening. But you know, one strategy we did do, and I can't recall which book it was. I think it was T P. E is we asked ourselves where are the waiting areas for people and then went to those locations and just put books on the table. And it it worked. It worked. Like like how many books do you find in an auto mechanic shop when you're sitting waiting for your car to be repaired? None. There's a cut there's a stale magazine from ten years ago.

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AJ Harper (26:01.674)

That's normally not happening.

Mike Michalowicz (26:25.582)

So we put some books down and and sure enough, we did get feedback from some people that they consume that. So it's an idea.

AJ Harper (26:32.098)

I also think if you have beta readers, advanced readers who are giving you feedback on the book, give them an opportunity to get the book at a discount or a free. So what I did was I for my beta readers for write a must read, I said, Would you like and I didn't have a print book yet. So and this is one way you can do this for no cost. I just said, I'm happy to give you a digital copy of it, meaning the ebook or the audio book or both. What would you like? Yeah. And I just gave that to them.

It's actually easier to gift is something I wanted to point out. I know a lot of people who give the audiobook of away for all the time. All the time, all the time, all the time, all the time. And it doesn't cost you anything because you already made it.

Mike Michalowicz (27:14.029)

Do you have specific policies for yourself when it comes to free books?

AJ Harper (27:17.848)

No, I just feel like if somebody asks me, if I if I meet someone, if I if I think it's gonna be the beginning of a new relationship, then I don't even hesitate, you know? I think that's a nice gesture. And in reality, it's just a few dollars. It's not really that much. and I frequently give away the digital ones. Frequently.

Mike Michalowicz (27:41.23)

Yeah, so a couple loose policies we have is if someone asks, we will generally provide that as long as they put the reason behind it. So we had a school in Newark that's doing an entrepreneurial thing. They actually asked me to come and speak and I couldn't just 'cause I had a conflict in the dates, but they also asked for books for the students. So, you know, it's it becomes a no brainer in situations like that. Of course. You want to support

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The educational system in our community specifically. if someone comes to my office, we do a book at Grab. So we have a wall of my books, but also authors I admire, Joey Coleman, among others, just comes to mind. John Bates did a book, John Briggs, of course, Brian Harriet's new book, which by the way is is has just launched. It's called Time Freedom. Get that book. It's awesome. It's also a page two simplified book. And so we have those available.

And you can grab the books because you've invested the effort to come visit our offices and take a tour. And we do that. but if what with the other policy we have is we don't we don't force free books upon people. Right. but if we do market by giving away a free book, we will always include a reason why. So something we did with the money habit is we realized that there are certain gathering points for communities that need financial help that are atypical.

So there there may not maybe there is a financial anonymous kind of club, but there's also, say, church groups or whatever that after worship or before or independent of it, they will also come together in subgroups to support su support helping each other in in different areas like financial support. So we reached out to I think about a hundred different churches about two months ago and gave a free copy of the money habit and told them a reason why.

And we put a cover letter in that and said, we're giving this to you so that if you feel compelled to share it with someone in your congregation that can benefit, it's available for that. And if you want more, we're gonna provide more for free. And it's of no value. This wasn't meant to distract you, it was meant to be simply of service. But this is how we're getting the word out in the book for communities that we think need it. So it's just very clear. Very conspicuous about what we're doing. And that when we give away free, we tell people why.

AJ Harper (30:05.932)

Yeah. So what about Lindsay's concern? I mean, she's got feelings around it. How does she deal with the emotions and how does she say no without pissing people off?

Mike Michalowicz (30:18.476)

Yeah, the the no I use, because I do this with speaking engagements. I am asked to speak for free constantly. And it's so funny, I was talking with my agent yesterday on Labor Day. tons of requests coming in for speaking. And she shared with me the company's called Go Leeward. If you want to check them out, if you need a speaking agent, G-O-L-E-E-W-A-R-D, go leeward dot com. And Lee says to me,

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there's people asking for you to speak for like seven thousand dollars or twelve thousand dollars. Now my my speaking honorarium is fifty thousand dollars now. And I'm I I I still can't get over that fee. That's extraordinary for me, but I'm I'm I'm so lucky to be getting that regularly now. And she goes, People are going to AI and saying, What can I get Mike McAllowitz for? And I he spoke for seven thousand dollars. So you can get him for seven thousand. Well, I did I did speak for seven thousand dollars twelve years ago, and but AI spin out, so she's getting all these phone calls.

So I get people asking to speak for a reduced fee, but most often someone's like, hey, c can Mike speak for free? By the way, he'll get in front of this audience. So Lee says no, but we do it by saying Mike will do, and I do do, four free speaking engagements a year for not for profit organizations to support community and so forth. I'm usually booked now three to four years in advance. So if you're interested in getting Mike for free, you can

We are now booking 2030. And it's interesting. Some people are so put off by that. but it's truthful and it's real and it and it it enforces a f scarcity, but it also vets out the right people. Certain people say, Awesome, I'll take the twenty thirty date. I want to get on the books. And those are people who really see value in you. Everyone else, they're they're well, I don't know what they're looking for. Just they're just looking to be gifted something.

And so I wonder if Lindsay could limit the books and say, listen, I give away a hundred books a year and cause I incurred the cost and I have criteria around this. And if you meet this criteria, you can get it. And if the books are not available, you can get on next year's list. The people who want it will put themselves on next year's list, or the people who really want it will make the investment now. But but you've got to put limiting factors on it. And it's interesting also the scarcity increases the perceived value. If I if if my agent said

Mike Michalowicz (32:42.306)

Mike does forty free speeches a year, first of all, it'd overwhelm me. But secondly, then it's like, he's always available. Anyone can get him. And it decreases my perceived value in the market. So scarcity is how I would and and it it's fair and I don't think it upsets people. And if it does upset them, they got an issue going on because it's truthful. That's

AJ Harper (32:55.746)

that. I like that.

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AJ Harper (33:04.726)

Can I just say about the emotions? I don't it doesn't bother me when people want my book for free. Yeah. It doesn't bother me at all. And the reason it doesn't bother me is because I think I'm so glad you want to read it.

Mike Michalowicz (33:19.842)

Well, you okay, you're placing genuineness on that request. I I and I love that and I agree a hundred percent. When people want something for free from me because they really value it, but when people are doing it because they can see an opportunity for themselves. Like I've I've had okay, I've been at events where people come up, they do the autograph line and they got like a stack of like six books in their hands. And they say, Hey, can you sign this one to me? Am I gonna do it? Yeah. They say, Can you sign these other ones generically?

I'm like, why? Like, well, I wanna you know one person some people are very honest. I wanna put on eBay.

AJ Harper (33:56.024)

Okay, but I'm talking about say just a one on one exchange, you know?

Mike Michalowicz (34:00.524)

Then you should be flattered. I mean if they genuinely want it you should be flattered, I think.

AJ Harper (34:04.354)

Yeah. And again, I do want to really wanna stress some of those that we talked about earlier, that's just how it is done in the business. And you do need to allocate a certain number of books that you're gonna be using for promotional purposes. And I would say exchanges with TikTok and Instagram influencers, gifts to colleagues, sending out for endorsements and media, that's just part of it.

Mike Michalowicz (34:28.929)

Any final thoughts for Lindsay?

AJ Harper (34:31.079)

you know what? I'm so glad that you're listening. Thank you, Lindsay. And we know you have another question, we'll get to that soon, but keep asking and keep writing and keep publishing.

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Mike Michalowicz (34:41.954)

Yeah, and thanks for showing a perspective that I may have lost touch with. You know, the emotion around these things. So Lindsay, you're kind of a rock star. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Talking about rock stars, we're gonna our we've done some bonus episodes. You brought up some really interesting topics and we ran these episodes. So we we launched these every Thursday. Is that the right day or is every

AJ Harper (35:03.131)

The well the main podcast is a Thursday release, yeah.

Mike Michalowicz (35:06.21)

Every Thursday. And so we had some bonus episodes that dropped like on a Monday or something in between our core episodes, and it really got a lot of interest. So we're like, let's do some more episodes. Now we're gonna try also something a little bit fresh in our episodes, is we're actually gonna sit down with other authors. So it's not just me and you talking. We're gonna be interviewing these other authors, getting their live questions on air. So we have three authors coming on. One of them is a USA Today bestselling author, and two other folks

I think two of we have to do remotely, albeit you'll be in the studio. But one of it's gonna be three of us in one room. This may be the first time that don't write that book has that many folks in one little studio.

AJ Harper (35:45.368)

But can but can I just I just want to make a statement. We don't typically have guests on the show. So we're just experimenting. So please don't send us a pitch to be the next author. Cause we're actually we're just capping it at these three to see if we like doing it. Plus to celebrate. We've worked with all three of these authors. So we have a personal we're involved in their books. So I just want to make that clear. Yeah. We're not we're not starting a new thing where you can pitch us to be on the show.

Mike Michalowicz (36:12.832)

Yeah, yeah, exactly. Exactly. AJ, as always, thanks for this. I can't wait for those episodes. I can't wait to see you back in person. I so much value just proximity with you, time with you face to face. So safe travels back home. Thanks. Yes. Safe travels from your home to your other home. Yeah. And a reminder to all of our guests, download all the free content that's available for you, produced and created by AJ for you at DWTB.

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AJ Harper (36:31.874)

New York, yes.

Mike Michalowicz (36:42.958)

Podcast dot com, get her book, write a must read, supplement it with the money habit, and you've got the one two punch. Emails any questions you have, just like Lindsay did at hello at DWTV Podcast.com. If you're interested in our simplified imprint, that's our entrepreneurial imprint that we have with page two, just mention simplified in that email and we'll hook you up with right people. As a reminder, please don't write that book. There's a lot of those out there. Don't write that book. Write the greatest book you can.