Mike Michalowicz (00:00.174)
Talk about small world, AJ. I got a call yesterday from Greg Eckler. So Greg is my Greg. You Greg. My college

I don't know him but I've written written about him many times.

The Elk turd, the Elk turd. So he's my old college buddy and fraternity friend. And he and his wife were meeting with an attorney to do some estate planning. H Greg's mother passed away last year. So they're they have to do some stuff. And my name came up in some capacity and the lawyer goes, I know Mike McAllowitz. And he goes, how do you know? Because AJ Harper works with me.

AJ is his co-writer. So y you apparently work with an attorney out in the Denver area who knows you or knows of you and knows of me because of you. And I don't know the person's name. I think it was a female. No, no, no. You're no no no. Okay. They sh she said she knew me, Mike McAllot, it's because AJ is the co writer for me, Mike.

That I'm a co writer with. I'm not a co writer.

AJ Harper (01:03.662)
Okay. Okay.

Yeah. So th you must w know this person in some capacity or worked with them or they listen to our show, but they know you as the primary contact and they they knew me through you.

Uh-huh.

AJ Harper (01:16.012)
I know lots of attorneys, so whomever that is, shoot me an email.

So there you go. Yeah. So Greg Eckler. Okay. Yeah. Small Yeah. Mm-hmm. Why would you know so many attorneys?

Small world.

AJ Harper (01:29.888)
I just I think that it's there's certain types of people that are you know, thinking of making career transitions and I find that attorneys attorneys seem to wanna leave their leave their work, you know? yeah, yeah. Yeah.

Which kinda is thematic for today. We're gonna about borrowing, expanding, stealing. That gets into a lot of legal stuff.

there's a lot, yeah. I think it's a legal issue, but I also think it's a moral issue.

Yeah. I it really is. I I can't wait to explore today's topic, so maybe we start digging in right away.

Let's just yeah. But we should do the admire thing and probably yeah. No, come on. No let me say an an an admire thing. you I love that you have maintained lifelong friendships. thank you. I think that speaks a lot to you. So we always call out Greg. Yeah. It's like a joke. You're always making fun of him in every book. Yeah. But he's dear to you. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz (02:05.014)
I admire how many attorneys you know.

Mike Michalowicz (02:28.76)
He's very dear to me.

And so you have these it speaks to the character of a hum human being when they have long term healthy relationships.

Yeah. It's funny, I I've someone asked me like, you you joke a lot. I would say at the end of most of my speeches, if there's a Q and A type thing, someone will comment about the joking and comedy in in a very positive way. Like, you're you you're actually a comic who teaches or something. I just came up, I was speaking at Lean Scaping was the name of event. And great

massive audience, like seven hundred people or something. And the the first person comes up, like, my God, though I didn't expect a comedy routine that would teach me so much. I laughed and learned. Which is flattering. and so I'm I'm reflecting on why do I joke so often? And it's really testing relationships. Really what it boils down to is it's a fear inside I have that my relationship with someone isn't as strong as it it I perceive it to be. So I use jokes as a test of the relationship. I'm like, that's what I'm subconsciously doing.

Mm-hmm.

Mike Michalowicz (03:35.64)
So when I'm busting Greg's chops, it's like does will Greg roll with that because that means he trusts me and likes me. If he's offended, then maybe the relationship isn't there. Or maybe I'm going overboard. I think that's why I'm using jokes so much.

But all the time? You're testing all the time? I wanna

I don't know. I'm just trying to peel back the onion in my own psychology. Okay. Yeah. I don't know if it's all the time. I I really get a kick out of a good joke. Yeah. A hearing one, receiving one. I I love laughing. Laughing. I love laughing. I love I love and that's when I'm like, that's the best, 'cause that means someone likes me.

Well you can take a joke too. You can take a joke.

AJ Harper (04:13.802)
Okay. Yeah. So I'm always telling people you should make fun of Mike if you want to get his attention.

hundred percent make fun of me. The you know, where it it's

In a gen in a genuine way, not in a way that's mean No. Intentionally. You would be so upset with yourself.

Right. I will never make a hurtful joke.

Mike Michalowicz (04:30.582)
upset with myself. So I will never make a h a true a hurtful joke. And if I do, I really get upset with myself and I I call and apologize. And I've done that a few times by accident. so when I make a joke about someone it's it's situational. it's you sometimes self deprecation in there or it's just so made up, it's blatantly obvious it is an embellishment to the extremest degree. Extremes, that's my known word. I like that

Mm-hmm. Extreme.

I like that.

so what I admire about you is your sense of humor. I I think a lot of people don't recognize many of the jokes in the books we write. And and the books are laugh out loud books. Like I you look at the reviews of all of our books and they're like when I dreamed Prophet First, I had no expectation I'd be laughing so hard.

I don't really read the review, so that's that's cool. yeah. Yeah. I love I love that.

Mike Michalowicz (05:25.9)

Yeah, and y the cool thing that Amazon's doing now, it's an AI summary, but it summarizes all the reviews and gives you the the pros and the cons. Yeah. And and that's very been very helpful. And in many of the books we've done, it says laugh out loud humor.

Yeah. I yes, I ha sometimes we aren't sure if I wrote it or you wrote

I would say you write a good portion of those jokes.

I but to be their mic jokes. They have jokes, yeah. So they wouldn't show up and say something I wrote. no No, but that's inter it's interesting to

It's not to be my

Mike Michalowicz (05:56.824)
No totally.

Your humor is extraordinary in in that you have that chameleon like ability to do humor in my fashion. I mean it's pretty rudimentary humor, but the the

I don't think it's it's not sophisticated. It's not sophisticated. No. But also that's uncomfortable for me. I'm a bit of a prude and so I have to like

By any stretch.

AJ Harper (06:21.166)
Just have to just go down to another level. Yeah. Yeah.

So digging into it, the authors for authors meetup. Yeah. You're a participant in this. Yeah. We meet down in Nashville. We've been doing it now, I think we're in our eighth or ninth year. Michael Hyatt just reached out today. He's like, hey, I got someone, someone else reached out, Josh Kaufman, they want to invite. He wrote the personal MBA book. I don't know him either. and there was another author, it was a very recognized name. Daniel Pink. Dan Pink. Have you heard of him?

I don't know Josh, but I know that book.

Mike Michalowicz (06:54.734)
reached out and interested isn't that funny. It's just he's a very recognized name. I think what's his book, Something's human to sell's human or to human is cell human cell. But it's interesting we're attracting people with pretty significant resumes.

Yeah. I'm excited because I'm already thinking about I r didn't know I could do a craft talk.

Particularly to authors with these kind of credentials.

I didn't know that that's what would be cool and welcome there. So then you mentioned it this last summer and and Charles is the one who did a craft talk. And I it was really good and and I thought, I could rock the heck out of this. So now that's what I wanna do next time.

Of all the presentations at Authors for Authors this past year, Charles Dohig took the top spot.

AJ Harper (07:53.334)
It made me happy to see that because I felt like everybody was taking really good notes and that showed me that they care about getting better at what they're doing. Yeah. And that that made me happy 'cause it's very marketing focused. It's very sales focused. It's very marketing focused.

Yeah, there there's certain folks there that that's their bailiwick and

Yeah, but so that so that's what I'm saying. When he got up, everybody was totally engrossed in what he was saying. Engross.

And the year before it was Jo were you there when Joseph Wynne spoke?

Yeah, I was there for the whole thing.

Mike Michalowicz (08:24.504)
took the cake. And it was it was not about marketing or any of that stuff.

I love him so much. Did you he has a great story about his like he has a great love story. Have you ever asked him about about his spouse? Yeah.

I know a little bit. I know they're their baby. They said their baby and stuff. since like their teens or something? Yeah. Yeah. No, I I I gotta Yeah. I love Joseph. and if there's anyone you want to champion on to having greater impact and succeeding, it's Joseph Wayne. And it's Charles Dohig. Like there's these people out there that are doing such good things. They're such masters of their craft. I just I just want them to have more and more impact and more.

Yeah, but they've been together a long time.

AJ Harper (08:47.473)
Sweet story. Yeah.

AJ Harper (08:56.863)
Yes.

AJ Harper (09:08.198)
So this episode was i inspired by a question that you asked Charles after he did his presentation.

Yeah, so he finished his presentation. people are immersed in it, and I have the privilege of facilitating the group and doing inappropriate humor on stage. Yeah. But I did take down the house with my jab at Rory Vaden, if you remember. But I go to Charles and I say, I have a question to ask you. and I'm kinda grateful that James Clear is not here, because you wrote The Power of Habit. That was Charles Duhig's book. Right.

Lots of it. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz (09:43.814)
And James Clear subsequently wrote Atomic Habits and said it clearly is an expansion or theft of some of your ideas. And he shot that down right away. He goes, This is not theft. He goes, This is the iterative nature of authorship. I am he goes, I've completed my work in the habit space with that book. And I am grateful that James Clear took this type of work and took it to another level. And he goes, it's serving people deeper.

And i for me that was like the st the one the single clap in the back of the room kind of applause and the whole place goes crazy. It it it's it's truly who I want to represent is I want to complete a work, and when it's done, if someone expands on it in whatever capacity, and it serves me more deeply, I want to be the person that embraces that. But also part of me is like, you're you're stealing from me. And so I have this internal turmoil on perception, and that's what we're gonna explore.

But you also borrowed and expanded. A hundred percent. Yeah.

Like it it's funny, like Prophet First, someone's like, you took Ramsey's idea. I'm like maybe flavors of it. I I have read his work, but I said this is stuff in the Bible, it talks about concepts of preserving money for intended purposes like tithing. It I'm like this goes back to biblical times. And so the Prophet First is a amalgamation of all these concepts and ideas that I've been made aware of and packaged in a new, fresh song.

Okay, but they're saying profit first is based on Ramsey, or they're saying somet because we actually do cite and quote and honor Ramsey with respect to his debt method.

Mike Michalowicz (11:18.156)
When I say they, no, a person said, that's Ramsey's work.

Ramsey's work meaning profit first, the concept of it.

I don't know.

Okay, but this is what I'm the reason I'm being a dog with a bone with this is because you do actually talk about debt by citing Ramsey's method and honoring him and explaining that you're building off of what was his method.

Yeah, and and in the money habit, we subsequently went further. And Ramsey's work is based upon I can't remember who the philosopher or behavioral scientist was, but back in the early nineteen hundreds, there was studies around mm small micro wins and how it cascades into momentum. And Ramsey's work was based upon that. Ramsey brought a a term snowball that I think is unique. I think he's the originator of the snowball method for debt management. But

Mike Michalowicz (12:17.954)
That's an interpretation of prior work, which was an interpretation of prior work. That's the iterative nature. And so we're gonna explore into this and then where where the line is between iterating, expanding, and and just theft. Mm-hmm. I i is that the appropriate place to start? Like how do you Okay, so how do you distinguish that, AJ?

Yeah, let's

AJ Harper (12:40.622)
It's so funny you bring this up because I have had a season of people borrowing, expanding, and stealing. From you? Uhhuh. Yeah.

All right, let's get let's get

personal I d well I don't wanna name names because that's just not my style. Some of it I found really hurtful 'cause it it it yeah, some of it I found really hurtful.

I know.

Mike Michalowicz (13:05.614)

Can we explore that? Like what does that mean?

Well, if you know someone, that's that's rough, you know.

so y w just I wanna make sure I put the pieces together here. You you know you personally know someone who has used material that you document did not give you attribution. And did they publish this as a book themselves? Okay, so articles or or or educational work or whatever. Okay. Yeah. I've had that too. And

Correct.

AJ Harper (13:28.304)
not a book, no.

AJ Harper (13:36.886)
Yeah. I've had it too. I've had it from strangers, but it's different one in someone you know.

I was talking about Profit First 'cause that's such a pinnacle piece of our collaborative effort. Mm-hmm. Cause there's people that have taken the title and made Prophet First book.

Yeah. I mean I kind of go you dummy. Like that that stuff just doesn't even just whatever.

But it's so blatantly intentional. They're they're trying to steal the momentum of title and redirect redirect. They're trying to intentionally confuse.

Yes, you're right. You're right. I just think it's just so it's so ta it's just the tackiest, most blatant dumb thing. Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz (14:14.99)
So that but that happens. And there's intentional confusion and there's unintentional. Unintentional is someone says, you know, you should take your profit first. Hey, that's a cool title, and they start using it without knowing. And then there's some people that literally are doing intentionally. And you can tell through through kind of retail channels because they start marketing against your own book, profit first, and they have like a sponsored profit first ad for their quote book. Mm-hmm. so that's that's one blatant

Yes.

Mike Michalowicz (14:44.664)

kind of use. Other people have tried to glom onto the profit first title as a service offering. So that's a steal not of the book itself, but they're trying to leverage them brand momentum and then use it to trigger them like, yeah, I t I do profit first. I'm a profit first expert. And it's like you're not affiliated with us at all. that's a a blatant lie and that's another kind of manipulative move. Those those are kind of steals I've seen happen with titles or brand momentum. But you're talking

actual anecdotal or technical writing that you've created.

Sometimes the w sometimes really specific way I talk about things. Like that's I'm no

Your terminology. You came up like core I think core message, brand prom

Message is not my term every everyone, you know, core message is a thing. But the trying to I'm trying to say this in a way that I understand. Yeah. You know, and it some of it's murky too. It's like you there's also people who get all their knowledge from you and then go out and try and be experts in something, even though they got all the knowledge from you. Yeah. And

Mike Michalowicz (15:33.536)
An example of some of that stole from.

AJ Harper (15:56.788)
y they don't have the deep experience and could never have gotten all that knowledge. Without you. Without you. And now they're out there trying to teach it. And it it's just shocking to me. You know, I come I'm old school. So I feel that we need to always honor our mentors and teachers and the people we learn from, whether it's someone we've met personally or someone we we read their book and loved their book. So I I

I have this term I've started using, which is my term, y'all. So you can cite you can qu quote me on it and say it comes from me, called supersider. So as in citation. Okay, okay. Okay. To be a supersider. We've gotten really lax. We've gotten really lax in attributing things to people and honoring pe it's a point of honor. Yeah, yeah, yeah. It's to say, I learned this from so and so. And maybe so I learned this from Charles Duhaig. Mm-hmm.

Right. And I'm gonna expand on it now. Dave Ramsey has this method. I do it when I say I talk about the I don't wanna curse, but it's part of the term. Swear. Okay. Okay. So Anne Lamotte says coined the term sh*tty first draft, which is so well known and many people will say, You just need to write a sh*tty first draft. I call it a sh*tty first draft.

No, you don't call it a sh*tty first draft. Anne Lamotte calls it a sh*tty first draft. So let's just give she is a legend. Just because everybody says it doesn't mean that you shouldn't honor Anne. Yeah. So in my book, I do talk about the sh*tty first draft, but I tell you that it's Anne's. Yeah. And then I've I've expanded on it because I have this theory about the sh*tty first draft that people don't actually

They they hear it, it sounds good, they it gets them going, but then there's a little voice in their head that says, wait, not this sh*t. So there's two there's two things that happen when people try to do a sh*tty first draft. One is they think, she can't mean this bad. So they think they're the exception and then they then it backfires on them, right? So they're still trying to make it less sh*tty.

Mike Michalowicz (17:55.032)
Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

AJ Harper (18:11.84)
And then they're try be the other exception, which is they wanna be the straight A student that said, Well, I'm gonna be the one that didn't write a sh*tty first draft. And so I'm gonna be the one where so first example in with my students, I'm gonna be the one where AJ says, I can't believe this first draft. So either side they're trying to be an exception. So they're really not and it's because they don't know how sh*tty is sh*tty.

You know what I love is when we listen to this podcast once it's broadcast.

It's gonna be like beep beep beep.

No one heard you for the last two minutes 'cause it's been a sound beep. You've

Can we just make a disclaimer at the start of this one that says just A No, no. But can we just say at the start, maybe a little disclaimer that says just if you have little ears, we have a lot of beeping. One thirty second time when we are using it using cursing because it's part of a term.

Mike Michalowicz (19:03.328)
Let me ask you something.

It's the term. So but I wanna see the example. If I had written in my book, I call it this, I didn't honor Anne, that's bad. You can't, you should not do that.

Is it laziness? I mean, some people use that term perhaps without knowing what the original source is. Is that laziness? Is that disregard?

So I think somewhat it's laziness, and I'm gonna say something that I've observed, and I hope you don't take offense to it, but I have observed this and this is just anecdotal, so please don't come at me, but I've noticed the difference in the way men and women handle this stuff. I've noticed that men have a tendency to say, look what I've like here's look at this. I invented, yeah. Yes. It they it's almost like they feel like I heard it, I listened to it.

Therefore it's mine. And they don't even think I don't think and it's good people I would say are good men. People I would say, I like that person. I think they're a decent human. Still and I still see them do it. And a c few have done it to me. And I just I don't think that they did it intentionally. I think there's something wired of, I learned that, it's now mine. Yeah. And I would that's why I've I wrote an article called.

Mike Michalowicz (20:00.534)
Yeah, yeah.

AJ Harper (20:25.15)
about supersighting. It's actually on my substack. If anyone wants to go to my substack, it's called AJ Harper on Craft. And I talk about can we all decide to be super sighted now? Like let's let's take it up a notch because I think that's what we have to do. We have to decide, wait, I'm gonna be a supersider to prevent the laziness. Yes. So they say, wait, let me check.

And I think it enhances your credibility significantly. So I'm I've never been a history buff until I started reading about George Washington. So now I'm reading about Abraham Lincoln. and what I'm doing in these biographies is flipping to the back of the book and when you know, one eighth of the book is simply citations. I'm like, this is a well researched book. I trust the information here so much more than if there was no citations. And I feel this way pretty much with any book.

A book that's well cited is a more trustworthy book.

Yeah. I mean sometimes there's no you know, sometimes it's just a person's story. So there's not yeah, yeah. But I but I I think we need to decide to be supersiders. We have to take it to the other level of I am a supersider because otherwise we are gonna fall down on the job. And it's hurtful. It's personally I've found it very hurtful when people are presenting this something that I created as their own, even if they didn't mean to do it.

And I I find that personally powerful.

Mike Michalowicz (21:54.648)

There's so many parallels between the music industry and the authorship industry. Do you know Noah Khan? Yeah. Okay. Exploded. Well, if you did, I'd be I've got to him. my daughter introduced me to his music maybe Yeah, four years ago. And there was a song stick season. I'm like, this is really kinda amazing. And in the last four years, this guy is like one of the number one folk artists, if that's the

I mean not personally.

AJ Harper (22:09.39)
That seems like music she would like.

AJ Harper (22:20.192)
Yeah, you can't even get tickets to a stop. Forgot it.

Yeah. And I've watched his his documentary and all these things. There's a rising country I'm reading this now. This is a Wikipedia entry. Rising Country pop star Stella Lefty gave Noah Kahn a retroactive songwriting credit on her hit viral song Boston after listeners and Khan's team noted that the chorus melody inter interpolated Khan's twenty twenty two hit song Stick Season.

Stella Lefty released Boston in March 2026 and it quickly surged up the charts to number two on the Billboard 100 and number one on the country charts. After Khan's representatives reached out regarding the melody's similarity, Lefty added Kahn as a co-writer on the track to avoid potential legal issues. And she it continues on that she, Lefty, argues that she didn't knowingly write a song that had a similar sound.

Mm-hmm. But in retroact retroactively gave credit. So did she know or not? Now, adding to this issue is she happens to be the daughter of the founder of Groupon, which was founded by her father, Eric Leftkowski. So I guess she shortened her name, and he's a billionaire. And so there's a my interpretation. There's also a little gotcha in there. you're a daughter of a billionaire, and

There is I find people when when someone has a experience or something that is desirous for someone else, that there's an envy that happens. And I'm maybe subconsciously, but I wonder if some people envy Stella in part because of her success and exposure and now attributed to, well, your dad's rich, he bought your success for you. And I wonder if there's a little bit of a community, let's go after her. That's part of me. Jealousy jealousy happens in a song called.

AJ Harper (24:13.046)
I don't know.

Yeah. But I don't think that should if she she should acknowledge that maybe I maybe I did pull it from there. And with the songwriting it's f difficult because there's only so many

Yeah. Yeah. I I mean listen, Stella gave credit to him and I I don't even necessarily hear it. In the chorus, yeah, there's a there's a similarity, but I don't hear it. Vanilla ice Vanilla Ice. He said no. He goes, the original song goes dum dum dum dum. He goes, My song goes dumb da da dum da da dum dum dum and therefore mine's totally different.

It's tell it's Queen.

Yeah, no, not according to the vanilla ice, it's functional. He didn't rip it off because he added one more note. So the question

AJ Harper (24:53.952)
No. I was just listening to a song on the drive in here, Bittersweet Symphony, and they had to pay the Rolling Stones.

So yeah, how does it come up? So vanilla ice is ice ice baby and it was under pressure, I think, by Queen and

Dave B.

So that clearly is a blatant verbatim copy. And Stella's song, not so much. So where does interpretation or expansion or borrowing, even as subconscious, become Stalin?

Well, we're not attorneys. So I do. We're not attorneys. So we can't say for sure, but I think you need to so let's think about who's listening here. Authors who are don't who you need to be honest with yourself about where did you figure this out. You have to do some work to think about why am I saying this? Why do I believe this? Where did I learn this? You weren't born with it. So where is it coming from? And sometimes we aren't

Mike Michalowicz (25:32.535)
No, quite a few.

AJ Harper (25:59.148)
we aren't keeping really good track. I just while I was at your Authors for Authors, I did a talk on c called Prove It, which was about proving that you wrote things. This is becoming a bigger issue now. Mm and and then I gave a version an expanded version of that talk for free. I did a webinar just recently on authenticating your process. So we have to be careful about the idea provenance.

We have to be careful. We have to document it. And that's why I'm encouraging every everyone to be supersiders because you just have to shift your thinking now. You can't just read a bunch of books and then write one.

I had a r record everything is another thing. So we do a lot of interviews. One of the books, and I don't want to disclose which one 'cause I don't want to similar situation to you. One of the books we did, we interviewed quite a few people. And one person went public recently and sh and shared that they contributed all these different ideas to this book. A a f it'll say a handful of ideas.

Will you tell me after 'cause I think I know.

Yeah, yeah, I will. So I was like, that that's an interesting

Mike Michalowicz (27:17.742)
I'm gonna say accusation, but it's not an accusation, that's their statement. And for them, it's the factual truth. but we have the recordings of the interviews we did prior to this person. And in the recording then of of when this interview happened, the first two minutes is myself disclosing: here's the research we've done so far, here's what we've collected, here's what we're thinking about, naming the book, which was one of the concepts they said they originated. yeah.

You I'm making more salacious than it is, but it was one of the concepts that was inferred that they originated. So I I shared with them, I I just want you to know I I call this person and here's here's the original source and we have it recorded and documented. And th they were gracious and apologetic and

So the person who accused you was apologetic? Yeah.

Yeah. And they weren't acc th the circumstances where they were asked a series of questions that indicated and a few times they said, I originated this idea. And I they didn't, I didn't. The book is a collaborative of interviews, but we have a history of interviews leading up to that book. And and everyone cited. Yeah, and everyone cited in the book. So but some of the ideas we didn't we cited one person over another person just because that story and the way they positioned it was more appropriate.

And everyone is cited.

Mike Michalowicz (28:32.77)

But the source originally came prior in another interview. So my simple point is there was no ill intent here from this person. They only know their contribution because they were the only one that they knew was interviewed, but we interviewed dozens and dozens of people. We interviewed dozens and dozens of people prior and after and after. So they all they know is their contribution. And they they assumed anytime something is referenced that was kind of their contribution, that clearly they're the originator it.

Okay, I don't think I know who it is then.

Mike Michalowicz (29:03.234)
And the reality is this was a collaboration, a collection of interviews and pus pus put together. My the moral of the story is record everything. before you do the next interview, do what we did. And I I outlined what we've created and what we've collected so far. Yeah. And there's evidentiary proof. and we cite this person and other people in the bus.

Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz (29:30.284)
Because they are the source of the their ideas. And so they're they're regularly referenced. I think what what some authors will do is they just collect ideas and they're attributing it to themselves because they're not thinking. They see themselves as the single source, like to your problem. And that becomes the problem. So I'm I'm just proud of how we prepared for that.

You know who did a good job with this is Will Goudera. So that guy's awesome.

Okay. He's so cool, isn't he?

Yeah, I was sitting at his table. He's so cool and he's a little he was sitting next to Jefferson. And

Yeah.

AJ Harper (30:09.27)
Fish. Yeah, Fisher. And w they seem to be buddies. And if they weren't before, they definitely are now. Yeah. But I what I liked about Will was he's a little cheeky. He is. And I thought, hm, okay, I like that in a person. And then I was driving back from Wisconsin just this last few days. Yeah. And I I said, you know what, I need a book that I can listen to that's not fiction. Yeah. So that I can

Pay attention, but not pay attention in the same way would with fiction. Cause when I r listen to nonfiction, unfortunately at this point in my career, I'm listening with an editor mindset and I'm

not listening and a lot of stuff is I've heard before. So I feel like, okay, so I really just thought, let me find out about this book that everyone's recommending. You've been recommending Unreasonable Hospitality to me for a long time. And then at the

At the event, Don Miller got up and he said he couldn't put it down that he woke up in the middle of the night to do the middle aged bathroom run and had to realized he just wanted to keep reading Unreasonable Hospitality to quote unquote see what happens. Yeah, yeah, yeah. So I was like, All right, you know, when some enough people recommend that I'm gonna pay attention to it. I will say I'm super jaded about prescriptive nonfiction, so I can almost tell you what's in most of the books. Yeah.

That's a ha that's a problem I have is that I can't really enjoy them anymore. Yeah. so when I do enjoy them, then I'm excited. So I was like, all right, a bunch of people have recommended it. He seemed cheeky and fun. I probably would like his voice. Yeah. So I just got it on Audible and then I decided to so I listened to the whole thing on my drive. Yeah. And he did a perfect job. He's actually a good example of this. So he is throughout the book.

Crediting so many people. His mom, his dad, different different restaurateurs, but specifically Danny Meyer, who was his boss. And if you don't know who Danny Meyer is, you should Google him. He's a big old deal in New York, but all over the world. on a base level, you know him from Shake Shack. But anyway, he Will was real he really was expanding s very clearly.

AJ Harper (32:35.598)
On and it that was a real expansion on Danny Meyer, but he paid homage to him. I thought he did a perfect job of it actually. Perfect job because he didn't just say, I learned this from Danny. He had wh multiple, multiple scenes where he was being i influenced by Danny, having conversations with him. He honored him throughout the book. He d if you want a lesson in how to be a supersider, you should read

Extraordinary.

AJ Harper (33:04.608)
Unreasonable hospitality.

Unreasonable hospitality inspired a small section of the money habit. And so I don't know if this is a borrowing or an expansion or just an inspiration. But in Unreasonable Hospitality, Will talks about when his mother was ill and fell down the steps and he held her for twelve consecutive hours. until in the blankets. And it's such a moving story.

And they had the blanket. 'Cause he was little. And he was little. Yeah.

Yeah.

Mike Michalowicz (33:35.93)
that inspired the passing of my father's story. in part. That we talk about that in the Money Haber when my father passed away. and then the inspiration of Helen was that hold on that was that the Money Haber or am I conflating books? Is that all in? That's all in.

You have to make the usine books. It's it's a Helen Fuller story, but but I I don't remember having that conversation with you.

'Cause it wasn't necessary. I just remember th I thought that was too intimate in my heart.

so what you're s okay. So what you're saying is you and I talked about, let's write about your dad and Helen Fuller and then you in your own head thought, I don't know if that's too intimate and you remembered the story from That's right. Unreasonable hospitality and that gave you a sense of permission.

Yes, I don't know if the sequence was that way. Is once I because it may have just come up and said, let's do I just I don't know if it was in reflection, but once I read that story, I felt so connected to Will. Yeah. I said, You you can talk about a very difficult topic, which is someone's illness or passing. Yeah. And when they're a parent. And so my the story about my dad became a no-brainer, even though I still in the I was a little bit in it still. I mean, he had just passed recently. I still it was still pretty raw. But Will's book inspired

AJ Harper (34:47.701)
It was pretty raw.

Mike Michalowicz (34:52.257)
that. So it's it's maybe it's not a borrow or an expansion, maybe it's just an inspiration.

That's fine. Yeah. That's

So you don't give credit for that, obviously, because it wouldn't make any sense to say, you know, his his story inspired me to write this story. No. But I did it did cause a a riff for me, if you will.

W I get it. I understand. But you didn't say, let me try and write a st a touching, vulnerable story like Will did. Yeah, no. It just made you feel like it was okay to do.

What what would be the me in that case it's not appropriate to represent Will in that book because that that would be it'd be disc

AJ Harper (35:29.738)
No, that is that does that doesn't

But but when is it appropriate to cite the person, honor them, give reference?

If if they if you learn something from them, if you're tak it's listen, that's why I'm saying be a supersider. It's always appropriate if you learn something from them, whether you're expanding on that knowledge, or even if you don't believe in it anymore, but you're sharing it. I mean you can't you can't tell people, this I came up with this. You can't just and even if you're not saying, Here's my idea in a formal way

Yeah. You have to really think about why do I think this? This is what I'm asking people to do. Why why why do I know this? And what because you didn't come on the planet this way. Yeah. Now some of it you can't cite all the education you ever received. Let's not be nutty about it. But let's understand that in thought leadership we have an obligation to honor the other thought leaders that we are learning from. And it's it's

It's not just a moral issue, it's just smart. Can you imagine if you weren't honoring people in your books and then you had to go hang out with them at dinner? Mm-hmm. And they knew it. Mm-hmm. What are you gonna do now?

Mike Michalowicz (36:47.778)
Yeah. Well yeah.

Yeah. Like what if I had written and read a must read? Here's something called the you know what first draft. It's I I think it's awesome. This is a great way to do it. Blah blah blah. I came up with this concept or this is the concept I follow. And I didn't say anything about Anne. This has happened to her a million times, I'm sure. So she probably just like blah blah whatever. how humiliating that would be for me.

Even if Anne was at the dinner and didn't she probably wouldn't give me the time of day if she saw that. But other people would know then. Yeah.

And it it crushes credibility. Yes. That's when you're found, you are a fraud.

So I think it's fine. It's fine to say, I read this, I loved it, it got me thinking and I changed it in this way. Or if you're not gonna expand on it, you can still say, I use it this way. Yeah. for a deeper

dive, please get their book. Like honor people and you and you can't pull, like for example, if someone has a full exercise and you want to put it in your book, you need to ask permission. A hundred but if you wanted to say

AJ Harper (37:59.49)
There's a detailed exercise I follow that helps me with X. And I recommend that you check out this book and learn how to do it. That's fine. But if you want to actually say step one, this, step two, this, step three, this, and it's someone else's process, you need their permission to do it. And this is the thing. This is the perfect opportunity for you to build a relationship. So why would you steal it? I know. This is the thing.

This go talk to them. This is what I'm always telling my students. Why don't you just interview them? Why don't you just interview them? Now you're gonna have a conversation. So many people, I bet now, if I wanted to interview Ann, I I would love to actually interview her and say, you know what? When you said that, did you know people were gonna get stuck on the fact that they'd they want to be the exception to what you just said? And I would love to know.

She probably has more to say about it now too. And so the people that you're heralding and that you're citing in the book, they probably actually have a new thought on what they said.

I went to this is a year or two ago now, the Taylor Swift's concert in Vancouver. The opening artist was Gracie Abrams, I think is her name. And she came on stage and she just before she started hit songs, she said, I wanna thank Taylor for this because we got together and she helped me write this song. And then she performed the song. It was it's w her big hit. I can't remember the name of it. It's called You or something. And and guess what? When you acknowledge the person that supports you, they perhaps bring you onto their stage, literally in this case.

For further exposure. talking about music, I did this weird unintentional experiment. I started listening to music, current music, and because of Spotify and all these different tools out there, you can go back if you want by decade. And that's what I chose to do. I said, I'm gonna keep on rewinding every decade, get familiar with the music from that decade to see what the original source of music is. Right? That was kind of my goal. And of recorded music, just to be clear.

AJ Harper (39:57.198)
Okay.

Yes.

And so I went back and it went back to, you know, nineteen ninety, nineteen eighty and so forth. Around nineteen ten was when the commercially viable recorder was existed, and music explodes in nineteen ten, nineteen twenty. It was ragtime music, a derivative of jazz. Up to that point, music was not recorded, it was live performance and it was on sheets, you know, sheet music. And so

music didn't propagate so quickly. It was sheep music slowly seeking out there going out there and people were doing these piano jazz routines, but then they start getting recorded and people start riffing, borrowing, enhancing, expanding ideas. And then we have this explosion of all these different things, including folk and and and metal and and rock and and country and all this stuff. But none of that exists it was just classical and then jazz.

And that was it. And there's this explosion. So if you rewind in time, classical music is this is since the Baroque times or before. Hundreds and hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years of the same stuff. It was great. And but in the last hundred years, there's been this explosion of music. And I think the thing is the same thing is happening with literature. It's so accessible, maybe because of the avenue of the internet. I don't know when it was, but there's so many formats for getting it out there. You can absorb all these ideas. So

Mike Michalowicz (41:27.0)
The opportunity in front of us is massive to expand and iterate and play. At the same time as if you don't cite the source, if you don't recognize the source, mm-hmm, it it compromises the integrity of that piece you make. You you were inspired by Charles

Yeah, for sure. So I'm not actually inspired by Charles, but I'm not inspired at all. Well, okay. I wanna be disappointed by Charles. No, I'm not. So if you're a listener, you know that I actually started my career as a playwright. And Charles Me is a playwright and he is known for he believes that there's nothing new and that he encourages people to rip him off.

He encourages people.

Yes. And so I wanted to read something that he has a thing called the Remaking Project. And I just I wanted to share this. so he says, please feel free to take the plays from this website and use them freely as a resource for your own work. That is to say, don't just make some cuts or rewrite a few passages or rearrange them or put in a few texts that you like better, but pillage the plays.

As I have pillaged the structures and contents of the plays of Euripides and Brecht and stuff out of soap opera digest and the evening news and the internet and build your own entirely new piece and then please put your own name to the work that results. Hmm. And so he wrote this,

he also goes on to say there's no such thing as an original play, and he talks about the Greeks and Shakespeare and so forth.

AJ Harper (43:06.156)
So that's his thing. He's always saying, rip me off, basically. But I want to point out that he also says this. But there's legal stuff. Yeah, yeah. But if you would like to perform the plays essentially or substantially as I have composed them, they are protected by copyright in the versions you read here, and you need to clear performance rights.

okay.

AJ Harper (43:35.64)
For all performance rights, contact so and so. So that's a big butt. That's a big butt. So what he's saying is you can grab take actual lines of dialogue. You like the s entire structure I came up with, beat by beat, follow the structure, but you can't use the exact words in the exact way that I did them in its entirety. Yeah. Because that's under copyright. So

That's interesting.

AJ Harper (44:02.804)
He's saying two things, but what he's really saying is go ahead and grab this. Now, he's extreme and a lot of people don't like this about him because we wouldn't you know you if if I heard a monologue I wrote in some someone else's play, I'd be like, dude. Yeah. I I don't think so. he says great. You know what I'm saying? Just not and it's not the whole play. Don't take the whole play and slap your name on it.

We talked about I can't the the author of Let Them, the book. And that title came specifically from a poetry piece. We did a whole episode around that. Has that been settled? Still th is there still a lawsuit going on?

Mel Robin.

AJ Harper (44:43.879)
we d yeah. No. I don't know about that. I no nothing bad is gonna happen to Mal.

But that sounds like it could be a direct steal.

I think it's egregious. Yeah. Because I think even if you that's an example of a pr something that's proven out in the world that people are people were already getting tattoos. Yes. Before. Yeah. Okay. So that's a situation this is a really good point that you're bringing this up. So let's

give Mel and her daughter who she wrote the book with the benefit of the doubt. Let's say that they don't remember

Yeah.

AJ Harper (45:27.318)
Reading the poem. Yeah. When you realize that you've that this is of already a big thing, you might need to just tell yourself, I wonder if I consume that and regurgitated it and don't remember that I took that in. We're doom scrolling and scrolling all day. Are we grabbing things in our subconscious and we aren't tracking because we're going so fast?

I personally I think it's a stretch to think that they don't remember doing this. But I if it were me and I was writing an entire book and people already had tattoos of this person's phone poem, I'd say, Let me reach out to this person and let's work something out.

Yeah, you know, it it's funny th th to have something like that happen to you, the the poet, I wonder how h she responds and how she deals with that emotion.

I think she's I can't speak for her but she's been vocal about it and I think it's pretty probably pretty devastating because she's also up against a big machine. Yeah. So

You know, my circumstance, I believe most people have good intent, not everybody. But what I will do is I'll reach out to that person, say, y you did something that h hurts me and you perhaps and likely didn't even intentionally do it. But I've been hurt. Here's the facts that I can present to you and that you may not be aware of and just wanna explain my perception.

AJ Harper (46:58.19)
I mean I I w I want I always think people are have the best intentions. I'm just after the year I've had with people taking stuff, I don't know if it's true. I think what people have though is they're not intentionally honoring people in the way that they should. I agree. And I think we just need to shift our focus. We need to make more of a priority of it. I think it's especially important in the age of AI. So AI, generative AI, when it's

When it's searching for things, it's looking for multiple sources that say it's you that did that. So if people are not citing you properly, eventually it's not even going to be you that gets the credit because of generative AI and the way it searches. So we all have to do our due diligence now. And we have to be extra. We have to be super citers. We have to be extra because otherwise, this credit is going to be lost. And we all work hard for these things. Yeah.

You know, whether we're trying to work through a framework or all of the hard work we've done for years leads to a a download that is unique to us, you know. so just I don't know. There's nothing wrong with pausing and saying, Hey, I learned this from so and so or I was reading so and so's book and and and that inspired me to think of this. That's n that's a good thing to do.

I had a call, quasi-related, different person yesterday. I was driving home from an event and they said I really we really need to talk. And I thought it was going to be around conflict. And they said, I I want to apologize to you and I ask for your forgiveness. And I was like, wow. So that that person, I said, I just want to point what a adult thing to do. And I said, I I never felt

Okay.

Mike Michalowicz (48:50.764)
that you're in position to ask for forgiveness, but I also want to receive that you're offering forgiveness. I receive it and I accept it because that's the way to heal your emotion around this. So I receive that. And I wonder if there's opportunities for someone that intentionally or otherwise took material from someone to step up into that adult. And I think there's you know, because of our legal conundrum we're in in this country, and all the finger pointing that comes about

Okay.

AJ Harper (49:10.574)
Yes.

Mike Michalowicz (49:19.298)
I wonder if people are afraid to accept responsibility when that does happen because there could be legal consequences and so forth. But I I will tell ya, this person who who said those words to me, I think it healed their heart and we both were healed because of that. So it was pretty cool.

I think just, you know, I used to tell people, you can I used to not be upset when people would take some idea I had. 'Cause I would say that's not my only trick in my bag. Yeah. There's an attitude of peop you know, when when students come in, one of the first questions they asked me is how do I protect my work from theft? And I used to kind of shrug it off. It's like this is a sign of an amateur. It is. It is actually a sign of an amateur that you're worried before it's even a thing, yes, who's gonna steal it. Which tells me

That's an amateur way of thinking because you have no idea what it takes to actually take an idea and turn it into something that becomes a phenomenon. So that's a tremendous amount of

work. A person could steal it, but are there's anyone paying attention to them? Really? Are they really? If Mel took that thing, that's a big deal, because they're paying attention to Mel.
Mm-hmm. now I think it's more challenging because of AI and how easy it is to rip people off. So

I think they're fair concerns. but at the same time, don't let it be your only trick in the bag. Don't let that be your only thing.

We gotta rock and roll. You have your master class coming up December third.

AJ Harper (50:50.594)
Yeah, we've talked about this a bit. Mastercraft it I call Mastercraft, you know why? Because we're in the way I do it is we actually work. Yes. So I'm not just talking to you, I'm having you try things and then I give feedback or fantastic. Yeah.

I said master class. I'm in saying

Mike Michalowicz (51:05.112)
So to sign up for that go to AJ Harper dot com

that one's on bulk by incentives and how to design them. Okay. And I just I'm doing it because enough people ask me to. Yeah. but then I also have an authorship planning annual event, which is on January twenty seventh. So help Yeah, but and w and doing. Yeah.

Well, it's a full day training.

Yeah, you you don't you don't just teach it. It's it's actually Yeah.

I just think I just I like to let's give it a try and then that way you can bump up against challenges and then I can help you handle them. That that's why I like to teach that way. Awesome.

Mike Michalowicz (51:38.904)
We also have John Bates coming. I don't know when this episode goes too late. No November second. So if you've missed it, sorry. Google John Bates speaking coach. He is awesome. But and if it's before November second and you want to get your butt over to Bootin, New Jersey, he's gonna be here for two days coaching folks on speaking. next week we're gonna talk about how to survive the SFD. Now I'm not gonna you were swearing so much this episode. I just I don't want to add any more beeps.

I don't know if this this

AJ Harper (51:47.16)
But definitely check out John Bates.

Mike Michalowicz (52:08.76)
But it is about that.

not swearing so much. I think it was a contained period where I described the term. I think for the next one we're just gonna have to say SFD. S F D baby. Because I can't You can't curse that much. You can't curse.

That must. But we're going to talk about that. It's an important element, it's a critical element of authorship. I want to remind you go to our website, dwtbpodcast.com, to get the free resources. AJ's prepared all those for you. We would really, really value if you'd rate and subs and subscribe to this podcast on your podcatcher. Selfishly, it helps us spread the word. Like more people subscribe, the more the word.

You why else they want to do it is 'cause we have these bonus episodes we've been doing and so if they're subscribed it'll just pop up when it comes because we do them at random time.

Yeah, this broadcast is on a Tuesday. Thursday. Thursday. Okay. I to start with the T. On Thursday and then we're sneaking in now bonus one.

AJ Harper (53:02.688)
Yeah, so you definitely wanna subscribe.

Yeah. Yeah. So we wanna see how people are liking that and and you won't miss it. 'Cause we have had people miss episodes.

Yeah, so if you're subscribed it'll pop up.

Beautiful. you can email us and the team at hello at DWTV Podcast dot com. Tell us what you want to hear because we want to talk about that subject. Hey, don't write that book. Write the greatest book you can.