



SPI 295

35 Quick Life Lessons from 35 Years of Life & Pencils of Promise Birthday Challenge

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Pat Flynn: This is the Smart Passive Income podcast with Pat Flynn, session number 295. It's your birthday . . . We got to party like it's your birthday . . .

Announcer: Welcome to the Smart Passive Income Podcast, where it's all about working hard now, so you can sit back and reap the benefits later. And now, your host—he's vowed to give his daughter a balloon every Valentine's Day he's alive—Pat Flynn.

Pat Flynn: Yo, what's up, everybody? Thank you so much for joining me today in this session of the SPI Podcast. Thank you so much for being here. And guess what? Today is my birthday. I am 35 years of age today, which to some of you, it might sound quite young, and to others, maybe I sound like an old timer to you. But either way, I'm just very happy to be 35 and to have lived this long, and to have experienced so many things in my life, and I wanted to share some of those things with you.

So today, we're going to talk about 35 quick life lessons from 35 years of life. This is from my perspective, and I know a lot of this can potentially relate to you and what you're up to, too. And so whenever your birthday is, happy birthday to you. I just want you to reflect on the amazing things that you have encountered and have experienced and have enjoyed in the life that you've lived so far. It's always great to reflect, and I thought it'd just be fun to do this because we've done a lot of great content, a lot of actionable stuff over the last several months, here on the podcast.

Last month was affiliate marketing month, and a lot of you have recently joined my new course, 123AffiliateMarketing.com. It's currently closed, and we are working with those beta students right now, but for those of you who are interested in that, you can check that out later if you wanted to get on the waitlist. 123AffiliateMarketing.com. So thank you to the new students who have joined. I'm excited to be working with you. But today, let's shift gears and go to these 35 life lessons that I've learned.

I've been around in the blog-o-sphere and the podcast-o-sphere or

the video-o-sphere. I've been doing this online business thing for a while, and I see these kinds of post every once in a while by some of my friends and some of my favorite influences out there. They're really fun. I get to know that person a little bit more. I also get to learn a few things that were a little bit surprising, too. And it also is a great reminder for kind of where I want to go, too, so that's why we're sharing this with you today. I have a special announcement at the end related to something that you could potentially get involved with, too, that means so much to me. It's very near and dear to my heart, and I'll tell you more about that in the end.

But for now, let's start with number one. Life lesson number one. We're going to go through these rather quickly. There's 35 of them here, so I definitely don't want to spend too much time on each of these, but there may be some storytelling involved. There may be some just tips that are just the tip, itself, and then I move onto the next one. We will see. So number one: Life is too short to complain. This is a lesson that I'm trying to teach my kids a lot because there's a lot of complaining.

I think kids are just, in general, just complain a lot, and they don't really understand that, well, when you complain, you're taking time away from other things that you can be doing, that you can be enjoying, that you can be doing to actually solve that problem, whatever it is that's bringing you those complaints. The biggest thing, for me, with complaints is that a lot of times, the result is the complaint. The trigger was something that I couldn't even control. So why spend so much time on complaining on something that I didn't even really have much control over?

All I know is that I can control what I can do now to make changes, to adjust, to pivot, to react, to respond properly, versus to just complain, because complaining doesn't really do anything. I think there is the idea of speaking up, and that's purposeful. When you speak up because something isn't the way that it should be, you are doing it because you're trying to make a change—not just because you're frustrated, and angry, and upset. So number one, life is too short to complain. Spend more time enjoying life and making use of

what you can control, and also, speaking up, if it is something that you want to make a change for.

Number two: Comparing yourself to others is never good. And I know this because I've compared myself to others most of my life, and there's nothing . . . Again, this is another thing that you can't really control. You can't really control what another person is doing, but you can control how you perceive that, and how you think about that, and how you adjust and react. Like, I remember when I first started an online business, I got involved in this community and people started sharing their wins and their results, and I always compared myself to them, because they were just way further along than I was, and I always felt like I wasn't good enough. I always felt like I was just getting started, that I had a much harder uphill battle at that point. But then I realized, well, I was comparing apples to oranges, because I was just starting out. These people were here and they were doing it for a very long time, and so I had to actually compare not what the results were, because it was impossible for me to get the same results as them because they had been doing it for so much longer.

What I then started to compare was, well, how much harder can I work? How much differentiation can I have versus what it is that they are doing, not the results that they are getting? When I started to really focus in on what they were doing in terms of the results and getting inspiration from that, not getting deflated because of that, well, then I started to work even harder, and my comparisons became about, well, how much further can I go? How much better can I be than what's out there in the space that I'm getting into?

So I'm never trying to compare myself to try and be better, or to try and place myself in the same sort of lane as that person, but I'm always comparing myself to others related to, okay, well, what can I do to potentially be different? Because, "Different is better than better." That's a Sally Hogshead quote, and that's one of my favorite quotes. "Different is better than better," so compare yourself so you can see and figure out how you can be different. Not how much better they are than you or how further along they are than you.

That's not anything good that's going to be healthy for you to kind of pay attention to. It's just going to waste your time, waste your brain space. Never compare yourself to others, but do use others and their result as inspiration for the work that you do.

Number three: Getting inspired by others is a must. This kind of tags along number two, in that it is . . . you need to have people out there, whether they are real mentors who can work directly with you and help you along or virtual mentors out there who can show you the way. Getting inspired by people is a must. You cannot do this alone, and so this could also involve being in a Mastermind group, or having colleagues that you connect with every once in a while, so that you can pull that inspiration from them. Again, not comparing yourself, but getting inspired to see where you could potentially end up—to see if you can get help to get that path from them, that they've already carved, so that you can go and follow that same path.

Okay, number four. When you set goals for yourself, aim high—almost higher than you think you can go. As they say, “Shoot for the stars because even if you miss, you can land on the moon.” There's other quotes that are very similar. There's even a song called “Give Me Everything” from Pitbull, where the quote is, “Reach for the stars and if you don't grab them, at least you'll fall on top of the world.” And I like that because sometimes, we don't even know how big we can go, and we set these limitations for ourselves immediately, even before we get started by saying, “Oh, we're going to have this goal here.”

No. Aim higher than you think you can go. Knowing that, sometimes you might not reach that goal, but at least you'll be higher than you would have if you've set a lower goal. And this is something that I've learned over time because I remember when I first started an online business, my first goal was to just survive. And then from there, it was to kind of, okay, let's be financially independent. From there, it was to start doing things like philanthropic efforts, and I just am always surprised that I can reach those goals. What if I aimed higher initially? Well, then maybe I would even be further along. So when you set goals for yourself, aim high and shoot for the stars.

Number five. To quote another song . . . There's not too many of these, so I know they're kind of corny sometimes, but don't worry. And this is from the great philosopher Drake who said, "We started from the bottom. Now we here." Now, of course, he's not a real philosopher, although some may argue that, but he's a rapper. And I love that. "Started from the bottom, now we're here," knowing where you came from. That's really, really important. To never just leave behind where you came from.

It's always important to have reflections on and be grateful for the journey that you've had, and remembering where you came from is so important because then, you remember the struggles that you went through. You remember all the accomplishments that you've had along the way, and you can be more appreciative of that. And not be so cocky, and just privileged, and feel like you are owed everything because of that, because you remember where you came from.

I've said this in a few episodes in the past, but I remember talking about some friends of mine who started business around the same time as me. And they made a lot of money. They became successful. Most of them in the software space. And they aren't my friends anymore because they completely changed who they were. They weren't the same people that I became friends with after they got rich and famous. And so the moral, for me, was just to realize that sometimes money and fame and all this stuff that we're working toward can change who you are. And, for me, what really helps me are two things.

One, like I said, remembering where I came from, and all the struggles that I've had, that helped me stay more connected to you, the listener. It helps me allow myself to be in your shoes and to be able to deliver better content for you. But, number two, it's the support systems I have. It's my wife, my friends and family, and my colleagues around me. My people and my Mastermind groups who all support me and help me realize that I'm potentially going to get off-track if I go down that route, and to kind of steer me back in the right direction.

And most of all, my audience. You guys. You guys are always very loud, and I love that about . . . when you feel I'm doing something I shouldn't be doing. You are so great at telling me when I do things right, and I love that, and you are so great at telling me when I do things wrong. And I love that even more, so continue to please do that. And to have people like that around you who can support you in the same way so that you never forget where you came from, and you can always continue to serve and stay connected to those who you are serving.

All right. Number six: No matter what you're working hard toward, in order to progress, you need to take breaks. I wish I knew this when I was studying way back in the day because I remember studying for so long, and cramming everything in my brain, staying up overnight, sometimes three nights in a row just to study for those last exam questions. And then I would just burn out. And, of course, I don't retain any of that stuff. There's scientific evidence that taking breaks while studying—actually not studying—helps you retain information for longer, to just be healthier, because cramming is never, never good. So for those of you who are still in school or you're studying for something, take a break every once in a while. Schedule it in your brain, in yourself, in your body, and your test scores, or whatever it is you're working on. Your project, your business, it will appreciate you much, much more.

All right. Number seven: Breakfast. I used to skip breakfast when I was a kid. Even in college for a while, until I started rowing lightweight crew, and I realized that by skipping breakfast, I was not giving myself the energy I needed to actually do what I needed to do while sitting in the rower seat, but also, later in life. As I became a business owner and started to really focus on my energy levels, and then later as a parent, breakfast matters so, so much, so getting some healthy fats in there. I'm not a health dietician, nutritionist-kind of person. I always recommend Shawn Stevenson from the model health show from that. Chalene Johnson for health-related things, too. I mean, those two are great. They're my go-to people for that kind of thing, and of course, my trainer, Jeff McMahan from Total Body Construction. But breakfast, gosh. Eat it, guys. Please.

All right. Number eight: Learn to know when you work best. That is, your body's going to go through rhythms throughout the day. That is, times when you feel very focused and creative—you can get in the zone much easier—and other times of the day when you are just tired, lethargic. You cannot work even if you tried. Knowing when those happen during the day is really key because then, you could take advantage of those times. You can schedule things that need to happen within those times. Then you can schedule other things that don't require as much brainwork, or creativity, or decision making into those more lethargic kinds of times. And just knowing when your body tends to work best is going to be a huge advantage for you as you move forward in your business, and in your life, as a parent, as a friend, as an entrepreneur, as a CEO. So keep that in mind.

Number nine: One thing at a time. My favorite book, still, of all time is *The One Thing* by Jay Papasan and Gary Keller. Work on one thing at a time. You're going to get so much more done, and you're going to give the things that you work on a chance to actually help you. Because what often happens is, you might try three or four different things at the time, and you're never going to give any of those things enough energy, or time, or effort, or time required to actually get to the point where they can actually help repay you, or pay you back, or become successful, or become that solution that you were hoping to build. When you work on one thing at a time, at least you're giving it a chance, even if it were to fail. And, of course, if you've listened to SPI at all, you know that failure is not a bad thing. It's actually a great thing because you learn from that experience, and you can take it into your next phase of whatever that phase may be. So work on one thing at a time.

Number 10: Never work just to feel busy. Always work with purpose, knowing it's helping to propel you forward. Now some of you may choose to work on one thing at a time, and I hope you do, but is it the one thing you should be working on right now? Another thing that they talk about in that book is the domino effect: really paying attention to prioritizing your workload and understanding the effect that finishing one thing has on the next thing that you're doing. A

lot of times, we work just to feel like we're working. We work to stay busy because we feel like we have to stay busy. "Hustle, hustle, hustle, hustle, hustle."

But hustle, to me, is also planning. It's planning, and prioritization, understanding what is it that you should be working on first, and never working on something that isn't actually going to move you forward. So reality check: Set an alarm for tomorrow at whatever 24 hours from now is, and have it remind you, or have it be a reminder that asks you the question, "Are you doing what you should be doing right now?" So I'm going to repeat that. Create an alarm on your phone right now for 24 hours from now. I don't know what it is you're going to be doing, but ask yourself within that alarm, have yourself be asked this question by your past self tomorrow, "Are you doing what you should be doing right now?"

Meaning, is what it is that you're focused on and working on, when that alarm goes off, is that actually what you should be doing? Is it something that's helping you propel you as you move forward? And there was a time when I actually set multiple alarms off during the day to check in with myself just to make sure, and that was great training because then I started to anticipate those alarms going off, and really just making sure that I was focusing, and putting time and effort into the things that I should be putting time and effort into. So try that exercise.

Number 11: Another quote for you. This is by another rapper, but I love this quote, and I love this rapper, too, and that is, "I'm not a businessman. I'm a business, man." So this is from Jay-Z. And he knows the power of personal branding. The fact that he is his business, and I know that that's the case for myself and many of you, too—that you are what makes success in your brain. You are what propels us. You are what differentiates yourself from everybody else out there. "I'm not a businessman. I'm a business, man." Oh, so good. Especially if you have a personal brand, you are what makes your brand work. So how can you put more of you into what it is that you are doing?

Number 12: Keep all of the thank-yous. This is something that I've been doing ever since the beginning because it was just so mind-boggling to me that I would get thank-yous for the work that I would do online, especially teaching people how to pass an exam in the architecture industry. If I were to ask you, for example, "Who built the home that you sleep in? Who built the building that you spend most of your time in each day, that may be different than your home?" You likely do not know the answer. And it's kind of trippy that you spend all that time in a place, and you don't even know who actually had an effect on actually building that spot that you sit in, or sleep in, or stand in that whole time.

So remember, I was an architect. I have my fingerprint on dozens of buildings in the United States right now. However, it was only when I started publishing an exam guide to help people pass the LEED Exam, an exam in the architecture industry, that then people started to call me out by name, by thanking me. By saying, "Hey, Pat. Thank you for this. Thank you for that." And it now happens more often, even on SmartPassiveIncome.com. When I go to conferences, "Pat. Thank you so much for your podcasts. Pat, thank you so much for your book, or for your course."

They're calling me by name. I'm getting recognized for that, and I have to really . . . So going back to what I was saying earlier, keep all the thank-yous. It was just really mind-boggling to me that I would get thanked for this kind of work that I do, so I have kept all of my thank-yous over time. And when I get to those moments during the day and/or during the week or month where I'm just not feeling work at all—I just don't . . . I'm not in the mood, even though I am in my time of the day when I know I'm most focused and creative, I just still might not want to do work—I go to my thank-yous. I go to my Gmail folder that I created specifically to hold these thank-yous, and I go in there, and I just look around, and I see the kind of effect that I've had on people. I keep the handwritten thank you notes. I keep them posted up on my wall in my studio and here in my home office, in San Diego. And I look them and I read them, and it just takes a couple to have me realize that, "Hey, if I let fear get in the way, if I let my laziness get in the way, if I let just not knowing what

to do next get in the way of me actually helping people, then I'm not going to get these anymore. I'm not going to get these thank-yous."

I have a direct impact on people, and I can continue to do that, or I can continue not to do that and have this stuff get in the way. So what am I going to do? And every single time, that gets me up and fired up for wanting to just continue to plow through that work. It's the thank-yous that keep me going because thinking about where you came from is important. Thinking about who you've already helped is important, too, because there are likely more people like them out there, waiting to hear from you, waiting to be served by you.

All right. Number 13: "If you want to learn and grow, never be the smartest person in the room," and this is just a quote that I heard a while back. I don't remember who said it, and I've heard it said in many different ways. But if you want to grow and learn, what you should always do . . . I remember watching when Tiger Woods was at his prime in golf. I remember just being so baffled and dumbstruck, but also just inspired that he, himself, at the top of his game, the number one golfer in the world, was still getting swing training from somebody. That's what helped him continue to be great until, obviously, he wasn't so great anymore because of some personal things that had happened, but we're not going to get into that. But if you want to learn and grow, never be the smartest person in the room. There's going to be people out there who are better than you, who are faster than you, who are more resourceful, who can help you grow even stronger, and scale your business even bigger, and so if you want to make that happen, always put yourselves in situations where you are not the smartest in the room. That's how you learn to grow.

Number fourteen: First impressions matter. This matters in the micro-context of content online. If you want people to open that email, you want to have a great subject line. If you want people to continue to watch your videos, you need to hook them within the first seven seconds. But also, when it comes to your brand, and in-person meetings, how you represent yourself, how you look, how the experience is within those first few minutes of interaction—that

matters for the whole course of life related to that interaction that you're going to have over time, so first impressions matter.

And here's the thing: You never get a second chance to make a great first impression. So a great tip I have for you is to ask your audience what their first impression was of your site, or, if you have a course, ask people, "Well, what was your first impression of my course?" That can give you some great insight into, okay, how can you better increase the experience that people have, that will allow them to want to continue to work with you even more? Or will allow them to go deeper into the things that you have to offer? So it really all starts with that first impression, so keep that in mind.

Number 15: Know what you're not good at, and be okay with it. This is a great strategy for life, because a lot of times, we entrepreneurs, we try to be great at everything. I remember when I first started online business, I tried to become a graphics expert, a CSS JavaScript expert, and I'd be on YouTube for hours just trying to learn all those things. And it wasn't until I finally figured out that there are people out there who are much better and faster, who are just specialized in those things, that it's not something I need to worry about because I can work with other people.

I can hire other people. I can ask for favors from other people and work pro bono so I can help them out, and they can help me out. And I can increase my results and grow my business and get better at life, and have more head space to do the things that I know I'm good at, and the things that I know I should be doing as the CEO of my company. So knowing what you're not good at is the one thing, but also being okay with it is the second part, and probably the hardest part, too.

Number 16: Numbers are people, too. We all try to collect more email subscribers, more followers, more fans, more sales, more customers. But each one of those things, each one of those numbers are people, too, and the more you can realize that those are human beings on the other end, the more you can better serve them. The more you can actually empathize with them. The more

you can better appreciate the fact that they are there, clicking your links, buying your products, and you can give them back the time and effort and attention they actually deserve for giving you that attention, too, because those are human beings.

Numbers are people, too, and this is something that a lot of people . . . When I first started doing online business and doing research, I felt like a number to people. I felt like a credit card number to people, when I started subscribing to email lists and joining courses and stuff. It was a very few select people who made me really feel like I was a real person, who were actually concerned about my needs, which is why I incorporate that kind of feeling into the things that I do, the products that I create, the courses that I put out there and publish in the world, and the content, and the podcast, too. You guys are people, too, and so I thank you for being here because you're amazing.

We are 17 in. 17: You have to invest in your business. Meaning, if you want your business to grow and scale . . . Yes, I understand in the beginning, you might be bootstrapping. You might not have much money to invest. Well, invest time, invest resources, invest for research in it, too. It just doesn't have to be money specifically. But, yes, investing money back into your business to grow and scale it, to hire out, to get tools and resources that can help you automate some of the things so you can take yourself out of those things and put them into bigger vision things. You can put them into the things that require only things that you can do.

Investing in your business was one of the hardest things for me to do because I was starting to make money, and it was just weird for me to spend even more money than I had spent on rent, on something that I could potentially do myself—like voiceovers or things like that—but it wasn't until I finally experienced what it was like to hire somebody to do those things for me that I realized that, “Wow, I'm getting return for that investment.” You can get return for that. Of course, you need to take a smart approach with that, and that's a whole another conversation. But you have to invest in your business if you want to grow and not run yourself to the ground.

Next, number 18. We are over halfway through the journey here. Thank you so much for sticking with me, and for all the birthday wishes. Thank you in advance. Number 18: You have to invest in yourself. Personal development should be a priority every single day, and the book that changed my life with this was called *Miracle Morning* by Hal Elrod. There's a number of personal development-related books out there, and websites and resources and podcasts, too. But that book more than anything helped me realize that even in a small amount of time in the morning, I can invest some time and effort into myself, to make sure that I am my best self, so that I can be a better father, so I can be a better husband, so I can be a better business owner, somebody who serves an audience. When you invest in yourself, you are investing in your future as well, so please take care of yourself. Put that mask on yourself first before you put it on other people. That's the sort of airport analogy, or the airplane analogy.

Okay, number 19: It's okay to say no. And this was really hard for me to do because I love to say yes to people. I'm a people-pleaser by nature, and saying no has been one of the most liberating things I've been able to do because now I have control. Now I take control of my time and where I put my time and money and effort into, and so when you say no, you're also saying yes to the things that you are doing. And that's key, too, because you are allowing yourself to have breathing room. And there have been times . . . And I'm even experiencing this a little bit right now because I've said yes to a lot of conferences, and I've been going and traveling a lot. Maybe it's a little bit too much.

When you say no, you actually make room for things. When you say yes to a bunch of things, you're not going to be able to . . . There's going to be a breaking point. There's going to a point where you're not going to be able to either devote enough attention to each of those things, and you're only going to have lower quality results, and/or you're going to just burn out, and you don't want to do that. It's okay to say no. The biggest thing, for me, was realizing that nothing terrible and earth-shattering will happen when I say no. People respect that. And if they don't, if they don't respect your

answer when they say no, or when you say no, then they are likely somebody you should say no to anyway, so just keep that in mind.

All right. 20: If it doesn't fit, why force it? If it doesn't fit, why force it? Meaning, if it doesn't align with what it is that your goals are, if it doesn't align with your brand and what your brand stands for, or what your mission is, then why do it, just because it might seem attractive? If it doesn't align with your values . . . Because maybe it'll give you a huge commission, but if it's not actually a product that will help your audience, then why would you promote it as an affiliate? If it doesn't fit, why force it?

Too many people—and this goes along with number 19—try to say yes all the time. It's okay to say no. There have been times I have had people like Tony Robbins ask to come and be interviewed here on the SPI podcast, and as much as I love Tony and his stuff, and I'm so just honored that he wants to be on the show, I've told his assistants, "Thanks, but no thanks," because it just doesn't fit into what I'm doing right now. I mean, that'd be cool, and it would be great to have a chat with him, but it's not something I want to do. Or, I don't need to change my brand for whatever it is . . . That is, I know what I stand for. And I know what my values are and I'm going to stick with it. And hopefully, you know yours, too, so you can make that decisions, or those decisions much better and much easier.

Number 21: You can be helpful by being a connector rather than a creator. Creating is great. Creating your own product, creating content, et cetera, it's all fantastic. But you can also be helpful by being a connector. There are products that exist right now in the market that could potentially serve your audience. You can be a helpful person by introducing those things to your audience, and you can also potentially become an affiliate for those things, too. You can be rewarded for being a connector. If you have people who might be helpful for your audience to know, or another person that you know who just needs a little bit of help, you can make that connection, and you will be served and rewarded. Maybe not right away, and maybe not monetarily, but you will always be rewarded when you serve others.

There are some people out there like Jaime Masters, for example, who is in a Mastermind group with me. I feel like she knows almost everybody who's important to know in this space. And she, as a result of just being one of those connectors, being somebody who is just so networked and knows everybody and makes those connections, she just doesn't know everybody—she knows who would be a good fit with each other, too. That's a super power, and she uses that super power to not just benefit others, but by benefiting others, she benefits herself, too, because we all remember, “Oh, it was Jamie who connected us,” and that kind of thing. So you can be helpful by being a connector. How can you better connect the things that are displaced within the space that you're in? The better you can do that, the more successful you'll become.

Number 22: You can sell and serve at the same time. This was a big mindset shift for me fairly recently, and this is why more courses are coming. These are things that should have happened a long time ago, but I didn't realize that selling can actually serve your audience even more. And I think it was because I had such a negative experience with online business, and internet marketing, and being sold to in the beginning. Like I said, I felt like a credit card number, or just a potential credit card number for people who were on the other end trying to sell me. It just didn't feel good, so I didn't want to make my audience feel like that, too. But it wasn't until I started to just get a taste of what it was like to actually create courses and create my own products and get the feedback from people who are now experiencing results—who, even though I have had free content for so long, they just now . . . because they're paying and investing, they have skin in the game. They are now getting results.

It just means so much to me that I can actually create something that will help somebody who feels thankful that they have a chance to pay for it. And it's a huge mindset shift. You can sell and serve at the same time, and I want to thank Chalene Johnson for really, really training me and helping me think that way because she does the same thing. She sells a lot, but for everything she sells, she knows she is serving at such a high level. And that's so great. And the other thing related to that, which isn't a number here, but

it relates to this—you can sell and serve at the same time—that is, when you’re selling something, you’re not necessarily taking anything away from the people who cannot buy that. That’s another big thing, because I was so worried that by selling something, that I’d be letting those people down who just, A, couldn’t afford it or, B, just were like, “Hey, why you trying to make all this money from us?” Well, no. There’s all this free stuff here that will help you achieve the same results if you go through it, but for the people who just want a little bit more hand-holding, and who require a little bit of my time—like, I cannot give my time away for free—so here is that option if you can do it. And if not, here are all these other options that already exist. You’re not taking anything away from those people.

All right. Number 23: You could be one relationship away from a major positive shift and change in your life. And the reason I say this is because when I was growing up, I was very shy. I got scared to meet new people. I would often sit in the back in the class, never raised my hand. I didn’t want to speak up. Whenever I was in a group setting, I would always stick to my same exact couple friends, and that’s it. I would never go and try to meet new people. And even in college for a while, I was at that point where I just wanted to stick around with the people I knew and not really venture out and go to different club meetings, or different networking things. But I’ve since realized that networking and going out there and just building relationships is one of the most important things you can do. Every major thing that has happened in my life, has become a result of the relationships that were in and around that particular situation. From getting my architecture job to succeeding in online business to marrying April, those kinds of things all happened because of different relationships that happened in and around those things.

So if I had access to a Delorean time machine—it’s my birthday, let me put a Back to the Future reference in here—so if I can go back into time, 88 miles per hour, and find my younger self, I would tell myself in the early ‘90s, “Hey, Pat. Dude, like, I get that you’re shy, but you got to go out there and meet as many people as you can because you never know. You might be one relationship away from a major positive shift and change in your life, or somebody who you

meet who might know somebody who could change your life.” So just keep that in mind as you move forward.

Number 24: Some people are going to let you down. Some people are going to let you down. And throughout my whole life, there’s been people who I’ve counted on, who I trusted, who just didn’t follow through. And yes, I was upset. Yes, I did complain. But I also realized that, well, that just happens sometimes. And sometimes there are great excuses for that. There are emergencies and there are reasons why people let you down, but other times, it’s just because people don’t care, or they aren’t who they said they were, and so just realize that that could happen. But at the same time, try to be somebody who always follows through on your promises. Try not to let people down, because people do remember that. I mean, you can help somebody for years and then let them down once, and that’s the one time that they just kind of break up with you, and you don’t want that to happen. So some people are going to let you down, and that’s just a part of life, but try to find those people in your life who you can really trust and connect with, who—even if they were to let you down a little bit—they would be there and apologizing because they know that that was not what they should have done. Always connect yourself with people who you can be there for and who will be there for you, too.

Okay, 25: Haters going to hate. Guys, as you begin to grow your business, as you begin to put yourself out there, as you begin to podcast, and create content, and put yourselves on these platforms, like YouTube and elsewhere, where there are people out there who are just going through parts of life where they’re just not happy, they’re going to target you and they’re going to hate on you. They’re going to disrespect you. They’re going to try and stir you up. Trolls. Haters are going to hate. It just happens.

And I remember when I first got my first few haters, people were telling me, “Pat, well, that’s a good sign. It means you’re making big progress out there. Like, yeah, you got haters.” And I was like, “This doesn’t feel as good as you’re saying right now, because I actually feel like crap.” And remember, for a few times—I’m not going to go

into the specifics—but I would stop working for weeks because I was just so upset at what these people were saying, and I'd spend so much time focused on the nuances of how they said what they said about me, but it was Derrick Halpern who really opened my eyes.

He said, "Pat, dude. Every second you waste thinking about these haters, you're taking away from the people who actually love and care for you." And I'm like, "Oh, man. That's great." And it's true because we have this weird entrepreneurial math where one negative comment is greater than a 100 positive comments. So, guys, you're going to get haters. Expect it. That's okay. Don't give them the light of day. Don't feed the trolls, as they say. Now there are opportunities to go and actually clarify things, if it's obvious that they're just not in the know. But if it's obvious that they're just disrespectful, just know that. Feel sorry for them because they're going through a stage of their life where they feel like they have to make other people upset and put other people down just to make themselves feel better, and that's how I frame it when I get haters. And you know what? I actually kind of agree with those initial statements from people who are saying, "Pat, it's great that you're getting haters."

The reason that's great is because it means you're making decisions. If you just kind of stood in the middle ground all the time, where you try to make everybody happy, then you're probably not making big progress. You're not taking the bold actions required. By sticking your ground and really, really moving forward with big, bold actions, you are going to leave a certain segment behind, or upset a certain group of people, and that is just a sign that you are making those big, bold decisions moving forward that need to happen. And you know what? Those haters, those are probably going to be people who are not going to want to either pay you, or be served by you anyway, so don't even worry about them. All right.

Number 26: Conversations are key. Having conversations with people in my audience is one of my favorite things to do. When I go to conferences, I always look for opportunities to meet fans and talk with them. I love it when people come to San Diego and there's a

chance to come and meet and have coffee or whatever. It doesn't always happen because of schedules, but sometimes it does. And those are my favorite moments because I can actually talk to people about my brand, and what they need help with in their own words. I can emphasize with them. I can learn about their struggles. I can hear their stories. I can picture those people later on when I'm creating content, or podcasting, or creating products. I know those people because I've gotten to know them.

One thing I do . . . because sometimes, it's not always possible to have in-person meetings and conversations with my audience, but I love to actually have Skype conversations. Many of you have been talking about the strategy of mine lately which isn't really a strategy. It's just a thing you should do. And that is, you have conversations with your audience over Skype, and I do it 10 times a month, and those conversations . . . It's kind of funny because when I reach out, they're like, "Hey, Pat. Is this an automated thing? Like, how . . . Why would you do this?" I say, "No, I would never automate that," but I just randomly select people on my email list. I send them an email and I say, "Hey, my name is Pat Flynn. You're on my email list. I would love to have a conversation with you on Skype and just get to know you a little bit more." And then those conversations sometimes last five minutes because they're kind of shy, and that's okay, but other times, they've lasted over an hour, and I've gotten to know so much more about who my audience is.

And, yes, I'm just speaking to one person and one person only, but they represent a larger whole of my audience, and by understanding their struggles, understanding what it is that I'm doing that I could do better, what I'm doing that I could continue to do . . . and I also use those conversations to tease things that are coming up, just to kind of get a gut reaction of things that are happening. It makes them feel special because they're getting insider information. Those people often become raving fans. Those conversations are gold to me, and I will not stop doing that, and I hope you continue to do that if you're already doing it, or start, at least, if you haven't done it already. So have conversations with your audience. Conversations are key.

27: Gratitude should be an every day practice. I use my Five Minute Journal. You can check it out at FiveMinuteJournal.com. We interviewed the founders in a previous episode. My favorite thing about that journal is that it's really quick, but it allows me to frame my day around what I'm thankful for and what has happened. And so I start my day thinking about the three things that I'm most grateful for, and what's really, really cool is they do this at my son's school. They journal in the mornings before they start their work because, as my son says, "It helps get their gears going." But as a part of their journaling process, they think about the things that they are grateful for. They are only seven years old. He's in second grade, and they're thinking about what they are grateful for in life. How amazing is that to set up that practice for these children in their lives? And . . . Sorry, I just get really passionate about kids, and entrepreneurship, and this kind of thing. But going back to you, gratitude should be an every day practice. It's like the number one thing you should be doing.

And guess what? It's free. It's free to think about what it is you're grateful for. Yes, there are likely some things in your life that you're not so happy with and that's okay. But what are you happy with? What are you thankful for that you have? Think about that every single day. If you want to use a tool like the Five Minute Journal, FiveMinuteJournal.com, you can pick that up. It's a really great book actually. There's also the Mastery Journal or the Freedom Journal by John Lee Dumas, all these things out there. Or, you can literally just wake up and practice, the moment you wake up, why you are thankful to be alive. When you do that, you appreciate the moments that happen during the day, and you just live a better life.

Number 28: Meditation isn't weird. And actually, for me now, it's necessary. When I got introduced to meditation, I was like, "What? Like this is kind of strange." But then I started to hear on all these podcast episodes, like Tim Ferriss, and Tony Robbins, like everybody, all these greats meditate. And I was like, "Is this really something that can change my life?" So I tried it out. And it worked, guys. It worked. I used a number of different tools to make it happen, and there's an app called Headspace. I also used a little

device for my brain to help me get instant feedback on whether or not I'm doing it right. It's kind of weird, but it's called Muse, M-U-S-E. And that worked. I've been using that every single day for years now. Meditation isn't weird. It's necessary now because, for me, what it has done is it helps me declutter what's happening in my brain, because our brain races throughout the day. There's all these different thoughts, but I'm now able to focus on my thoughts a little bit more. I can get in the zone in my work a little bit easier. When I get distracted and get out of the zone, I don't have to take another half-hour to get back to where I was. I can just snap right back into it, and I can get right back into the zone. And I feel like I'm a little bit more creative when I'm in those moments of the day that I know I am most creative. So meditation—try it out. It is not weird.

Number 29. We are closing in on the final few here. And again, thank you for sticking with me today. And remember, I have that thing at the end I'm going to talk about, which is really special to me, that we'll talk about before I go. But here we go. Number 29: People—myself included, because I am people, I am a person—we tend to sell ourselves short. So when we price our products, when we price the consultant work that we do . . . It's so funny because when I coach people, a common theme—especially for people who are freelancing, people who are doing consultant work—they are completely underselling themselves. Not just with the price point, either. I mean, most of those people can double their price points. And it's funny, because the initial reaction is, "Oh, my gosh. I could never do that." But trust me—you can. You can double your price or even triple it, and everything will be okay. You might actually even get a higher quality client, and may even have less clients to focus on, so you can deliver even better value to those people. So that's just the first thing.

But secondly, even on like the sales pages, or the way people talk about themselves, it boggles my mind that people don't realize how much great things they have to offer and serve the world with. And you really need to know what those things are, and be proud of those things, and sell yourself on those things. And yes, selling is hard, right. But remember, you can sell and serve at the same time.

And in order for people to be changed from the work that you do, you need to change how they feel about who it is out there that's serving them, and help them realize that you are the one to work with. And so don't undersell yourself. That's a common thing for people to do. So ask yourself this question. "How am I underselling myself? What could I do better to show people that I actually have this value to offer?"

Okay, number 30. Number 30: There's no such thing as the right time. This is a big one. This happens in my personal life, in my business life. There are projects and things that we want to do in personal life—for example, buying a home; in business, working on online courses, or selling something, or starting a coaching program, or whatever—you often hear the excuse, "Oh, it's just not the right time yet." But is there really going to be a right time? When the planets are perfectly aligned? And in most cases, that is no. There is not always going to be the perfect timing for everything. The perfect time, sometimes, is now, and you just have to pull the trigger and do it. So don't wait for the right time because sometimes that's just an excuse. It may be representative of the fear that you have with this unknown, which is often the case. And if that's the reason, well, then you know that. I mean, you've heard me talk about it before. Fear is a sign that that's what you should do.

So if the fear is telling you, "It's not the right time," well, then you know that it actually is the right time, so just go ahead and do it. And when you think about it, what's the worst that can happen? Usually, the worst that can happen is not as bad as you initially might think. Like actually think, realistically, the answer to that question. What's the worst that can happen? It's usually not as bad as you might think. And then again, there's never really just the right, perfect time to do something. So it's going to be waiting on you to make that decision to just go, move forward, and shift.

Number 31: "Whether you think you can or you can't, you're right." Henry Ford. This was a quote that really helped me get started online, back in 2008. I found this quote, and it's been posted up. I've had signs created about it and posted around my house

because it really is all down to the mindset. If you don't think you can do something, then guess what? It's not going to happen. But if you can think you can do it, well, you at least are giving yourself a chance, and so that quote of whether you think you can or you can't, you're right.

It really is what happens in the mind and how you believe in yourself and in the effort that you're putting into whatever it is that you're working on. You really have to have this belief that you can do what it takes to make it work, even though you might not know exactly all the steps you might need to take, even though you don't know exactly what's going to happen. You need to believe that you will be able to figure out that this will work. And it might not happen right away, but it can, and you need to know that.

Number 32: The best thing that ever happened to me were my kids. They are my "why." And even if you don't have kids, you can hopefully relate to this because when they came around, they became something that I saw every single day that reminded me why I was doing what I was doing. And if you don't have kids, you should have something to remind you every single day about why you are doing what you should be doing. And I'm lucky because I have these kids running around the house, and I can work from home, so they are there with me all the time. And all I want to do is spend my time with them, and so when I'm working, I know I'm working on the things that matter. I don't waste time anymore because I know that if I'm wasting time and going down a YouTube rabbit hole, or wasting my time on Facebook—or whatever, not that those platforms aren't valuable, but they can be a time suck—I know that I'm taking time away from my kids, so I've learned to become super and hyper-focused, and super prioritized-based, and super productive with my work because of my kids.

And also, I want to . . . It's not just about what I'm doing now. It's about what that means for the future, and not just giving them options for the future, right? Like the more successful I am, the more options they have? It's not necessarily true. What I mean is, the legacy that I'm leaving behind. The example that I'm giving

to them, so that in the future, they are more and better equipped for making better decisions for their life, whether they become an entrepreneur or not. They will have the skills and the examples in their life needed to know what is potentially possible for them, and to think big, hopefully, and to take all these lessons. I hope one day they will listen to this episode in the future. Maybe I won't be around anymore, or maybe they're going to pass it on to their kids and they can say, "Hey, this is what dad talked about when he was 35 and what was important to him. So maybe we should think maybe some of these things are important, too." We'll, see. But kids, if you're listening to this in the future for whatever reason, I love you guys.

All right. Number 33: Helping kids is so important. The start of their life shapes who they become and everyone who meets them, too. So this is, now, getting into a lot of the educational things that I'm really, really excited about. My son and I, we're starting a podcast together. My wife and I, we've been talking about how we might be able to have a bigger effect on education, incorporate a lot of the things that I'm learning and what we're experiencing at this current school that they are in, how to actually incorporate that into other schools with the curriculums that they have, so we can better equip our children who are our future.

Literally, when I'm an old man, it is our kids—not my kids, but all of our kids and their kids—who are going to help make and shape what our lives are going to be like in the future. I'm going to be an old man who will likely be very slow and not thinking very much, because I'm going to be retired. I'm going to be fishing, or golfing, or whatever. But our lives will be affected by the kids that we have now. And so how can we better help and equip these children? And it all starts with the first and early years of their lives, and that's why this podcast that my son and I are starting is really important. It's coming out next year. It's called All of Your Beeswax. You can check out YourBeeswax.com.

If you are listening to this and that website is not really up and running yet, it's probably because I haven't finished recording those episodes yet. We are still in the middle of recording season

one right now, which will come out later next year. But you'll hear about it and that's important, because that's going to help me start conversations between parents and their children about this kind of stuff, too, and that's just . . . I know I just need to get things started. I don't know what it's going to look like. Who knows? But I'm aiming high, and I'm going to invest in myself and my business to make this the legacy that we leave moving forward, my wife and I, related to education and kids. This is really, really important to us.

Number 34: Behind every amazing growing business is a supportive and incredible team. And I'm so thankful that I have this incredible team behind me. Everybody on the team—and I'm not even going to name names right now because there's too many of you just to thank—but all of you have had a massive impact on the success of this business, of Smart Passive Income, of our projects, our courses, all of my life, and the life of my children, and my wife, April, but also the lives of those who we are changing.

I mean, what I'm so stoked about is that you guys are so behind the same mission that I am. Like the other day, Mindy posted something in one of our Slack channels related to something cool that happened as a result of a person listening to our show, and we all got behind it, and we were like, "This is why we do what we do." And I just am so thankful that I have this team who is so incredibly supportive of not just myself and my goals, but just everybody out there. You, listening right now. My team is thinking about you, and that is so cool. And they also deal with my crazy ideas. They help put things into place. They help actually schedule things out and make things come to life, so thank you from the bottom of my heart to my incredible team, and I highly recommend you all figure out how you can get at least one person to start with, but hopefully, many more people who can support you in your mission, too.

Then, number 35 to finish off, before I talk about that something special—although this one is very special to me, too—and that is, 35: I wouldn't be here doing what I'm doing today if it wasn't for my wife, April. April, thank you from the bottom of my heart for understanding this crazy world of business and being so supportive

along the journey. Because guys, April is the unsung hero of Team Flynn. She is what makes all of this possible because she is the one who has supported me from day one. The day I got laid off, she let me know that we were going to be okay, and that she was going to support me no matter what.

She didn't sign up for this, guys. When we got engaged, I was going to be an architect, and things changed, and she stuck with me ever since and has helped support me on this journey. And it's been very difficult, I can imagine, for her because guess what? I go to conferences, I get to meet with fans, I get these fancy dinners, I get these things sent to me, and she . . . what is she doing? She's at home raising the kids, making them the best kids that they can be, and that, to me, is just the most beautiful thing in the world, because she doesn't need that recognition. She doesn't do it for that purpose. She does it because she cares about the children, and she supports me, so I can help build this business. And not just to support our lives, but she knows that she has that impact on your life, too, in that kind of indirect way. So, hey, if you ever get a chance to meet April and thank her, please do it because she deserves it way more than I do.

Whoa. All right, guys. We are 35 life tips in, and we are approaching the 50-minute mark here in the SPI podcast. I just want to thank you all for listening, and I appreciate you and for being with me. I've met a lot of you recently at different events I've been at. And even if I haven't met you yet, I just want to personally thank you so much for all of the support. Some of you told me that you've been listening for years. Some of you . . . Maybe this is the first episode you've listened to. Either way, I just appreciate your time because I know that that does not come cheap, and to know that you've spent it with me just means so much to me. And I cannot wait for next year because we've got a lot of big changes happening in the world of SPI—changes that are all there to represent the theme of the year for me, and that is 2018, which is going to be called Higher Value. That is going to be my approach for everything that I do for you next year—Higher Value. Stuff that's actually going to help you even more than the things that I've been doing already. So you'll hear

more about that in the next episode, where I'm going to talk about what some of these changes are and where they all came about, so that'll be in episode 296.

And finally, that really, really special thing I wanted to talk about and share with you: A few years back for my birthday, I ran a birthday campaign to help build a school in Ghana, Africa, and we had built not just one school, but we raised enough money to build two schools, and the year after, I actually flew to Ghana, Africa, and I saw the schools that were built. Actually, the SPI community is actually mentioned on a plaque in one of these schools in Africa, and to see the thousands of lives of children that we will change as a result of that was just so meaningful to me. I came back home. I wanted to see what else I could do to support Pencils of Promise, which is the organization I went through. And I actually had come on as an advisor for the organization. I've been an advisor ever since. I'm excited to work with them even more this year and actually use my 35th birthday as a celebration to start another fundraiser to get the SPI community involved because I know a lot of you have been actually asking me about how they can help.

So here's the deal: If you go to SmartPassiveIncome.com/pop, which stands for Pencils of Promise, so SmartPassiveIncome.com/pop, you will be redirected to the fundraiser page for my 35th birthday. I want you to join me in bringing education to kids who really need it most because they don't have access to education like our children do. And yes, I am doing work for education here in the US, but I also love helping children here who don't even have buildings to actually learn in, and so this is something I'm really excited to get the SPI community involved in again. And it doesn't matter how much you donate—any little bit counts. What was really cool is we, actually, back in 2014, I think it was, we set a record for the most number of backers within a campaign, and I hope we can do that again.

So if you want to join me in this, I'm going to be donating to this. Other people, family members of mine, are going to be donating, and I would love to ask you to get involved, too, if you wanted to.



SHOW NOTES: <http://www.smartpassiveincome.com/session295>

If you go to SmartPassiveIncome.com/pop. Go there. You'll see a video, and then you'll be able to donate and help these children who really need it, so thank you so much for your support. I appreciate you, and just thanks for all the birthday wishes. Instead of presents, I would love for you to check out SmartPassiveIncome.com/pop and donate to the campaign. We'll build some more schools, change lives.

All right, guys. Thanks so much. I appreciate you and look forward to serving you in the next episode of the Smart Passive Income Podcast. Thank you so much. It's been a great 35 years, and here's to another 35 more—at least, of course.

Announcer: Thanks for listening to the Smart Passive Income podcast at www.SmartPassiveIncome.com.



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