



**SPI 230**

# **From Deathly Afraid to Cool and Confident: My 5-Year Public Speaking Journey**

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Pat:

Yup, I'm going to do it. I wasn't going to do it, but now I've decided to do it. I'm going to start this episode with a Back to the Future reference. That's right, folks. That's how you know you're in the right place, if you've listened to me before. For those of you who don't know me. My name is Pat Flynn, host of the Smart Passive Income podcast. This isn't our usual intro here. Usually, you'll hear some music. I'll probably put that in in just a few minutes. I wanted to start off by taking you into the Dolorean. We're going to go back 5 years into the past, back to September 2011. That's exactly 5 years to the month that this episode goes live.

Now, you might be asking yourself, "Well, what's the significance of September 2011?" That is the very first time I've ever spoken in public. I'm going to take you through the journey from the first time I've been on stage, all the way up to the most recent time I've been on stage. I want to share with you the journey that I've had, and how much my mindset has changed, what I've learned along the way, a lot of the mistakes I made, what I did to get better. Overall, what has it done for me in my business, and why do I continue to do it.

Let's go. Hop right on in. Time circuits are ready. Let's go to 2011 in Schaumburg, Illinois for the financial Blogger conference, also known as FinCon 2000.

*Thanks, man. Seriously, let's all give Philip the biggest round of applause. This has been an amazing experience. This is incredible. Last to speak. I have a lot of responsibility. You can go home, and I can have a really crappy presentation. You could think the conference sucked, and it's all my fault. Last ...*

Wow. What a way to start, Pat, by telling everybody that you could just ruin the entire conference. Of course, you could probably tell that I was a bit nervous. By a bit, I mean a lot a bit. It was because I had never dreamed that I would be on stage in front of, well, at this event, hundreds of people and talking. This was something I was deathly afraid of doing. You might be wondering "Well, Pat, why did you do it in the first place?" Well, for a few reasons.

I wanted to get into public speaking, because I knew it was going to be good for business. Actually, I had been given the opportunity to do it several times before. I had said no because I was just completely afraid of it. However, when my good friend Philip Taylor, the author of PTmoney.com, a financial blog that I was reading at the time, when he reached out to me and asked me to come speak at his event, I said yes. It was his first event that he had ever put on. I wanted to help him out. I was excited, but also a little nervous.

I didn't know, however, I might remember by listening to the little clip that I played there at the beginning. Don't worry, I have a lot more clips for you, that I was going last. I didn't know I was going to be last step at this event. I had a spot in the middle of the event. That's what I was preparing for. However, 2 weeks before the event started, after several dozens of hours of practice, again, because I was completely nervous, PT calls me and he says, "Pat our closing keynote bailed. How would you like to take the last spot?"

In my head, I was like "No, no. Never. I would never do that. Why are you putting me on the spot? I'd rather die." Really, I felt like that. Well, what came out of my mouth was, "PT, anything for you, man. I'm here for you." Then, after I hung up, started to get sweaty palms, started to freak out. I put in even more hours. Actually, I got so nervous about speaking at this particular event, that I scripted everything I was going to say. I had written down word for word 20 pages of text that I was going to memorize. That's exactly what I did.

Now, that I've been speaking for several years now, I realize just how dumb that was. It was just a reflection of how not confident I was as a speaker. Also, just how much I really wanted to help out PT, because he asked me for a favor. I wanted to deliver. Using memorization techniques to memorize that script, I actually spent a lot of time reading and doing research about how to deliver a great presentation. I've read a great book by Dale Carnegie called Stand and Deliver, which I still highly recommend for anybody getting started in speaking. I loved it so much that I made the mistake of actually telling everybody that this was my first time on stage and I love that book so much.

*You taught me a lot, too. I don't know if it's here. Incredible presentation. I've been a lot about presenting in public speaking. This is my first presentation, just like Addam's first public speaking gig. I read Stand and Deliver by Dale Carnegie, and all the tips in there. For me, it did everything to ...*

No need for that. There's no need for that. Plus, I think the audience knew that I was kind of risk because my voice would crack.

*Really, what saved my life was a blog, a blog.*

Yeah. I don't know if this is cringe-worthy for you to listen to, but for me, while I'm editing this show right now, I am indeed cringing and wincing. It's really hard for me to listen to, because I know now what I did wrong. I think this shows you that whenever you're just starting out with something, if it's your first time, you're going to be terrible. You're going to be bad. The only way to get better is to keep doing it.

I ask you, what is your equivalent of me getting on stage back in 2011? What's that thing you know you need to do that is probably scaring you to death right now, that you're probably going to suck at at first, that you just need to do? Hopefully, through the course of the rest of this episode, you're going to hear just how I've been able to improve, what I've done to make those improvements. Part of that is actually appreciating the small wins along the way. Although I wasn't perfect, and although I was cringe-worthy at first, I did do some things right.

*One thing I did learn from him was going for the big win. One day, I go to my boss and I say "I'm worth this much. This is how much I should be earning." Next day, \$20,000 raise. Think certain. 4 months later, I was laid off.*

I told stories. I found that when I was telling stories on stage, people listened and they engaged. If I timed it right, I could get a laugh or a head nod from the entire crowd. Here is another story that I told.

*Something that not a lot of people talk about. I want you to seek*

*engagement. Get your audience to participate. How many of you have tweeted about Finn Con this weekend? Why, because we're all a part of it. We all support it because we're a part of it. Have people become a part of your brand. Have them support you in the same way.*

*I said earlier in the beginning of my presentation that I was a short kid. A lot of my friend like to play basketball, unfortunately. Because they're my friends, they invited me to play basketball, which was nice of them. I was last picked for teams. I was never passed the ball. I never got to shoot the ball. I was just there running around like a chicken without a head. I didn't feel like I was really there, even though I was.*

*Then, they had the opportunity to do some local 3 on 3 basketball tournaments. They set up teams. Obviously, I wasn't good enough to be on the team. I wasn't tall enough, too. They're like, "Pat, you should come out and support the team." I was like, "No. No thanks." The reason was, they didn't really include me very much. I guarantee you that if they passed me the ball a couple of times, if they let me shoot and miss, and just encouraged me, and let me participate, I would've been there like that. I would've squirted Gatorade in their mouth during timeout. I would've patted them with towels. I would have given them massages. I don't do that for free. I monetize. No.*

The funny thing was, after the presentation was over, and it was only 20 minutes. It was the longest 20 minutes of my life. I thought I did very poorly. I was expecting a number of people to come up to me and say "Pat, you should never be on stage again. Pat, you were terrible. Pat, you just didn't really intrigue me." The exact opposite happened. After the presentation was over, and after the conference ended, I had a line of people who wanted to talk to me, who gave me their business cards, who said "Thank you so much," who said it was really inspiring, who said there were a couple of points in there that are truly going to change the course of their business. That's when I got hooked.

I got obsessed with how I could become a better speaker. The only problem was, well, I didn't know where else I was going to speak. It wasn't like I was planning a whole year's worth of speaking. Soon enough, the speaking opportunities did come my way. I always said yes. I'd be really nervous again. I'd always question why I say yes to these things because I get to a point where I'm like, "Pat, why do you put yourself in these situations? You don't have to. You're just a blogger. That's all you need to do, hide behind your little screen, and your WordPress platform. You can do it that way."

Again, I knew that the speaking thing is awesome, and it's a way to build authority. Plus, I remember what it was like after I spoke at Finn Con in 2011, and what it was like when people came up to me and just enjoyed it so much. I soon realized that this fear, this resistance, as they sometimes call it, that tries to stop us from doing these amazing things, like speaking, or whatever your equivalent is, that's actually a sign that whatever it is that you're trying to do is something that's meaningful to you.

For me, now, I look toward that fear. I try to find it because I'm serious. If I don't feel nervous about something I'm doing, it's probably not big enough anymore to actually make a big difference. I challenge you to find that fear. If you're there already, great. Of course, you have to take action on that thing. I'm going to talk you a little bit about what I did to conquer this fear of speaking.

Now, I will say that I still get nervous before I speak. Every time before I speak, even just the last one I did last month. I still get really nervous to a point where sometimes I feel like throwing up. Like, it hurts my gut. I don't fear it anymore. I get excited about it. I hack my thinking to know that "Well, this is something that's meaningful to me."

What happened next? Well, I found that fear in an upcoming presentation at Blog World Expo in Los Angeles. Again, this was late 2011 now. I was really excited because Blog World Expo was actually the very first conference that I ever attended a year before. It was in Vegas. This was the first time it was doing a LA and New

York, 2 time a year kind of thing. Then, it switched back to Las Vegas. Then, it became known as New Media Expo, which was my home conference, if you will. The one where most my audience and my fans were at. It was my favorite conference to go to up until 2015, when that was the last time I spoke. We will get into that presentation later. The event's no longer around, unfortunately. There are still a lot of great events to attend.

Going back to 2011, this was going to be the biggest presentation of my life. I spent, like I did before, quite an amount of time rehearsing and preparing for it. The title of the presentation was "How to be everywhere." It was about how ... A lot of people were saying, "Pat, you're everywhere, it seems. Everywhere I go, there you are." I was giving people strategy on how, to their public audience, they could seem like they were everywhere, too.

I wasn't literally everywhere. I made it seem that way with all the different platforms I was on. I wanted to talk about that. Going into this presentation, I had one goal in mind. That was to know the content so well that I didn't need the slides. That was the one thing I picked up between Finn Con and this event was that a lot of people use and rely on their slides to help them with their content. I figured, if I didn't need that, if I could show slides but show that I just knew the content and didn't even have to look back, that it would be very impressive. I would stand out.

That's what I did. I learned the contents so much. I choreographed the slides with what I was saying. I knew it by heart. When the event happened, I was really excited, up until there was a technical glitch that happened during my presentation that made me just want to run away forever.

*The fact of the matter is this, we all want more eyes on our brand. We all want more traffic, more people coming towards signing. There's no better way to do that, I feel, in my experience, than with this idea of being everywhere. Being everywhere to me means a couple of things. One, it means reaching out on new platforms, other than your blog. Get people to know who you are on these*

*other platforms, people who were just hungry to devour your content. They just don't know where you are because you're not where they're at.*

*Second thing about being everywhere ... Why didn't anybody tell me? Is that the way it's supposed to look? That's not the way it's supposed to look. Do we have a tech guy in the room? I'm sorry, guys. Okay. Well, that's supposed to say "Being everywhere." A little freaked out because a lot of my content is supposed to be on here in that font. That's okay. Just listen to me, and don't look at the slides. Being everywhere. The second part about being everywhere is this ... For those of you who walked in, the slides are jacked up. The second part about being everywhere is this ...*

What happened? What happened was I had built my keynote presentation on my computer at home. I had taken a thumb drive, and then imported it into the computer that was there at the event. Everything was fine and dandy until they were slides that included fonts, because in my presentation at home, I included special fonts that were downloaded on the Internet, which that computer that I loaded it onto did not have. Instead of using the special fonts that I included myself, it defaulted to Arial, which relative to the fonts that I was using, was much wider.

A slide that popped up that was supposed to say "Being everywhere," had instead said "BEI," then, "Every W." That's it. That slide was up there. You can't tell from the audio. That was actually up there for about 3 to 4 minutes as I was speaking. That's why when I finally turned around, I was like "Why didn't you guys tell me?" because I was just speaking in front of this thing that was incorrect the whole time.

Now, for a split moment, maybe 30 seconds, I wanted to ditch. I couldn't believe after all that work, that my slides were messed up. I just wanted to leave. You all heard what I ended up saying. I said "Guys, don't worry about the slides. Just look at me." Thankfully I'd spent so much time rehearsing the content in this presentation that the slides weren't even needed at all. What was really funny was



after the presentation was over, a number of people came up to me and said, “Pat, did you do that on purpose? Because it made it seem like you knew exactly what you were talking about. It was different than any other presentation I’ve ever seen.”

My first reaction was “Heck no. Why would I ever do that to myself?” Secondly, I thought it was really cool because it showed that I handled that in the right way. It proved that I knew the contents. I’m very thankful I spent all that time rehearsing, like a said. I am also very thankful because I learned a huge lesson, a couple of lessons, actually.

First of all, if you’re going to use another computer to house your presentation, make sure it includes the fonts that you included in your presentation to use so that that never happens to you. I’m happy to say that’s never happened to me since. I’d also learned a trick that if you don’t have any audio or video files in your presentation, just export it as a PDF file. That way, you can be sure that no matter what, it is not about the fonts. It’s just images. You will be good.

The second lesson I learned was that when you start out, you’re going to suck. You’re going to make big mistakes like this. You’ve got to keep going. This was a rookie mistake. If I let it stop me, if I ran offstage, or if I decided to quit after that, I wouldn’t be doing what I’m doing today. I wouldn’t be speaking in front of thousands of people. I wouldn’t be getting paid for it eventually, which I wasn’t at this point. I was doing all my speaking for free to get my name out there.

Because I wanted to go big with it, because I wanted to get serious, I hired a coach so I could get better. I found this coach through our good friend Corbett Barr of @fizzle.co, because I had heard that he had an amazing presentation, and he had a coach helping him on that one. I hired the same coach. His name was Mike Pacchione. He was awesome. He actually trained under Nancy Duarte, who, I’ve mentioned on the blog before. She’s been featured in my book club with a couple of books like Resonate and Slideology. She’s helped

people like Al Gore with his presentation.

To train under one of her students was amazing. I will say, it was a very tough experience because he just drilled me for a lot of things. I wish I had some audio recordings of some of those chats we had, because it really put me on the spot. It really had me sweating. It was life-changing. Absolutely life-changing. The funny thing was, he didn't really tell me what to do. Like many good coaches I've worked with since then, I found that he just always seemed to ask the right questions that got me thinking in the right way. That's how we direct it, was through questions.

For example, he would always ask "Okay. Who is in the audience?" We would spend a lot of time for some upcoming presentations determining who was actually in the audience, like the exact people who were going to be in there, so I would know about them, so I could understand, again, and answer the question, "What transformation do I want people in that audience to have?" Meaning, what do they come in with? Then, what do I give them, and what do they come out with?

You've heard me talk about transformation a lot here on the podcast, on the blog, on SPI TV, that's really where this all stemmed from, was my work with Mike in my speaking. Speaking has carried over into a lot of other things, podcasting, especially video. Anytime I'm sharing a message, which is obviously anything I do online, even social media, I've always thought back at some of the lessons I've learned from Mike. For example, another big lesson that I've learned was just how important first impressions are, specially in front of audiences who you've never met before. There's a lot of things that you can do to stack things in your favor even before presentation starts to have a great presentation, from the person introducing you, making sure that they know what to say and how to say it properly, to going into the crowd and shaking people's hand beforehand, just to make yourself and the crowd feel a little bit more comfortable, so you have some sort of connection there already, to even what you're wearing.

In 2013, I spoke at New Media Expo, which was formally Blog World Expo, again. This was the first time I actually dressed up to go to a presentation, or actually thought consciously about what I was wearing. I did everything I could to match the slides to what I was wearing. The black and red theme with the slides that I was using, and all that kind of stuff. On the surface, it might not seem like it mattered. I did get comments from people who said specifically, “Pat, I love how you dressed professionally, because the other people in the speaker really didn’t.” They liked how it matched the slides. They thought the careful attention to detail was really, really professional. That help me stand out for sure.

Before I play a clip for you from 2013 from New Media Expo, which was the first presentation I did after getting coaching. It was really interesting because the presentation itself was redone about 3 different times. Mike, I know you’re listening to this. You probably remember this. We had a whole different deck, a whole different presentation before things just finally started to come together. That was the big struggle. This was the biggest struggle working with Mike, not because he was hard to work with, but because I know he wanted me to succeed. I had thought things should be a certain way. He had to keep questioning it. I always was asking me, “Well, how are you emphasizing this point? What is the transformation? Are you actually supporting that transformation with this stuff?”

All of a sudden, things just happened to click. I find that the more I work for something, especially if it went hard, obviously, the more likely I am to get to a point where if things will finally come together, and they did. It seemed like one day, they just finally came together. I knew it wasn’t just because of one day, though. It was because of all the training and the coaching that I got. Then, I started 2013 with a bang, with this presentation, which is all about the power of free, using free in your brand.

There were a couple of things I did to stack things, again, in my favor to make a good first impression. When people were coming in, I not only welcomed people into the room before they were coming on. There was a little bit of a struggle there because the

people who were speaking right before me at this event went over there time. That stuff that you can't control. You have to kind of adjust and adapt to certain situations like that.

Anyway, to set things up, I actually had 2 containers. In one container, there were Lindt chocolate truffles. In another container were Hershey's kisses. Chocolates, 2 different chocolates. One obviously worth more than the other. The Lindt chocolate truffles being substantially more than the Hershey's kiss. I told people that they could only pick from one container, either the truffle or the Hershey's kiss. As you might guess, most people selected a Lindt chocolate truffle. I would say 98% of people did.

That actually played a role in some data that I shared later in the presentation. About halfway through, I talked about an experiment that was done at a University involving those 2 chocolates. The experiment, just to make sure that you guys know what it's about, and aren't just like, "Well, Pat, I don't get it." Really quick. There's a guy named Dan Ariely. He studies economics at a university. He did this experiment where he sold his students a Lindt chocolate truffle for \$.26, or a Hershey's kiss for 1 cent.

You could choose one. Which one would you choose if you saw a Lindt chocolate truffle for \$.26, or a Hershey's kiss for 1 cent. Well, most people ended up buying the Lindt truffle because it was obviously a lot of value there for the \$.26. He then later did the same thing, except drop the price of each just 1 cent. The relative difference between the price of both chocolates were the same, the Lindt chocolate truffle was a quarter, and the Hershey's kiss was free. Then, most of the people, 90% ended up opting for the free Hershey's kiss, even though the relative price between the 2 are the same.

You can conclude that free is indeed a very powerful force. Because I ran that experiment there live at the event and people were participants, it became that much more of a sticking point for them. That was one of the things that I heard later on that was really cool, because it kind of put everything together. I'm going to play a little

bit of a clip from it, just to give you an idea of just how much more confident you could tell I am in this presentation.

*Free is powerful. It moves people, sometimes in mass. It's ridiculous. We're trained when we're kids, to just gravitate towards free. I mean, imagine a pinata exploding and just kids going buck wild on the candy. They don't even care what candy it is. They just want to grab as much as possible. Free is so attractive and so magnetic, we should all be using free. Not just your content, though. Yes, our content is free, but I'm talking about stuff that's beyond your content. We'll talk about why in a second.*

*Unlike cupcakes or grand slams, or even a car, what we can give away, as people who do business online, and have blogs, that stuff can be replicated, duplicated. It can work for us over and over again. Once somebody eats the cupcake, the cupcake is gone. Our thing that we can give away for free will be there forever and continue to work for us. You've just got to put the time up front. That's the only thing you're investing in this. There's a little bit of time to figure out exactly what your target audience wants, what they need to get there, and introducing free as an indirect route to earnings.*

So much better. So much more confident, you can tell. Yes, it was well rehearsed. The one thing I want to say about rehearsing is I did it completely different than I used to because Mike called me out on it. When we first started working together, he asked me how I prepared for my presentations. I told him that I wanted to get it right, so I would write every single word down and memorize it. He couldn't believe it.

He, first of all, just couldn't believe that I could memorize 20 pages of notes like that. I did. Then he said, "Well, you should be an actor." I said, "No, I shouldn't be because I'm a terrible actor." Anyway, beyond that, he said you were doing your audience a disservice by writing down every single word. I didn't understand that. It took me a while to understand it until he really explained it. He said that by writing it down, you're not allowing yourself to be creative and be

yourself on stage.

When you think about it, you listening on the other end, if you and I were having a conversation, it would be weird if I had come in with some sort of script, right? It would be weird if I had just started reading off answers to your questions, if you had questions for me. That's not how we interact in real life. When you think about your favorite professors or your favorite teachers, they typically, or probably, didn't read off every single word that they read to you. More than likely, they had a game plan, they had an outline, and then just spoke from experience and trusted their experience to share it in a way that was memorable and intelligent and useful and valuable.

That's what Mike wanted me to do. That was a very hard thing for me to get over. I couldn't imagine not writing down everything, because I didn't trust myself. Again, I didn't trust myself. It wasn't until I realized that it was similar to sharing this information with a friend where I wouldn't come in with a whole scripted item, I would come in with outlines and certain points and certain stories that I want to tell. I should rely on myself and trust myself to tell those stories in a way like I'm doing right now with this podcast. I simply have an outline in front of me, but that's it. I know what points I'm going to talk about. That is my roadmap. When you're doing a presentation, your slides are there not to read off of and be the script for you, but to be there as your talking points, or reminders, and guides for what stories to tell, what data points to make, what questions to ask, how to participate with the audience at that point in time.

When you think about a trail, for example. You start at the beginning. Then you go to the forest. You see signs, right? You see signs that say, "Go this way, or go this way, or watch out for that." That's what slides are. They aren't just there to be word for word bullet point that you read off of, where you're looking back the whole time, and not even facing your audience. They are there to remind yourself what you should be talking about, but also to be a point at which your audience can know that that's the thing that's being discussed. Then, they focus back on you.

That was the one thing I noticed more than anything in this particular presentation. Yes, I prepared a lot. Yes, they were moments that I was trying out that were new. Even at the end, I try to reverse Q&A. I wanted to do something different there where I wasn't actually getting questions asked to me, but I had people coming up, tell me about their business, and asking questions to them. See what free thing they could offer their audience.

Fun fact, John Lee Dumas was in that audience. He was there first time at a conference, just starting out Entrepreneur on Fire. He came up. He volunteered. He told me what his business was. I dissected that. I told him what he should do. He should take some of his top interviews and turn those into a PDF file that he can then use for a lead magnet to build his email list. He did that within a week. That's the kind of action man that he is. Since then, as many of you know, he's had now thousands of episodes recorded, and has made millions of dollars online. I'm not going to take full credit for that, but I was episode number one of Entrepreneur on Fire. That's all I'm going to say.

After this, I started to realize the small things, and big things, that I could do to really get my audience to remember certain points, to remember myself, to remember what I was saying, and to stand out from all the other speakers out there. I was really excited to get an invite for the fall of 2013 back to Finn Con, or the Financial Blogger Conference, Finn Con 2013.

I hadn't gone the previous year. I actually wanted to go, but my wife is due in and around that time with our daughter. Thank God I didn't go, because she gave birth during Finn Con. They actually made an announcement during Finn Conn '12 that my wife gave birth. I heard there was an applause. Adam Baker, if you're out there, thank you so much for that shout out. I really appreciate it.

2013. I was invited to do, not just a presentation or any old presentation, I was invited to do the opening keynote. The opening keynote. To come around full-circle, 2 years after I had spoken at 2011, I wanted to go all out and put everything I had into that

presentation because I owe Finn Con. That's why I continue to feel Finn Con is one of the best conferences out there. It's more than just a personal finance blogger conference now. So many people in around the online business and online marketing, entrepreneurship industry, from all different niches, attend this event. You should, too, if you have a chance. I will most likely be there. I will be there this year. It's typically in September. Maybe I'll see you there.

To prepare for this presentation, again, like I said, I wanted to go all out. I felt like I owed Finn Con so much for getting my start on stage. Beyond the presentations I've already featured in this podcast episode and talked about, I'd been speaking a lot of other places, more local and smaller events, just a few hundred people. Some paid very, very well. At first, I started to get paid 1,500, \$3,000 for about 45 minutes. Then, it got all the way up to 5, \$6,000. My name had started to go out there. Conference directors were talking about just how much they loved having me there. Not just because I was providing a lot of great content, and I was providing unique content, but I always stayed in the audience before and after I shared my presentation. I would always interacted. I was always there to answer questions for people. They loved that. That's one of the things that conference directors often look for, because they want to provide a lot of value to their own audience. Speakers can obviously do that.

To prepare for this presentation, I spent a lot of hours, over 250 hours. I tracked it because I knew it was going to be quite a while. It was probably a little too much, but I wanted to make sure I got it right. As the opening keynote for this presentation, I wanted to start with a bang. Like I said earlier, back when I was working with Mike, I had learned recently just how important first impressions were. That was something that I felt that, at the time, a lot of bloggers, especially in the personal-finance space, were not really paying attention to. When people visit your site, they typically have only 4 to 7 seconds. 4 to 7 seconds, that's all you have to make a good first impression, or else, they're out of there. Most of the time, when people leave within that short amount of time. They're not going to come back.



I wanted to stress the importance of first impressions. I thought “Hey, what better way to start a presentation about first impressions, than with a first impression you could never forget.” Let me set the stage for you, if you will, for this presentation. A room full of 500 to 600 people, packed room. This is in Saint Louis. I was getting introduced by a good buddy of mine, JD Roth, who was the former owner of [getrichslowly.org](http://getrichslowly.org), one of the very first blog that I’ve ever read. He was introducing me. I had run out from the back of the stage. As I’m climbing up on the stage, I trip, and I fall flat on my face, on purpose, though. I had practiced how to fall properly.

After falling on stage in front of everybody, I paused for a few seconds. Then taught myself back up. Then, actually walk in reverse the same way I came up on stage, while the music that had originally played me on was actually playing in reverse, as well. I was rewinding. Then, from there, I’d go back on stage and say these very famous words that were relevant to all this. I’ll play that for you right now, including my entrance, my fall, and the beautiful sound of the microphone leaving feedback, which was totally unplanned, but it worked out perfectly. Here’s my entrance.

*Announcer: Ladies and gentleman, Mr. Pat Flynn. Ladies and gentlemen, Mr Pat Flynn.*

*Pat: If there’s one thing I want you to take away from this talk, it’s this. First impressions matter. They matter because we don’t get a second chance to make a first impression. We cannot rewind a first time. There are no do-overs or mulligans. When it comes to the first time, anybody experiences anything. That first impression you make is so important. Fight them, because it directly influences everything that happens in that point forward.*

I actually did it. I actually fell on stage. I actually hurt myself. Later, after the adrenaline was gone, and I caught my breath, as you could tell. I was probably a little bit out of breath because of all the running I was doing. I didn’t actually count for how long the stage was, or how long the conference room was. I actually had bruised a rib when I was falling, because when I was practicing, I was

practicing on carpet. Well, the stage was wood. When wood meets rib, not good things happen.

It was totally worth it, because a lot of people reacted and literally thought that I had fell on stage. I saw a few people in the front row get up and want to help me. A number of people had put their hands over their mouths, because they just couldn't believe it. Even to this day, people still bring up that little moment at Finn Con, which is super cool. Hopefully, that gets people to remember how important it is. If Pat can fall at the beginning of his presentation, nobody else has an excuse, right?

I'm going to play a few more clips from this presentation, because I did a lot of things that were different. I tested a lot of things that worked really, really well. You can probably tell by now that I'm starting to feel a little bit more comfortable about what I'm doing on stage. It was at this point, exactly 2 years after my first presentation, that I started to feel like I owned the stage. My time on there was my time to do what ever I wanted. It wasn't the stage controlling me anymore, or the audience worrying me, even though like I said earlier, I still get nervous and I was definitely nervous before this one, I implemented a lot of new strategies that I wanted to see how they worked. They worked really, really well. One of them being actually focusing on people in the audience and connecting and building trust with them early by highlighting some members from that exact audience.

*Before I start talking more about first impression, I just want to say it feels great to be back at Finn Con. Are you guys excited to be at Finn Con? I'm excited. I know you guys are excited. You know how I know you're excited? Because I've been following the hashtag. I've been reading the messages on Facebook. There's a few messages and tweets I want to share with you from some of you out there. This first one comes from Smart Money Chick. She said, this was actually on March 5, when tickets go on sale. He said, "I woke up giddy like a school girl," exactly how I woke up this morning. He said, "Finn Con tickets go on sale in like an hour, yay."*

*Here's one from Agatha, "Who's ready for a Finn Con '13 Photo op? @PoweredBallroo 00:37:34, remember the 80's shot in Finn Con '12?" Of course I have a picture to go along with this. I want that boombox, by the way. It's awesome. Here's one from Travis, who said, "Who has 2 thumbs and is excited to leave for Finn Con tomorrow? This guy." Here's one from Eric. This isn't really a thing about excitement, it's just a tip for himself. He said, "Smartest thing I can do, put off dating until after Finn Con, not like last year with new girlfriend who was crazy." Ladies, I talked to Eric just to confirm, he doesn't have a girlfriend right now.*

*This is my favorite. This is one from Scott. He said, "Is it bad that I'm more excited about Finn Con than I was with my family's trip to Disney last year?" Lance said, "Not if you don't tell your family." To which Scott replied, "Oops."*

I had them hooked right from the beginning just by sharing a few tweets, a few Facebook messages that were found using the hashtag. I found that if you speak in front of a very close-knit community, like the Finn Con community, or I recently did this at the Everything Food Blogger Conference, because the food bloggers are all very tight with each other, too. If you can highlight a few of their members in a special way at the beginning, you got your audience hooked, all of them, because they're all family.

That worked out really well. Another thing that I focused on that I wanted to add into this presentation was better audience participation. I learned that the more you can get your audience to participate, the more likely they are to be engaged and actually take action on the concept that you're sharing. One thing I learned was that you can get your audience really easily to participate by raising their hand. You ask them questions. You have them raise her hand. However, the other part of that is you want to make sure that everybody raises their hand at some point. You don't want to just ask one question and then leave the other guys hanging. You want to ask one question. Then, however many questions you need to ask after that to cover all your bases.

Yes, not everybody will raise their hand no matter how many questions you ask, because just some people don't like raising their hand. As long as in their head, they're raising their hand, if that makes sense, you're covering all those bases. You're covering all options. Then, you're good. You have them participating and engaged. You're going to hear me run through something similar right here in this presentation.

*Who was here for the first time? This is your very first Finn Con, raise your hand. Wow. Welcome. Put your hands down. Who's here for the second time? This is your second Finn Con. Sweet. Third time? You've been here since the beginning of all Finn Cons? Nice. Now, if you have anything to do with putting this conference together, anything, you're a volunteer, raise your hand up super high. For the rest of us, just thank you for the work that you've done.*

After that very successful keynote, I was really excited to do a lot more just like that one. Plus, I was starting to get paid for what I was doing. Before that, I was doing all my presentations for free. Actually, Finn Con '13 was one of the first ones where I ever got paid. After that, I started to do a lot of smaller events here and there in front of a couple hundred people for different companies and whatnot. I was getting paid thousands of dollars, anywhere between 1,500 to up to \$10,000 for some of my content, which was completely amazing. To think back just a couple of years earlier that I was deathly afraid of getting on stage. Obviously, very motivated to go up there and get paid for it. More than that, it was the feedback I was getting from everybody who was taking action on the content that I was presenting. He would often follow up with me via email later on. That was truly driving me forward.

Now, my next big presentation was at New Media Expo, previously known as Blog World Expo in 2014. This was a presentation titled "How to Convert Your Casual Readers Into Raving Fans." Many of you have seen this one or heard about it. I didn't know at that time, but that would become one of the most popular presentations that I would ever do. Here's a clip from it.

*That's first thing. Second thing I want to talk about, actually, a lot of you applied on this already. I want you to imagine having a conversation with somebody that you've just met for the first time, totally brand new, something that you're probably going to be doing a lot here this week, or this weekend. The conversation's start out the same. You know, the small talk. "Where are you from?" "I'm from San Diego, California." "That's cool. How about you?" "My blog is Smart Passive Income." "That's cool." "How about you?"*

*Then, all of the sudden, in the middle of that conversation, one of you will share something that both of you have experienced before. It will be like, "Hey, what school did you go to?" "I went to Cal, UC Berkeley." "You went to CAL." "Are you series?" "What year did you graduate?" "05." "06. Oh my gosh. Awesome. Best friends forever. Go, Bears!"*

*That's how friendships start. That's how you can convert your casual audience into active members by sharing these really interesting things about you that people can connect with on an individual level. You have to put a little bit of you in your brand. Put you into your brand. This is why I spend money to have my voiceover guy at the beginning of each of my podcast episodes share a different random fact about who I am. When I started doing this, people who were experts in the industry were saying things like, "Pat, this is the dumbest thing I've ever seen. Why would you waste your time and your money doing this?"*

*Now, those people are coming back to me, 6 and a half million downloads later in my podcast saying, "Pat, you are a genius." My response is, "No. I'm just being human. I'm just being a human being online who knows how to connect with people." Share these interesting things about you with your audience. You don't have to go overboard. You can just share these random things. I cannot tell you how many times I've been to a conference and people have come up to me. It's first time I've ever met them. They say things like, "Pat, how did your [inaudible 00:43:25] football team do?" I'm like, "I don't want to talk about it this year."*

*I had somebody last night say, “Pat, I’m also a half Filipino.” I was like, “Sweet. Pinoy Pride.” Then, I had a guy come up to me at one conference one time. He came up to me a little too close. I was wondering what he was going to do. He’s coming up to my ear. He’s like, “Pat, I’m also scared of spiders.” Then, we hugged it out. Connecting with people on an individual level like that, by sharing these things about yourself are going to go very, very long way.*

You could probably tell by listening to this that I am a much more confident speaker at this point. I didn’t know, like I said earlier, that this presentation was going to be one that I would do over and over and over again. I would be asked to do this one specifically. It made so much noise, especially because actually I did some things at the end there that I didn’t share with you, where I actually included magic. I actually hired a magician to help me understand how I could better deliver these messages through magic, which part of the conversation here was about creating magical moments for your audience. I incorporated magic. We did some really cool things with a can of pineapples, and a beach ball. Anyway, that presentation is available on YouTube, if you want go ahead and check that out. We will put it in the show notes and all that stuff, and links to all of these different presentations that I mentioned, too, at least those that are public so that you can watch them if you want.

I didn’t know that it was even possible, or it was allowed for a speaker to do a presentation over again. Now, it sounds funny when I say that, but when I had presented at NMX at 2014. That particular presentation was probably the 15th or 16th completely brand-new presentation that I had ever made. I never repeated a presentation that I had done before. Up until August 2014 when I did that same presentation that you just heard in Australia for the Pro Blogger Conference with Darren Rouse. It was an amazing event. Obviously, going to Australia was fantastic. I got to bring my family with me, which is great. More than that, doing this presentation for the second time which, again, I’ve never done before. It was amazing.

I was actually scared at first because I know what the content was. I know that I had done it before, but that doesn’t matter. What matters

is the audience that I was speaking to had never heard it before. Because that, it actually became an even stronger presentation because I had gone over the presentation. I've watched the replay and picked out the thing that worked really, made sure to include those things and figured out what I could do better so that I could deliver this amazing presentation in Australia. Since then, I've performed this particular presentation, gosh, I would say at least a dozen times now, and paid for most of them.

A few more conferences I wanted to give a shout out to because they've just been massively supportive in my effort to become a public speaker, Michael Hyatt and his Platform Conference. I actually opened the very first time I was on stage at Platform by playing a trumpet, which was really fun. That is a much smaller event, but a lot more intimate. A lot of great relationships have formed by going to the Platform Conference. I recommend that one. If you have a chance to go to that.

I also spoke at all of the Social Media Marketing Worlds here in San Diego, which is put on by Michael Stelzner. I highly recommend that conference. Huge conference, but extremely valuable. Of course, it's in my hometown. Make your way over if can. There's also Traffic and Conversion Summit, which happens in San Diego, which is really cool. Of all the conferences, that one has the most advanced information in terms of traffic building and affiliate marketing, and all that kinds of stuff, which is really fun. I also spoke at Agents of Change in Maine for Rich Brooks. Of course, Podcast Movement where I started to experiment even more.

That was the one thing that I noticed that as I started to speak more, I started to keep upping myself and raising the bar higher and higher and higher. It worried me a little bit, because every time I did something, I felt like I had to outdo myself the next time. Probably the biggest thing I did was in 2015, at the very last New Media Expo that there ever was when I had the keynote. I did so well the previous year with that casual audience presentation that I was asked to do the keynote the year after. I'm not going to play any clips from it because I need you to see it in full to get the full experience.

Just to give you an idea, I start the presentation with a movie that I filmed. I actually filmed it on the same parking lot that Back to the Future, was filmed back in the 80's. It was a Back to the Future themed presentation. I filmed myself in this movie. Literally, 30 people came out to help film this little short film of mine, which had me at the end of the short film, exiting in a Dolorean. I actually got to drive a Dolorean. It had me going 88 miles per hour ... I didn't really go 88 miles per hour, but it made it seem like it.

I disappear in the short film. Then on stage at NMX, I come from the back of the room in a real life Dolorean. I was fulfilling my childhood dream. I got to arrive on stage in a Dolorean. It happened to be the 30 year anniversary, this was 2015, of Back to the Future. It was one of most amazing experiences, and a moment that I and everybody in the room would never forget.

The video is linked to in the show notes, again.

[Smartpassiveincome.com/session230](http://Smartpassiveincome.com/session230), if you want to check that out. Now, when I speak, everybody who has seen me speak before is like "Hey, did you bring the Dolorean with you?" "No, because it costs a significant amount of money to rent that day. It was just a once in a lifetime thing." I'm so glad I did that. I am so glad it was captured on film. A big shout out to Caleb, my videographer, for capturing that in multiple cameras, and all the film crew that was with him that day on stage at New Media Expo in Las Vegas.

Now, to finish up, I wanted to share a presentation with you from Podcast Movement. This was Podcast Movement 2015. I recently spoke there in 2016 in Chicago. 2015. It was ... Where was it? It was in Fort Worth, Texas. It was the opening keynote. I had actually won an award there the night before, which was the Best Business Podcast of 2015. Thank you to everybody who had voted and supported me for that. I wanted to finish off this particular episode by sharing a clip from that presentation, because I had done something I've never done before. Because this was a podcasting event, because I was doing the opening keynote, and because 2015 was the year of the Serial Podcast, which I know a lot of you have listened to.



I wanted to add some of those elements from Serial, that I liked, into my presentation. I told stories, but I did it in a different way. I did it with, sometimes, background music behind me. I used different multimedia. I used audio clips from other people that were inserted into the presentation, too. It was a lot of fun. The one thing I did that I'd never seen anybody do anywhere, was I pretended to forget my lines. I had a voice play over the speakers, that was supposed to be the voice in my head. This is what it sounded like.

*Amazing people. We're going to make a lot of great connections that we can bring home with us, as well. We're going to party it up, too, I'm sure Some of you have already done that. A lot of you ... Not a lot of you, maybe some of you are maybe going to drink a little too much. Just as reminder, we will go home and talk about it on our podcast. Just be careful. That's all I'm saying. It's like at least we all have audio podcast, or most of us do. The visuals are left out. Some of us do have video podcast. If you see me with a camera, just behave yourself, okay?*

*Now, I wanted to take this time on stage here. I am so blessed to be here. I wanted take about 30 minutes with you. I want to stress that 30 part because I know we're all tired of being stuck at 20. Thanks, iTunes. I appreciate that. 30 minutes to talk about something I really wanted to talk about, something I've been thinking about ever since I've been invited to speak on stage here. It brings me back to 2009, sorry. It's getting ... It's really hot in Texas.*

*Recording: Pat, what are you doing?*

*Pat: Hello?*

*Recording: Pat, what are you doing? You're the keynote speaker. You are dropping the ball.*

*Pat: Excuse me, can you not interrupt my presentation, please.*

*Recording: Excuse me. Can you not interrupt my ... Golly, Pat, did you put that*

*music bit in there to hide how terrible your presentation was going to be?*

*Pat: Geez. Can the mic guys in the back cut off that mic, please.*

*Recording: You can't get rid of me, Pat. I've hacked into your presentation. It's just you and me. Honestly, I'll keep going because somebody has got to fill that dead air you've wafted into the building.*

*Pat: Oh my god. Can you just listen to me, please? This is ridiculous.*

*Recording: I would rather listen to a 5-year old episode of one of the bottom 100 podcasts on iTunes recorded in an echo-chamber, on a plastic desktop of microphone, on a Gateway 486DX-2 computer, using a voice recorder in Windows 3.1, at half speed, backwards, on my iPhone 3 with earbuds that don't even fit, than listen to any more of your BS.*

*Pat: I don't know where you are, but if you were a real man, you would come up here on stage right now and face me. Maybe you're in the back of the room. I can't see you, but can you raise your hand, please, whoever is saying that.*

*Recording: Hand is raised, Pat.*

*Pat: Really, where are you?*

*Recording: Here, let me help you out. Hello, Mc Flynn, anybody home?*

*Pat: What's going on here?*

*Recording: I'm in your head, Pat.*

*Pat: Yeah. Stop interrupting me so I can get back to the presentation, please.*

*Recording: No, Pat. I mean, I'm in your head. I'm the voice in your head.*

- Pat: Wait, and you have a British accent?*
- Recording: Well, for now. Perhaps you'd prefer one man. One stage. Pat Flynn in the critically acclaimed number 1 disaster movie of the year, your keynote presentation.*
- Pat: Ha-ha. Very funny. No. Let's not do the movie guy voice, please.*
- Recording: You are literally screwing this entire thing up.*
- Pat: No. Wait, was that Chris Ducker?*
- Recording: Pat Flynn. Boy, Pat Flynn, look at you strut your way up to the stage. Sit down, little girly man. You're presentation's going to blow.*
- Pat: Can you please just let me finish my keynote?*
- Recording: Keynote? More like key nope. Dear me. All right. Fine. I'll let you start again. No interruptions.*
- Pat: No interruptions?*
- Recording: No interruptions. I promise.*
- Pat: Thank you. Sorry. It gets in the way sometimes.*
- Recording: Don't screw up.*
- Pat: As I was saying ...*
- Recording: You got this, Pat. No pressure.*
- Pat: I thought you said you weren't going to interrupt me?*
- Recording: I thought you said you practiced? You said you practiced. I'm in your head, Pat. You said you practiced. No pressure. You got this, Pat. You are literally screwing this entire thing up. Pat, I'm still here, Pat. I will always be here.*

Pat:

*Seen. If somebody were to talk to you like that in real life, to interrupt you like that, embarrass you, how would you feel about that person? If you were really struggling, and you just needed a boost of confidence, a little bit of encouragement, yet instead, somebody just tore you down, and kicked you while you were down. What would you feel about that person? It would be very easy just to say, "You know what, what are you doing here? Get out of my life. What the heck. You're in my way. I'm trying to do something important here."*

*Yet, for whatever reason, we all love to keep this one hater list in our lives. This one hater who loves to steer our ship in a direction opposite the direction we were going. This one hater, who, at the moment, when we're so close to that breakthrough or achievement, it just pulls us back away from it, back right to where we were. The most destructive hater of them all, ourselves.*

*The truth is, we are our own worst hater. It's true. It doesn't even matter what part of life you're in. Doesn't matter if you're just getting started with something, or maybe you've been doing it for a while. Whenever you're trying to achieve that next level, those doubts, those excuses start coming in. That voice. I don't think I can do it. I'm not good enough. They're not going to like it. It's dangerous. I mean, imagine all the amazing things we could have accomplished if we didn't let our voice get in the way.*

You're on this journey right now, whether you're trying to become a public speaker, or start your own online business, or whatever it is, you have to realize that this voice is always going to be there. I want to encourage you, and this is the overall message of this exact podcast episode, I want to encourage you that no matter what, please keep going. The world needs you.

Thank you so much for listening in. I appreciate it. Hopefully you've enjoyed this blast from the past, if you will and account of just how much progress I've made since 2011. Guess what, I'm not stopping. I know you're not either. If you want all the show notes which

includes links to all the different presentations I mentioned here in this particular episode, head on over the [smartpassiveincome.com/session230](http://www.smartpassiveincome.com/session230). You'll find them all right there. Plus, I'd love for you to go there so you can let me know what you think of this episode, please. [Smartpassiveincome.com/session230](http://www.smartpassiveincome.com/session230).

Thanks so much. I appreciate you. I look forward to serving you in next week's episode. We actually didn't even play the theme music here like normal. You know what, this wasn't a normal episode. Again, I hope you enjoyed it. If you want to hear the theme music, just look in the archive or look forward to next week. Thanks much. Take care. Bye.

**RESOURCES:**

[Fincon](#)

[Podcast Movement](#)

[New Media Expo](#)

[Agents of Change](#)

[Platform Conference](#)

[Social Media Marketing World](#)

[Traffic and Conversion Summit](#)

[Stand and Deliver](#)

[Resonate](#)

[How to Become Futureproof \(NMX Opening Keynote\)](#)

