



SPI Podcast Session #49 - Being Everywhere and Building a Community Around a Product Niche with Brendan Hufford

show notes at: <http://www.smartpassiveincome.com/session49>

This is the Smart Passive Income podcast with Pat Flynn, session #49. Forty...forty-nine, are you serious?!

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, who learned the most chemistry from watching Breaking Bad, Pat Flynn!

Pat: Hey, what's up? This is Pat Flynn, and welcome to Session 49. Now, this is crazy because it's only October, I'm recording this session in October 2012 and my goal for the year was to get to at least 50 podcasts, so it definitely looks like I'm going to meet that goal. Man, just knowing that I'm meeting goals that I set for myself 10 months ago, it just feels AMAZING, so I hope you are reaching your goals too, because guess what? Time FLIES, and at least right now, there's only a couple months left until the end of the year. So, the lesson is, reassess what your goals are, or what they were, figure out how you're progressing, and adjust accordingly. You can do it!

So, getting into today's content and our featured guest, his name is Brendan Hufford and I'll let him tell you what he's doing online in just a second. But let me just say, one of my favorite things in the world is getting emails and messages and sometimes phone calls, too, from people who tell me they've put my advice into action and are seeing results. That's why I do what I do.

And I just got a note this morning, an email from an SPI fan, Steve Nixon who runs freejazzlessons.com. You know, shout out to Steve and again, thank you for sending me this note! And I do want to get him on a podcast later, so you may hear from him in the future, but anyways Steve sent me an email this morning that says:

"Pat,

Hope all is well! I just wanted to send you a quick thank you note. I just released my first product EVER on the site, and it was a HUGE success," that's huge in capital letters, "way beyond what I thought this could be. I'm currently still in launch week



right now. It's all very surreal but a lot of fun. Your advice over the last year has been so helpful. You are the man!"

No, Steve, YOU are the man! Seriously, I'm looking at your Facebook feed right now through my Rapportive app in Gmail, and I see you promoting a Jazz improv DVD which I'm guessing is the product that you are promoting right now in your launch, and some of your fans and friends are replying super-positively! So dude, awesome, well done, I love it and I would love to have you on the show sometime, so, we'll chat.

Anyway, about putting my advice into action and seeing results: Brendan runs a site in a very interesting niche, it's actually a product niche, one that you and I, you know, the listeners and I would probably think that would be difficult to create a following for, and a community around this product. But, Brendan's done it, and specifically has put a lot of my advice into action, and he's going to share how in just a moment, and he is another part-time blogger.

He has a full-time job in addition to this blog that he's running, just like Leslie in the last session. He's making money, he's having fun and more importantly he's making the world, or specifically parts of the world a better place as a result of his blogging. So I'll let him talk more about that in a sec. Brendan, dude, thanks SO much for coming on the show. How's it goin'?

Brendan: It's going great, Pat! I'm really happy to be on the show with you today.

Pat: Well, thank you for coming on. You know, as much as my audience knows, I'm always looking for success stories, especially those outside of the "make money online" sort of blogging entrepreneurship niche. And you know, Brendan has a great niche that I'm excited to dive into today to talk about how he got started and all that, but I think before anything--I'm going to tell you out there listening--this guy, Brendan, is an action-taker, and in order to succeed that's what you have to be. You have to be an action taker.

I mean, I'm on his site right now, and I'll let him reveal what that is exactly in a second, but he is implementing several, almost every single strategy that I've outlined on the blog and shared on the Smart Passive Income blog, and he IS seeing success with it. He is an action taker. I mean, he's taken part of my reader challenges, and this latest one that I'm doing, I'm asking my audience to just select one of the previous reader challenges that I'm doing, and he emailed me and he said "Pat, I'm not just going to do one, but I'm going to do every single one of them because I know that they're going to



help." And they will, so I mean, you can just kind of tell what kind of person you are, Brendan, so again, thank you for being here. And just tell everybody, what do you do online? What kind of site do you have?

Brendan: Well, Pat, let me just start by saying that I think if there's any strategies on your site or anything in your podcasts that I haven't implemented yet, it's just because I haven't known about your site long enough. I think given a long enough timeline, I'll definitely implement EVERY single strategy because I've seen SO much success with everything.

Pat: Well, thank you.

Brendan: Basically, where I came from, I started maybe a year ago, I read [*The 4-Hour Work Week*](#) and I was really intrigued by it and I thought it was really interesting and I started looking at websites and something that I've done for probably six years now is I've trained Brazilian jiu-jitsu. It's a grappling-style martial art that not a lot of people are familiar with.

It's very similar to judo. And unlike judo, where they have a governing body that regulates the uniforms, the size and shape and everything, jiu-jitsu is kind of wide-open.

In my sport, there's probably 50 different companies that make uniforms which are called gis. And a big problem that I notice is that everybody's gis fit improperly. And so people started reviewing them, and I looked all over the Internet and I saw 20 different sites where there was one review on this site, and one on this site, and one over there, but there's nothing really cohesive for everybody to get together with.

I did a little bit of homework, and I found out that some of the major retailers online that sold these uniforms offered affiliate commissions. And I thought *Well, that's really cool*. And I think I was looking up something about how to do affiliate marketing or something and that's when I happened on your site, and it really changed every--well, let me zoom out a little bit. That's a phrase I've been using lately, I stole it, clearly, from Dane Maxwell in one of your other podcasts.

Pat: Zoom out, yeah.

Brendan: But I tried to implement everything right away, but I got really overzealous. I'm definitely a doer and not necessarily a planner. I kind of operate under "ready, fire,



aim!" as a motto. And what happened was, I found your [Backlinking Strategy That Works](#) post. And I went crazy with it. I made an insane buffer layer and way too many links to my main site, and screwed it all up and just WRECKED my whole site. Google HATED my site. And it was awful.

Then I thought *Well, I can either scrap this, or I can stop trying to gain Google and just build a community here.*" And I had a couple of people coming to the site regularly, and I made a Facebook page and I had a Twitter account and all these things, so I just started engaging with people and enjoying it, and I started to build a community and I started to build traffic and a mailing list with all of the strategies on your site, which I'm sure we'll touch on here in a moment.

But, I ended up building a really awesome community, and--like I said I'm sure we'll talk about it momentarily--my rankings are actually coming back, which is pretty cool. It's something I didn't plan on and something I didn't expect, but I can't help but thinking that my strategy to implement your stuff and be everywhere is really what's been causing that to happen.

Pat: Right. I mean, that's going to happen because you're creating such a nice community of a website that people are going to go to and refer to other people just because it's awesome. Google was going to understand that that's the site that should be ranking for all of those different keywords.

Now let me zoom out a little bit and talk about the backlinking strategy. Did you follow it to the T or did you try to go a little bit faster than you should have, and that's why things started not going the way you had originally planned?

Brendan: Oh no, I TOTALLY screwed it up. I did it all wrong. I got so excited about it, and I did a lot of the things right that you were supposed to do, but I sent--like I said, WAY too many backlinks to my homepage, I wasn't providing any value to anybody, and I was totally thinking that I was just going to trick Google and I was going to get rankings because I wanted to rank for EVERY single brand, so if you looked up a review of a specific brand of gi for Brazilian jiu-jitsu, you would come to my site, and I thought that's how I was going to get traffic.

And I'm SURE the strategy works, because I've used it on other websites that I've made for various people. I helped out a buddy of mine who's a plumber, he came and did my plumbing and I noticed that he didn't have a website, so I just asked him, "can I build a website for you?" And I build a very basic WordPress website and did a little bit of



backlinking just locally for a couple of keywords and did it correctly, and he's got a great website and he gets a lot of business from it, and I'm really happy to help him out like that. So it does work when you do it RIGHT, but when you are an overzealous buffoon like I was about it you can REALLY mess it up.

Pat: Yeah, it's tough, I mean, because--especially online, a lot of us don't want to wait for things to happen, but online when you have a website or business of any kind you have to let things happen on their own, and you can't force the issue. The approach that you're taking right now with building a community and actually making what I like to call an ultimate resource for a particular niche is totally awesome and definitely a way to go. So what's the actual URL of your site so people can check it out?

Brendan: My website--and this is another mistake I made early--I wanted to build a niche website, so I wanted an exact match domain, so my website is gireviews.net. And I thought that was great, but the problem was it's a broad search domain, so I thought--then I immediately looked at the narrow search and I think people search for "gi reviews", the exact keyword phrase maybe 75 times a month, and I was so bummed by that, but then I realized that when I turned it into an authority site and started building a community it was actually better.

Pat: So what are some of the keywords that you're being found on right now?

Brendan: This kind of relates to one of the things I did in the reader challenge coming up, one of my pillar articles is about how to get these specific types of gis that are really hard to get. There's one company, it's kind of--if your listeners are familiar with Jordan shoes, like Michael Jordan Nike shoes? They do limited releases at midnight in certain places and they're really hard to find and there's resellers and everything.

But there's gis that are like this, too. One gi--so, let me just explain a little bit. These gis usually run anywhere from \$65-\$200, depending on how nice they are. There's a gi that recently that was really rare made by this one company called Shoyoroll. They are a really cool company, they have really awesome designs, but they only make limited batches, just like Jordans...just like the shoes. One of their gis recently went on eBay for almost \$1600.

Pat: Wow!

Brendan: Which is just astounding to me, but it was one of their original ones, but there's only 50 of them and it was in pretty good, almost mint condition. And people



love these things. I rank for a lot of those keywords because it's what my readers like to read about and I write about it quite a bit.

Pat: So when you review a particular gi--I mean, first of all, is your site just all gi reviews? Like every post is a different gi and you review it? And if that's the case, or even if it's not, when you review gi...how do you review it? What makes your reviews stand out from all of the others?

Brendan: So, with--I'll talk about the reviews first and then about where the site stands.

Pat: Sure.

Brendan: So the reviews first--I wanted to get them to be really in-depth. So I started out doing just really...I'm sure if people check out the site they'll see really crazy videos I did in my basement. I just wanted to be everywhere, so I was like "I need video, I need all of these things, 1,000 word reviews about how they fit, the aesthetics of them, how much they shrink, how do they wear over time" all these different things. The jacket part of the uniform, the pants part, everything. How my interaction is with the company. I put it all into the review. How much the gi costs. It all goes in there, and it's really just my completely subjective opinion of what I think of it. And I try and of course be as objective as possible, but you know, that can't really happen. I try and keep it as neutral as I can.

But I've started to do a lot of different things, things that I saw on your site that I thought would be fun and kind of funny and injected my own personality into it. I added a thing called "dog approval" in all of my reviews that I've been doing lately where I put pictures of my dogs in there, and I have a section called "wife approval" where I get my wife's thoughts on it and put that in there, and it really helps me tie in with my readers. I've made my website a lot more personal lately.

Pat: Yeah, see, it's really interesting because you were writing about gis, which I actually own a couple--just randomly, so you know, I did Tae Kwon Do when I was little.

Brendan: I think we all did!

Pat: [laugh] Right? But anyways, I think it's really cool that you're taking a niche that I would assume that people are building websites for niches like this, that they're just



going to put content out there, they're going to try to review every single brand that's out there and really take their personality OUT of it, because that doesn't really add to the value, it would seem, of the review. But you're kind of doing the opposite. You have a dog approval, wife approval, you're talking about your life, you have videos of you in your basement. Why do you think that matters?

Brendan: I just think it lets people connect with you and see where you're coming from and see that you're a person, too. I think that most people--I know there's been a lot of studies done that show that most people buy things because they know somebody who's related to that company. They maybe get gas at BP because they have a relative that works there, or they shop at Best Buy because their best friend is a manager there.

I wanted people to KNOW me. I wanted people--and it just was, it seemed foolish, I was interacting with people so much and it was getting so personal that I thought *There's really no reason to leave myself out of it.*"

You know, I put corny jokes in there and funny pictures in all of my reviews of me just doing ridiculous things. In one of them I have me working out in my basement with a sweatband on and all of my medals from grappling tournaments. It's just ridiculous. And it's a lot of fun, too. It has to be fun for ME as well. And with--sorry, go ahead.

Pat: Oh no, I was going to say, because--you talk about it being fun, and I can imagine in any sort of niche, even I've experienced it myself with Smart Passive Income, with Green Exam Academy, my security guard site, I think every goes through this. They go through these down periods where--they're not just having fun with their site anymore. They just feel like they've got to keep up with it just because that's how many posts they have to have per week, or they have to just keep stuff going, and they're doing it for the wrong reasons or they FORGET why they did it in the first place.

I mean, you told me right before this call that you kind of went through a sort of meltdown with this site, and--can you talk about that really quick? And then also how or why you got out of it?

Brendan: Absolutely. About six months ago, I kind of had almost, just with all of the working online--I was doing too many projects at once. I had this site, I was trying to run new niche sites at the same time and backlink to those and monetize those with AdSense. I was chasing every latest craze. I was trying to rank my YouTube videos. Just doing EVERYTHING, guest posting, too much.



And I kind of got to the point where NONE of it was fun. I didn't enjoy any of it and I felt so stressed out and I felt like if I didn't continue at this pace, that something bad was going to happen. That people were going to stop coming to my site, I wasn't going to make any money off of it, I was going to lose. I don't know, I built it up in my head that some--I can't even tell you. It was so ridiculous now looking back, that I felt like something horrible was going to happen.

And I happened upon this website, [Zen Habits](#) by--I'm probably going to--Leo Babauta. I'm probably saying his last name wrong.

Pat: No, that's perfectly, actually. You're saying it right.

Brendan: PERFECT! Great! I always get nervous when I tell people about it that I'm saying his name wrong.

Pat: Yeah, I killed his name in BlogWorld in 2010. Even in front of his face, so don't worry about it.

Brendan: Perfect! So I can't go worse than that.

Pat: No!

Brendan: So I happened on his site, and I got so much out of it. Just keeping a clean desk and a clean room--I mean, right before I started talking to you just now, I literally cleaned my desk off and I feel just so much more at peace just sitting here. It seems ridiculous. I cleaned the whole room that I'm sitting in right now.

Which kind of touches on [your most recent podcast](#), which I was--oddly enough--listening to today. It really goes along with everything that I read on Leo's site about how peace and finding kind of a middle ground with things and finding a balance and finding focus and all of this stuff. I'm a HUGE procrastinator. I put things off until the eleventh hour, and--granted, at the eleventh hour I absolutely CRUSH it. I'm REALLY good. I do great work at that eleventh hour, but the stress leading up to that sometimes just isn't worth it.

Once I kind of reevaluated all these things in my life, I found balance with my family and with, you know, competing and training Brazilian jiu-jitsu and running the website and all of these other things. I dropped all of my other projects other than this website,



and oddly enough--and this is something that I read about kind of in The 4-Hour Work Week, is just...you know, map out your fears. What's the WORST that can happen?

And...nothing bad happened, to be completely honest with you. My life, the quality of my life improved greatly, and my relationship with my wife is infinitely better, I think I'm a much better person just because I'm able to focus. When I work, I work, and when I'm not working I don't work. I don't check my phone, I don't do any of that stuff.

It was really odd. I was riding in the car recently with my wife and some of our friends, and we were going on a long three hour car ride, and I didn't talk for like an hour. Finally, one of our friends was like "Brendan, are you okay?" and I said "Nah, I'm just really enjoying listening."

It was so--it's very--I mean, you know, people can kind of tell from this I'm a teacher, so I talk quite a bit and I like to talk, so for me to sit there quiet for an hour was really a weird thing for everybody around me, but I was really enjoying listening and just trying to be in the moment, not riding in the car checking my emails, responding to tweets, all of this other stuff. Planning out ten tasks that I had to do when I got home, and all of these other--most important task of the day, I was just in the moment, and it was great. And that's what I do now.

Pat: Right. It's always good to just sit back and listen sometimes, or just focus on what you're doing and not have your--you know, not be somewhere physically but then mentally somewhere else. Your whole body and mind is in one place at one time, and it's always good to kind of do reality checks sometimes and make sure that that's what you're doing.

Brendan: Yeah, and like you said, you know, when I'm with my wife and my family, that I'm with them, I'm not mentally somewhere else, and I KNOW that as much as I appreciate that and it brings me peace, I know they appreciate that, too, and that's even more meaningful for me.

I would advise everybody out there that if they haven't listened to that podcast then they should, and if they haven't, they start implementing some of that. You're so much more effective when you focus on just doing work when it's time to work and focusing on your family when it's time to be with them, or whatever task you're supposed to be doing right then.



Human beings are HORRIBLE at multi-tasking. We just end up doing the five things we're trying to multi-task and we do them all really crappy. And if we just focus on one thing at a time, we can do really great things.

Pat: Yeah, I think that's great advice. I mean, you just touched on it yourself with your story, getting rid of all of the extra projects you had going on so you could focus on gireviews.net and obviously now it seems like you're having lots of fun with it. I mean, I'm on your Facebook page right now, and you're putting up all of these great pictures and interacting with people, which is great. You have 2700 Likes, or fans, and in every single post that you put up there's dozens of comments, and it just amazes me that a community could be built around a product such as a gi. It's just so cool.

Brendan: It is. It's really surprised me, and I think a lot of people--and see, here's one other thing that I picked up from your site, is not making, not looking at other people who do the same thing as you as rivals.

I know there's a lot of people in your niche, and I know there's other people in, you know, with security guard training and all of these other things, and you advocated to not--I wish I could cite the exact time that you said this, but just not to look at them as rivals and kind of partner with them and work together on things, and I started doing that and just found so much value, but I feel like so many people, even in my niche, don't really get the engagement thing.

There's a couple of people who do. My friend--I have a friend named Seymour, who has a website, it's meerkatsu.com/ and he's a really cool artist and he does jiu-jitsu as well, and he really understands the whole engagement and being friends with people and forming relationships. I feel like there's a lot of people that really don't. They just say "man, when I post on Facebook I just get so much traffic to my website." And I just think to myself "it's really not about that."

Pat: Yeah, you know, I could take a page out of your book on my security site, because right now that site is, in comparison to yours, I have the information on there, I have the reviews and I have the steps that people would need in order to become a security guard, but I don't have that engagement.

So I can definitely, probably step up my game on that site even more and make it more community and start to talk to people, or at least--I know a lot of people don't know that I am not a security guard, so it might be a little bit more difficult for me, because you're obviously in jiu-jitsu yourself, so it's a lot easier for you to speak the same



language and things like that, but I could easily find someone to do that or find a couple of community leaders who I could pay or reward with some sort of something or maybe have them be allowed to be a sponsor on the site for free in exchange for interacting with the community...something like that.

I mean, I think...that's really what can help your site--not your site, Brendan, but other people's sites who are out there who have the information but you kind of want to take it to the next level. And so, what are the results of all this?

I mean, you are everywhere, and I want to talk about that a little bit more in just a second as far as kind of, your strategy, your content building strategy, and maybe if you have a schedule around that, but I mean what are the results? I mean, how many people are actually reading your blog, how much traffic do you get? And what are you seeing from all of the work that you're doing?

Brendan: I'm sorry if you can hear me shuffling papers around here. I have a whole bunch of notes just so I don't forget things.

Basically, what happened was, I started my mailing list and I went through--I've never tried--just to become completely transparent, I've never used [AWeber](#) before. I started with [MailChimp](#) because it was free and I could have free subscribers on there. And I started in December of 2011, so just...you know, about 9 months ago, I had 285 mailing list subscribers.

And I listened to some of your affiliate marketing stuff and all of these different things, and I started partnering with grants for giveaways, and the stipulation for the giveaway was...especially that brand that I talked about, Shoyoroll, that was really hard to get a hold of, they said "Yeah, we'd love to do a giveaway with you!" I called the owner and he's a really awesome guy.

Pat: Nice.

Brendan: And I got, in a single month, I went from...from February 2012-March 2012 I got over 1000 new subscribers just from that one event.

Pat: That's awesome.

Brendan: And right now I sit at right around 3000 mailing list subscribers, which I think is amazing.



And the big thing is--and another thing that I've taken away from your site is the [autoresponder series](#). I don't push anything on anybody, EVER. If you want to use my links, you can, if you don't feel like my site gives you value, please DON'T use my links, because I don't deserve that affiliate commission. And I feel also that too many people--I've been reading a lot of Gary V. lately, you'll probably be able to tell by a lot of the stuff that I say, and I know you're a proponent of his as well.

Pat: I am.

Brendan: But, I think too many people in social media use it as media to push on people, and I LOVE that autoresponder series post that you made, where it was all about content, content, engagement. Content, content, engagement, and that's all I--I set up my autoresponder series, I think I probably have like 12 or 15 weekly or biweekly emails that go out, and people know that it's a robot sending to them, because they still respond because as soon as they respond...I can't tell you how many emails I've gotten that say "Wow, Brendan, I thought that was just automated and I was never going to hear back from you, and you responded in 10 minutes."

And I tell them, I have 3000 people on this list, if I could send all of you an email individually, I totally would. I totally would, but thank goodness with technology it makes it easy and I can ask these questions automatically without having to do it individually, but I want to hear the answers, I want to hear from people.

I sent out an email the other day, Pat. I got 200 emails back! I'm sure that's nothing, I'm sure there's people listening to this that are like "whatever, I send out emails and I have 3000 unread emails in my inbox" but for somebody like me, in such a specific niche, not even a niche sport but like, a MICRO niche within a niche, to get 200 emails back in like an hour, I couldn't even keep up. I was on cloud 9 and just engaging with people, and I was so happy to hear their thoughts and opinions. It was so cool.

Pat: That's so cool. What...gosh, there's so many questions I have. This is just such a great story! Okay, so let me go back--you are a teacher, you said. What is it that you teach, exactly?

Brendan: I teach psychology and sociology at a really awesome charter school in Gary, Indiana.



Pat: Okay. So you're a teacher, you work, you know, relatively long hours as a teacher, I'm sure.

Brendan: Mmhmm.

Pat: And then you come home during the day--do you work on your site every day? How often do you work on your site and for how many hours and--sort of what kind of work are you doing?

Brendan: It depends. I kind of work in different intervals. I almost operate on a blast and dust scale, where I'm either REALLY into it or really trying to get away from it. I oftentimes get up at 4:30 in the morning and get about an hour or two of work done on the site or on...you know, just engaging on Facebook or whatever I have planned, whatever is coming up.

And then, be it reviews or guides--another big part that I've made of the site is not just gi reviews, but also how to maintain your gi and how to take care for it. One of the things that I've done for the upcoming reader challenge is write--it's an eBook, but I've been calling it "The Epic giBook." So corny.

Pat: Love it!

Brendan: It's so bad.

Pat: No, that's so good, though! That's so good.

Brendan: But, again, another strategy I implemented from your site. I bought epicgibook.com so when I tell people or do guest posts, I can tell them "go to epicgibook.com" and it'll take them right to there.

Pat: yeah, that's great.

Brendan: Try to think--a great idea. So, I get up at--sorry, I go off on tangents.

Pat: No, that's okay.

Brendan: I get up at 4:30 in the morning, and then I work on the site for a while, whatever I need to work on. Usually, when I get home at night, a lot of that is family



time, or I go train, or I go do jiu-jitsu, or whatever I have to do, but a lot of time at night, it's just creating papers or getting ready with lesson plans.

I'm very blessed that I've been teaching the same class for about 5 years, so I really have a really good handle on my content. And I LOVE teaching, it's such a cool subject, psychology and sociology. If you're a teacher and you want something that immediately applies to something to student's lives, and you don't have to convince them that they're going to use this when they're older, psychology and sociology is where it's at. And it's a total blessing that I've been able to teach that. I absolutely love it.

Pat: That's cool.

Brendan: Um, so, obviously my time now, being that many years into it is very different than my first year, where it was just--you know, 40 hours at work and then 40 hours outside of work, 80 hour work weeks figuring everything out, and now it's just a lot more of looking for new and creative things, and looking for new lessons to write and videos and new multimedia to work with them and projects and just fun things that'll kind of enhance, but I find that so many of the things that I do with my website translates into the classroom as well.

Just engagement and building relationships, I feel like I'm an infinitely better teacher as soon as I learn how to really share myself and build relationships and provide value every single day. It's so weird how a lot of times your personal life translates into your online life. Mine has had a reverse effect, and it's just gotten so much better since I've got all of these tools now.

Pat: Mmhmm. Now, as far as "be everywhere," you have your website, you have your videos, and you just recently started a podcast too, which I think is really cool, especially, again, for this micro niche, and I saw some chatter about the podcast on your Facebook page and a lot of people are excited about it, which I think is really cool.

How are you delegating what to do as far as being everywhere and when to do it? Are you doing one post a week, one video a week, and then one podcast every two weeks, and how is that working out? Or are you still trying to figure that out?

Brendan: I know it sounds crazy right now, but I--so what happened was, I engage so much with people that I'm really proud to say that one of my buddies, I had him on to do some guest reviews and really just build the community, my buddy Dan Halpen is now a part of the team. It's he and I on the website, so now I have a partner and I just



feel like we can take it--and this is something you said earlier, how do we take it to that next level? It's just...I got a partner! And he's awesome and he helps me tremendously and does amazing work and I feel SO blessed to have him on board, but we have content ready to rock for a while.

We have a regular--not necessarily a regular posting schedule, we try and post two to three times a week, we don't want to beat people over the head with content to the point that they kind of feel like if they're not on the website constantly--I'd rather have them on Facebook or in their email engaging with me than reading, you know, nonsense posts that I'm putting up just so I can have a post every day.

I'd rather keep the content high-quality and almost make it like evergreen content. You know, five years from now, or six months from now, it's still valuable versus just putting up nonsense posts every day just to post and then having people not care about it in a week or two. I'd rather have quality content that provides value and then spend my other time engaging.

Pat: Right.

Brendan: Sorry, just to answer your original question, we usually post about two or three times a week. The podcast, optimally I would love to do once or twice a month, right now, I'm not really sure how it's going to go. We're getting guests and things like that. I have a whole bunch of people on board that I'm really excited--we have an upcoming podcast which is another thing with the reader challenge. An interview with a guy from--it's an organization called Tap Cancer Out.

And they're just, you know, a grappling-centered foundation for finding cures to cancer and donating to different cancer funds and things like that, and it's something that I'm really passionate about, and my partner Dan is really passionate about, and we're going to get them on and do a podcast with them. It's really cool and we try and do it as regularly as we can, but if we don't, I think the biggest thing is just--we don't get stressed about it. If we miss a day, or the posting schedule is off a little bit, it's okay. It's not worth uprooting your entire life just to have three posts in a week versus two.

Pat: Yeah. I can definitely attest to that. I mean, for a while I was very strict on three post a week, and when things started happening in my life where I just couldn't do that, for a while I was putting out a lot of posts that were just not as high quality as they would normally be, just to get that third post in during the week. And a lot of people started to email me and say "You know what, Pat, this isn't as good as the stuff



that we're used to getting. I would rather have you post even just once a week, or even just once a month, but have it be the same quality that you used to."

And you know, things change, things happen in people's lives. And I'm always gonna-- you know, I just had another kid and that's taking a little bit of time away from work, too, but I'm always going to strive for two-three posts a week, but if I can't make it one particular week for some reason, I'm not going to kill myself over it. Which I know a lot of people do.

Brendan: Hey, just to interrupt you, congratulations on that, by the way!

Pat: Thank you!

Brendan: That's really fantastic.

Pat: Yeah, she's taking a nap right now, so hopefully she'll give us a few more minutes to talk here.

Brendan: [laugh]

Pat: I wanted to talk about monetization a little bit. Now, I don't want to--we don't have to get into specific numbers, but you are making money from what you're doing on your gi site, correct?

Brendan: Absolutely. I kind of have to because I didn't think that it was right to ask, you know, my family, my wife, to give up not only the time I spend on this venture-- which I'm really passionate about, which I really enjoy--but also to fund it, as well. I wanted the site to pay for itself.

Pat: Right. And so it sounds like it's doing pretty well, and you're primarily making money through affiliate marketing through the gis, correct?

Brendan: Yeah! Right now we're making money through the affiliate sales, I have a couple of people--there's a couple banner ads along the side of my site that's private advertising, they pay to put an advertisement there, and in addition I've--and I guess I can announce it here, I haven't really talked about this even on my website yet, and I guess I'm kind of proud to announce it here...

Pat: Oh, thank you!



Brendan: One of the things that I noticed was going on is that there's all these cool adult gis, and I think you mentioned earlier, when we were kids, almost everybody did tae kwon do. EVERYBODY did it. It was a very...there's some adults that did it and some teenagers, but a lot of it was kids, and I noticed with kids gis in Brazilian jiu-jitsu that there just really wasn't anything cool. And if there WAS something cool, people were charging like \$150 for a gi that a kid is going to grow out of in six months. And I just didn't feel like that was right, so I did a whole bunch of research and I'm starting my own gi company! And...what's cool is that...

Pat: No way! I think that's SICK! That's awesome!

Brendan: I'm really excited about it, Pat! And I'm doing a couple of really cool things that might blow up in my face and I don't care, because I think that it's going to provide just so much value for people that work with my company, in addition to working at a price point that I think is totally reasonable with people.

I'm going to do a gi buyback program, because a lot of kids don't ruin their gis. They don't tear them up like adults do, and their gis are in perfect condition when they're done with them, when they grow out of them, and what I'm going to do is offer people a discount if they mail--and PAY them to mail their gi back to me, and then give them a discount on a brand new gi.

Pat: I love that idea.

Brendan: I'll have all of these used kid's gis, and I can do two things with them. I can either resell them on my site, I can sell used gis at a super-low discount price, OR which is what I'd like to do, I'd have all of these used gi that are mine that I know the quality, I kind of know their background and everything.

My plan is to take them down to Brazil. There's a lot of kids, especially the city of Rio de Janeiro who just live in extreme, abject poverty, the likes of which we don't even know in the United States. We don't know hunger, we don't know poverty like they know poverty there, and a lot of these kids, Brazilian jiu-jitsu, it's either soccer, Brazilian jiu-jitsu or drugs, and that's their way out to make money.

The thing is, a lot of these kids want to, there's this big drive to compete and do the sport and everything, but they can't afford gis, and there's a really--there's a program for foreigners to come into Brazil, it's called Connection Rio, where you can stay and



have lodging and everything and I hooked up with them and I found a gym in Rio de Janeiro with a guy who only trains kids and he has SUCH a need for gis, Pat, and I am just really excited to not only start this business and make money and all of these things, and help my customers here in the United States, but I also want to help people in Rio de Janeiro and help these kids and just send a whole bunch of gis down there for them as well.

Pat: That's...I think that's great. You know, you're not just--see this is what happens when you just put yourself out there online and you create something awesome, and it gives you so many opportunities to do wonderful things in this world and help so many people. And also, have wonderful things happen to you, too. I mean you're starting this new company, you get to help these kids in Rio, I mean that's just awesome, Brendan. So well done. Well done.

Brendan: You know what, I owe you a huge thank you too, Pat. For--I know a lot of people will never see this, but originally I sent Pat this epic, three-page text document of just everything he has said post by post that has made a difference in what I've done, and if you're new to his site, man, I--[inaudible]

Pat, I've got to be honest with you, when I first discovered your site, I feel like my wife was like "Can you please shut up about Pat Flynn? I've heard about enough about this." And it wasn't her fault! It was mine!

was just raving and I was watching all of your videos and read all of your posts and you do great job of crosslinking to relevant content IN your post so I would open one thing and be like "wow, this is really interesting!" and then I'd have like seven more tabs open after that, just from reading that one post, and I can't even tell you enough, or thank you enough that...this has really made a difference in my life.

And not just in my life, but in the life of my readers as well! I get CRAZY emails all the time just from people telling me how helpful it is and how much the Internet needed something like this. I had a guy telling me that he felt like this is God's work that I was doing, and that just meant SO much to me!

Pat: For gis!

Brendan: For GIS! It was absolutely--I mean, I have one right here, "I just wanted to let you know, you're doing a heck of a job on your page once again, thank you so



much. I follow you on Facebook, I enjoy all of the info you personally provided for me. You're a good guy. Just know that. P.S. Your dogs are awesome."

These are emails that I get from people and I'm sure you get emails like that too. It's so rewarding for me to be able to provide value for other people.

Pat: Right. And this all goes back to waaaaay back, I was talking to Mark Mason from--no, [Nicole Dean](#) was on the podcast, it was episode 4 or 5, something like that. A couple of years ago, actually. She said in order to succeed online and to really be fulfilled in life, just do what you can to make the Internet a better place.

You know, that's really what it comes down to, and that's what you're doing, and we all are doing it in our own different way, you just happen to be doing it through gis, but you ARE making the world and the Internet and those who are interested in gis...you're making everything better, so big shout out to you and your company and to your partner--it's Dan, you said?

Brendan: Yep!

Pat: Kudos to you guys. I hope you guys go big, even bigger than you are going already, and the last thing I want to touch on that I almost forgot. I have my notes here I wanted to cover. Your second podcast episode is coming out soon, and you were talking to me about this before how you were going to reveal to your audience that you make money on your site through affiliate links. So, briefly talk to me about that, why are you deciding to do that, and how do you think people are going to take it?

Brendan: Basically, I was looking at different strategies and things like that, and that's something that you've said and I've probably--I feel like I almost had to get hit over the head with it, because I feel like you've said it a hundred times before it finally clicked that I just needed to tell people on my site "These are affiliate links, if you want to use them if the site provides value, please click them and if it doesn't provide value, I don't deserve that affiliate commission and DON'T click them."

So I'm going to start my second podcast, like you said, with the disclaimer explaining that to EVERYBODY. I want to be fully transparent. I don't want people to think that I'm involved in jiu-jitsu forums because I want clicks and I want money and it's not about that at all.



I feel like you embody the idea that the best marketing strategy out there is just to care about people, and I care SO much about my readers that the fact that I could accidentally deceive them? Just REALLY bothered me. So I'm going to do exactly what you are doing, and I hope that I'm going to see probably what you see a lot, too.

I know that--well, here, for my personal story, I can't even tell you, pretty much every tool that I've ever bought online, I made sure--"Let me go to smartpassiveincome.com and go to the resources page right there and I'm going to click through this link and make sure that he gets the affiliate income because he provides so much value for free to me that I want to make sure that he can pay his bills and continue doing awesome stuff like this."

Pat: Well, thank you.

Brendan: And I hope that I'll see the same thing.

Pat: Thank you Brendan. And I'm sure you will. Because what happens is, when you provide so much value, people--just like you're doing on your site, and I hope people who are listening this go there just to see what a really niche site about a specific product CAN be like. GiReviews.net. That if you just provide so much value, people are going to go out of their way to give back to you, in whatever way they can, and if it's not through purchasing something it's through sharing you or at least leaving a comment and saying thank you.

I actually, funny you mentioned that--and again, thank you for going out of your way, Brendan, to do that. That means the world to me. I got an email from a guy named Chris the other day who said that he was going to buy Camtasia, which is a screen recording software, and he was at the checkout on their website, and before he clicked "submit" he thought to himself "Heck, I wonder if Pat has an affiliate link?" So he closed all of the windows, went back to the site and went through my affiliate link just to make sure that I got that credit.

I mean, he was RIGHT THERE but took a little bit of extra time just to go through my link which is, you know, I appreciate that so much and it means the world to me and it just shows, I mean, I talk about this all of the time and like you said, I am a broken record about this, and I don't CARE that I'm a broken record about this because it works!



And I love this strategy. It's a strategy where everybody's a winner. Just give stuff away as much as you can and you're always going to get back stuff in return. I mean, your income is a byproduct of how helpful you are to people.

And you are absolutely being helpful to people. I mean, your reviews are awesome and they're entertaining and they're very thorough. I'm looking at one right now for it's called a "Full Metal Jiu Jitsu BJJ Gi Review" which I don't even know what that means, but...

Brendan: Full Metal Jiu Jitsu--again, it's one of those crazy things, Pat. There's a gym in Australia, and that's their academy gi. That's the one that they give to all of their members there, and I thought "Man, that's such a cool gi, I wonder if I can get one of those?" So I emailed him and he's like "OH YEAH! You know, I love your site! That sounds great, let me send it to you!" And he just sent me one all the way from Australia. How cool is that?

Pat: That's awesome. Companies will do that! They want to get their stuff out there on sites where there's traffic, and they're talking about relevant stuff. I mean, I know a guy who is a bike rider, a mountain bike rider who has a site and he just emails companies and asks to see what their new products are and reviews them on the site and they give it to him for free. It's awesome!

On this...you know, you have an intro, you have a video, you have pictures, you have a part where you talk about the design, you look at the tag on the inside of the gi, you have all of the measurements, the jacket, the trousers, the rolling--which I don't even know what that means!--and then the summary...

Brendan: Rolling is like sparring.

Pat: Oooh, okay okay okay. And at the end you have a purchase, "Click here to get the gi." And it's just such a...it's awesome. I love to see this sort of Smart Passive Income model on a site just like this. I think this is what every single niche product site should be like. And if you compare this to just a niche site that's built JUST for keywords, even if you compare it to one of my own sites, security guard training, you know, this is way better, I think.

So I have a lot of work to do and things to think about, because I do want--and I do know that having a community behind your site is the best way to take it to places you



won't even, can't even imagine, creating your own business and helping people around the world.

This is just good stuff, Brendan. Thank you so much for being on the show. If you have one tip to give to people who are trying to get online, who are trying to start something, what would that tip be? I know that's such a general question, but what would your number one tip be for people?

Brendan: If you don't mind me giving two instead of one...

Pat: Two is good.

Brendan: Good. Not three! Just two. I think the first one would be just to be patient. You know, please be patient with things. The rankings will come in Google, the people will come, if you're on there and you just absolutely crush it with your content and then you engage over that content.

And don't be in forums posting 3000 links to your site, that's a mistake that I made, and everybody knew me as the link guy, and they were like "why are you posting this again?" Look, just.....great quality content and just be patient.

You're hearing about me after a year of just getting up at 4:30 every morning, going to bed at 11:30 every night and just working my butt off to make this awesome. And it took a year of hard, hard, hard work and a lot of learning to make this happen.

And I think my second tip, if I could give any other tip, it would just be to care. Care about people, care about how you can help them, that should be your number one thing any time you engage with anybody, is just "how can I help them?" Can I take 20 extra minutes? Can I email somebody for them? Can I do...?

I mean, you know your niche better than I do. So I know inside and out how to help people out in my niche, and I do that all the time, and I think if you're in your niche, that's the first question you need to ask yourself. Sit down right now, make a list of 10 ways that you could really help people out, and I think that that'll carry you a long ways.

Pat: That's great, Brendan. Thank you so much. I mean, everyone out there, you CAN build a site in a very small niche and be successful. You CAN do this while you have another job. You CAN do this if you just wait a little bit and be patient and work at it,



like you said, and now you are pulling in an income, you're making a passive income, you know you're making sales without you having to be there in order for those sales to happen and it just sounds like you're having a lot of fun, too, so...well done, Brendan. Thank you for sharing your story with us!

Brendan: Thank you SO much for having me on Pat! This is really, if you would've told me a year ago when I was just reading 45 pages on your website a day that I would someday be in your podcast, I would've told you there's absolutely no way. But, I'm very thankful to share my story and to share with people that if they go on and if they just implement the strategies as you can see with my backlinking strategy, if they do things how they're SUPPOSED to be done, they'll have a lot of success with it.

Pat: Awesome, Brendan. Thank you and thank you for being so supportive of my strategies and...I don't want people to think that I just had you on here just to make me look better, I mean, you had such a good story, but again, I just appreciate all of the support and I can't wait to bring you back on the show later to tell us how your business is going and how your trip down to Rio was when you hand-delivered some gis to the studio.

Brendan: I'm looking forward to it, Pat. Thanks!

Pat: Bye, Brendan. Thank you!

Pat: Alright, I hope you guys enjoyed that interview with Brendan Hufford from gireviews.net. That is gireviews.net. Please check it out! It's such an awesome thing he has going on there. Like he was saying, it's really a micro niche site. If you really think that there's no other niches out there, that all of the good niches are taken, I mean, just look at something like that. You could really get specific, a niche in a niche in a niche, really, and build a big community around it, just like Brendan did, and really succeed.

And again, he's doing that part time! And now it seems like it could be something full time for him in the near future, which is great. So best of luck to you, Brendan, thank you again for being on the show.

Thank you ALL for listening and I cannot wait until the next session, session number 50! It's going to be awesome, I can't WAIT for you to hear it, and until then, just keep killing it out there doing your best, providing value, just...you know what's up. Just go



ahead and do it, take action, and good things are going to happen. I'll see you in the next episode.

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

show notes at: <http://www.smartpassiveincome.com/session49>