



SPI Podcast Session #102 - How to Create Extraordinary Change and Transform the World with Adam Braun of Pencils of Promise

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Pat Flynn: This is The Smart Passive Income Podcast with Pat Flynn Session #102. Boom!

Intro: 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 won most improved player in basketball when he was six, Pat Flynn!

Pat Flynn: Hey, hey, what's up everybody! This is Pat Flynn and welcome to session 102 or 102 or however you want to say it of the Smart Passive Income Podcast. I'm really, really happy you're here and I kind of just want to dive right into today's episode because I have an amazing guest with us, Adam Braun from PencilsofPromise.org, an amazing organization that's building schools around the world for people who don't have schools. It's just an amazing story and he just came out with his new book called [*The Promise of a Pencil*](#).

Gosh! This is changing my view on what I want to do. I have to think bigger. And yes, I do donate some of my income to charities and things like that but I want to go bigger and Adam is helping me think that way. We talked about in this episode all about nonprofit versus for-profit and doing things beyond just what we're doing here in the business and for ourselves but doing things for other people who don't have the ability or the money or school or education and things like that. I mean it's just incredible.

And so, I'm just going to go ahead and say, let's just go right into the interview right now. Here's Adam Braun from PencilsofPromise.org.

All right. I'm so happy to welcome Adam Braun to the Smart Passive Income Podcast. Adam, how are you today?

Adam Braun: I'm doing great. Thank you so much for having me.



Pat Flynn: Thank you for coming on. Congratulations on the book that you have coming out, *The Promise of a Pencil*. And I want to get into the book. But before that, let's just talk about what it is that you do. I mean obviously, you're an author but if someone came up to you and said, "Adam, what is it that you do?" what would you say?

Adam Braun: I would say that first and foremost I'm an entrepreneur. I've been starting small, medium, and large businesses for as long as I can remember whether as a kid trading baseball cards and basketball cards to selling burnt CDs on eBay when I was 13 to working in the financial sector all the way up until when I was about 25 years old when I started the organization that I now run called [Pencils of Promise](#). And we build schools, train teachers, and provide scholarships to students all across the developing world.

So really the base of the pyramid, are people living off on less than \$2 a day. And what we're most known for is building schools in some of the most challenging and difficult rural environments in the world.

Pat Flynn: What made you want to – entrepreneur, yes, I get it, building businesses. But what made you want to do something like this where you're actually building schools in these developing countries?

Adam Braun: Sure. So my story has taken a couple of pretty drastic turns like probably most entrepreneurs. But growing up, I wanted to work in finance. And so, I had all these early experiences with hedge funds and fund to funds and institutional banks. And off of that, I really got a really pretty strong sense of how great businesses are built. And I saw the way that for-profit business acumen could help scale an idea from its infancy and through that kind of maturity stage all the way up until large, really massive scale.

And when I was 21, I went into the developing world for the first time and I had a habit of asking one child per country, "What do you want most in the world?" And I have them write it down on a piece of paper. And I found this boy who was begging on the streets of India and just – no family, no nothing, and asked him the question. Here's my one kid in that country. And as much as I thought I would hear a house or a fast car or something, his answer blew me away. I said, "If you could have anything in the world, what would you want?" And he said, "A pencil." And I didn't almost understand why. And as I started to probe a bit deeper, I learned that this boy had never been to school before in his life.



And the thing that I had always taken for granted being raised in a household that really prioritized education and I knew that education was the one thing that lifted my family out of poverty over several generations dating back just 50, 60 years ago when my grandparents were in Concentration camps and Holocaust survivors came to this country on a boat and it was this access to education that helped them advance their situation. My parents advanced their situation and then my siblings and I hopefully doing the same. And this kid didn't have access to that one basic building block.

And so, I gave him a pencil. He lit up and I started passing out pens and pencils as I travel which opened up all these great conversations with people. And I came back to New York, landed a great job at Bain working in consulting, a top tier firm. And as much as I was learning, I couldn't get this kind of idea out of my head that if you could apply the best business practices or the best businesses in the world to our most important humanitarian issues, you could build something and it could really change things.

And that's how I started a little bit more than five years ago really on the side of my job to kind of tap into my passion. And not necessarily leave my job but try and have something on the side that made me come alive and that's when I started with \$25 in a bank account hoping to build one school and that was the formation of Pencils of Promise.

Pat Flynn: That's great. That's a fantastic story. How did you get started? So you had this idea. You had a wanting to go and do more and you started on the side, what did that start look like? Was it just like a website or what were your first moves?

Adam Braun: I think a lot of people make the mistake of assuming that they have to go huge from the very beginning and that means that they incur a lot of really big capital costs and they get themselves into kind of risky situations. So my idea was I wanted to take no risk upfront because I didn't really have much money. And I wanted to tell people that all the money that they were giving was going to go directly into our very first school.

And so, I'm born on the Halloween which makes for a really, really good time and I had always used it as a charitable fundraising party for different organizations that I was passionate about. And so, for my 25th birthday, I said to friends and friend of friends, "Come out to this one venue in New York City. Pay \$20 at the door or whatever you want. Just provide a birthday present but in lieu of the actual present, make it a



donation to this organization, Pencils of Promise, and help me build one school that I'd like to dedicate to my grandmother."

And fortunately, about 400 people came out. We had about \$8,000. And then I just reached out to anybody and everybody that I could, a lot of late night kind of relentless emails. And most people said no or they ignored me. But I think like most entrepreneurs, the more that people say no, the more you get inspired to prove them wrong.

And so fortunately, I was able to find one organization that had worked in Laos where I wanted to get started and they really helped me get a foot in the door. And with that kind of initial introduction into some education ministry folks and a little bit of know-how of how to build our very first school, I made it to the ground. Then I just threw on my backpack and moved out to Laos for a little while and really figured it out on the ground with essentially a lot of small donations. We did a masquerade event. We had people at my apartment for New Year's and we really bootstrapped it.

Back then, Kickstarter wasn't really up and going or many of the crowd funding platforms. And so, we initially raised capital through low-dollar events targeting young people in New York City and saying to them, "Rather than spending your money at a bar or kind of having a destructive night, why don't you celebrate with us and have some type of positive outcome and help us build our first school."

Pat Flynn: That's awesome. What was it like for you to see that first school go up or first know that it was going to happen and then actually see it?

Adam Braun: Oh man! It was really, really emotional truthfully. I mean that first groundbreaking ceremony. It was just such an impossible dream at the start to think that this was actually going to happen. And I knew everybody was telling me, "It's impossible. You need big philanthropic donors. You can't invert the traditional philanthropic model and go small first."

But I just – I kind of thought the world was going in a direction where people are going to value the little guy and that with the rise of digital and social media, you could find ways to engage people and show them that something as small as \$25 could really make a huge impact.

And so, I remember being in this village called Patong in rural Laos and watching grandmothers carrying a big, big wooden like 2x4's. I mean they were bigger than that



but big wooden planks. And me kind of rushing over and saying, "No, no, no. Don't carry that." These were like very old women. And they would shoo me away and other people in the village would say, "No, they've been waiting years and years and years to watch this school go up. They're going to be a part of it." And it was really emotional truthfully for me. That first one was really, really powerful.

Pat Flynn: That's really cool. So, what is your business now? What is it that you do now? Like how would you describe your business now?

Adam Braun: Sure. So at this point, Pencils of Promise is a lot of things. But one of the things that we realized was that we wanted to make it really accessible. We wanted to make it fun and we want to make it easy for individuals to create a really large impact in the lives of others. And that if we did that we could actually provide something of value. We'd actually have an asset that we could essentially almost like charge for.

And so, I think a lot of charities, they view themselves as kind of asking, asking, asking and they're not able to provide value in return. And what I wanted to do was build an organization that treated what we did as something of real significance. And so, what we realized pretty early on was it was only \$25,000 for us to build a full school. If you think about building a school in the United States, it's at least a couple of millions of dollars, if not many, many more.

And so this \$25,000 number seemed incredibly accessible for people young, old, rich, or medium-income or low-income. It still seemed like it was attainable. And so, we decided to build out an all-local staff in the field that could ensure that people's money would be used effectively. Hundred percent of donations that come in through our website go directly into our programs to help build schools. And then we are able to work directly with communities to help these schools come to life. We work with education ministries as well.

And then once they are completed, not only does an individual have the opportunity to dedicate that school much like the first school was dedicated to my grandmother, the second school dedicated to grandfathers, et cetera, but we actually take people into the field if they fund a full school. And that's a place where again, we can provide tremendous value to an individual or a family or a business because if you think about a lot of businesses, it's tough to engage your employees and get them inspired. And it's also oftentimes really tough to get your consumers to switch brands to you versus somebody else. And when you look at the studies, consumers are worth more than



80% frequency likely to switch brands if all things are equal if one brand or company or individual service provides some type of social benefit to society at large.

And so, what we're able to do is bring that value to companies so that they can say to their consumers, "Every time you purchase our product or every time you participate in this campaign, you're educating a child." And then the kind of completion of that is when the individuals from that company actually go into one of the countries where we built schools which are Guatemala and Ghana and Laos and we worked in Nicaragua as well and have a life-changing experience out there as well.

Pat Flynn: That's fantastic. Now, is this is a for-profit business or a nonprofit business?

Adam Braun: So I'll give you two answers. The first answer is we are a nonprofit business. We are not a for-profit. We are a registered 501c3. But one of the things that I've shared with a lot of people unfortunately, it has gained pretty wide traction at this point, is the idea that the term "nonprofit" actually does a huge disservice to the industry because it's the only term that starts with the word "non" to describe somebody's business, right? Like you would never describe – I was telling somebody this morning, "You would never describe somebody that worked at Delta as someone that works in a non-automobile industry. You'd say it's the aviation industry." And yet, that's what we do to the philanthropic sector. We describe it by what we aren't pursuing instead of describing what we are able to do.

And so I call what we do, for-purpose work because that's what I think we're about. We're about maximizing purpose, social benefit. But from a tax status, yes, we're a 501c3 registered nonprofit organization.

Pat Flynn: I see. So – and the reason why I want to bring you here on the show, Adam, was to have people think about more than just their business and entrepreneurship but to think bigger, transform the world. I mean that's even mentioned on your page here at AdamBraun.com/book. It says, "For anyone looking to transform the world, this book will show you how to get it done." So I mean that's a quote from Richard Branson about your book, which is awesome that you have a quote from Richard Branson.

Adam Braun: Yeah.

Pat Flynn: But let us get into the book. Tell us how myself, how all the listeners out there, how we can transform the world and how your book kind of helps us do that?



Adam Braun: Yeah, sure. So, one of the things that I realized very early on is that as much as [Pencils of Promise](#) exists within the construct of a nonprofit or a for-purpose organization, the principles in building a business around the things that you love, the pieces that make you most come alive are still consistent with any for-profit business.

And so when I set out to write the book, the first thing that I decided was I'm not going to write this as something like charity kind of pity me story or pity the people that we work with. I wanted to write something that was incredibly empowering for any aspiring entrepreneur or someone who just feels stuck because that's how I felt. I mean was 24, turning 25, I had a job at what has now been rated – this year Bain was rated the number one company to work for in the world. Twitter was number two.

And so from all perspectives, I had the dream job and the dream life. I was like living in this great apartment in Union Square, New York City, young guy, like single at that time, and somebody from the outside would have said, "Oh, he's doing everything right." But the reality is I felt very empty on the inside because I wasn't tapping into what made me most come alive and what fulfilled with a sense of purpose.

And so the way that I was able to manifest it was through the creation of this nonprofit. But I genuinely believe every single person has the ability to create something either it's a movement, an organization, or company out of the thing that makes them most come alive. And it doesn't have to be a nonprofit but what it ultimately has to do is it has to provide you individually with immense, immense fulfillment and meaning.

And there's a big difference between happiness and meaning. And I think it's something that people oftentimes bucket together. They say, "Oh no, I want to have meaning in my life. I want to be happy." But they forget that happiness actually often ensues from meaning, not the opposite. And that people that live very happy lives can often live very meaningless lives. And people that live with tremendous meaning cannot always experience happiness. It can be really hard to live a meaningful life.

But what I found in writing this book is that when I look back over the last five years and just to kind of fast forward from that very first school that I set out to build with \$25, now we've broken ground on over 200 schools across the world. And we're breaking ground on a new school every 90 hours.

And so, the organization has scaled tremendously. But what I realized was I had all these lessons that I had learned on the entrepreneurial path and I think it's applicable



to your audience because I started off with this as almost like a – when you think about passive income, this kind of stuff that works in the background, stuff that sometimes starts off as a side job. This was my side passive not income but kind of passive purpose driver for me or sense of how can I just work on any business and it happened to be a nonprofit. But the book is written in 30 short chapters and every one of them is titled with the lesson learned. And those 30 lessons learned are the things that I wish I knew when I got started.

Pat Flynn: Awesome. Let's keep digging to some of those lessons if you don't mind sharing.

Adam Braun: For sure.

Pat Flynn: I mean obviously, you had a great idea. A lot of people have great ideas. How did your side project become what it is today?

Adam Braun: Yeah. So I think the first step that I was trying to share with people is that you have to begin with getting outside of your comfort zone. A lot of people, they try and stay within their lane and say, "Oh no, I'm good at this." And I find that the most successful individuals often don't stick to what they're good at. They stick to the pieces that they feel like they internally have a calling to go pursue. And you often find that outside of your comfort zone. It's when you separate from a relationship or it's when you leave a job or you go to travel to a foreign place.

And my motivation behind that was music. Like all the great musicians that I love and even I'm not a big art person but if you study art at all, you see that the great artistic works were never created when people were contented or satisfied. It was always created in periods of struggle like their country is torn with war or they just got their heart ripped out.

And so, I find the first thing is people need to get outside of their comfort zone. And then the second is you do the small things that make other people feel big and it's not about – truthfully, I just opened up a package before I hopped on with you. And it was from a guy who has got a new company. He hasn't gained a lot of traction yet but he sent me such a thoughtful gift. And it wasn't the most expensive gift that I have received in my life. It wasn't the most ornate but it was really thoughtful to me personally.



And when I started, the first thing that I did and I didn't have a lot of money in our kind of coffers at that time but I went on Vistaprint and I ordered about 40 sets of \$2.50 business cards. So I ordered a \$100 worth of business cards and I shipped them without individuals knowing to every single serious volunteer that we had and I gave them a title and they had a Pencils of Promise business card. And all these people had full-time jobs. They're young professionals in New York.

But suddenly, they had business card that had their name on it and it gave them a sense of ownership. And next thing I knew, I would talk to them and they would be like, "Look, I'm going out at night and I'm giving out my Pencils of Promise business card more than my Goldman Sachs's one."

Pat Flynn: I love that. It sort of reminds me how – I know a lot of people who have membership sites and forums and a lot of times, they'll sort of upgrade certain people in those forums, the people that are most active to be admins or moderators. And those people are just on top of the world when you gave them that sort of title and it's a small gesture but at that time, those people feel like, "OK, now I have even more responsibility or now I'm actually in charge of this community. I'm going to do even more to make sure it's a place where people want to be." So I love that and that's kind of what I – sort of the angle I'm feeling from that second tip there.

For the first tip, begin outside of the comfort zone, I mean I can't express that enough. I mean that's why I'm now getting paid to do keynote presentations. I was deathly afraid of doing public speaking before.

Adam Braun: Yup, me too.

Pat Flynn: But I knew it was something I had to do. So I was going to ask you, I mean you just mentioned yourself that you felt the same thing with public speaking. What were some of the other things that were sort of outside of your comfort zone in the beginning when you got started that you just knew you had to do and just said, "You know what? I'm just going to do it even though I'm scared?"

Adam Braun: Sure. So there is actually a chapter that's titled Vulnerability is Vital. And ironically, the whole thing actually got released on Entrepreneur.com today. So if anyone is listening, they could just go on Entrepreneur and almost preview the book and just read one of the full chapters. But that whole chapter is about me acknowledging my biggest single weakness, which was asking for money. And you would think that that's the strength that somebody who's starting an organization that



now raises millions of dollars every single year but it was the thing that I hated and feared most. I was so, so uncomfortable with asking anybody to give a dollar to the organization.

And in one of our board meetings, my board of directors are incredibly accomplished, well-known, highly respected business leaders and so I was kind of the young entrepreneur and I had to put on this front of confidence, some kind of perfection like I can't show them that I have flows in every board meeting and finally, it got to the point where I realized if I didn't open up to these people and say, "Hey, you know something? I'm actually really bad in this one area and it's one of my biggest areas of growth but it's one of the most important things for the success of the organization and I suck at it," we were never going to progress.

And so, I did that in one of our board meetings and I said, "I need your help. I need people to guide me." And they ended up linking me up with one of the country's leading fundraising gurus and I kind of studied in a course that she provided over a long weekend up at Harvard and she called out to me what my biggest issue was, which is that I was putting myself at the center of the ask and that I was essentially feeling like if I ask someone for money, I'm asking money for myself.

And she said, "Adam, you have it all wrong. When you're making that ask, you're actually making that ask on behalf of the child and the village that you met when you were in Ghana last month. It's for the mother who has never been able to send her daughter out to secondary school. And if this person says yes to your ask then her daughter goes to school. This has nothing to do with you and everything to do with them."

Pat Flynn: Right. You'd be letting them down if you didn't do it.

Adam Braun: Right, right. And as soon as I started to make that mental and emotional, almost spiritual shift to say, "This isn't about me. This is about them. That's who I'm asking for," it transitioned from a fear and a burden to actually an honor to be able to kind of be the steward, the conduit through which these people were able to achieve education simply by me being the one in New York or D.C., or San Francisco or LA or wherever else asking on their behalf.

And so, that was a third one for me that was just really just transformative. And what I try to share with a lot of people is that whatever your areas of greatest vulnerability are, those are the ones that often yield the biggest reward. And if you even think about



your email, your inbox right now, my guess is there's about 80% of the stuff in there you can do pretty easily and pretty quickly and 20% is really hard, requires a lot of thought and it's going to scare you a bit because it's maybe something that you could fail at.

And what we do is we spend most of our time tackling the 80%. You spend the whole day moving through stuff because you feel like you're actually accomplishing something. But great leaders, they start up every single day and they say, "What is that 20% that's going to move the needle for me? And that's what I need to focus on." And they don't leave the office or they don't leave their inbox until they get that done. And it's acknowledging that vulnerability that enables it to become a strength.

Pat Flynn: Yeah. I mean most people will do what's most comfortable for them.

Adam Braun: Yup, yup.

Pat Flynn: That's really what it's all about and a lot of people make excuses to make that OK. Like, "OK, I'm going to answer 80% of these emails because it's quick and I just want to get them out of the way so I can focus on that 20%."

Adam Braun: Yeah.

Pat Flynn: When really, you're just making excuses.

Adam Braun: Completely.

Pat Flynn: Now, how did your business grow so quickly? How did it become so well-known? Was it just the fact that you were building schools? I mean I know a lot of people especially in this space I'm in, they'll say, "Oh well, a certain percentage of your payment for my product will go to charity A or charity B." And they think that that is enough to pull in the crowd or to get more traffic or to get more customers. But is it?

Adam Braun: No, no, I don't think it is actually. I think a part of it is – like anything else, I mean I think you've done a great job of this, which is kind of anticipating where an industry is going. And to the like old Wayne Gretzky quote about not going where the puck is but where the puck is going.

Pat Flynn: I love Wayne Gretzky.



Adam Braun: Yeah, yeah. At some point, you have to make a calculate bet and say, "This is where I think things are going to be and I'm going to position myself ahead of the curve and if I'm wrong, I'm standing out alone in the desert by myself. And if I'm right then everybody else is going to be in that same place in 6 or 12 or 18 months and I got to reiterate all over again but at least I'll be seen as a leader."

And so, my first kind of big bet was on the rise of digital and social media which now seems obvious. But in 2008, if you spoke to somebody in the charitable sector, they would say, "Why are you wasting time there? They're not going to get any big donors from that charity moves through big philanthropic contributions and you're not going to do that through young people clicking on like buttons and poking each other."

And so, I was with Mark Zuckerberg during college and so we were basically beta testers for Facebook. And so, you could just see that it was going to democratize social giving. So that's one big place that I really invested in was actually not asking people for money but asking them to join this community that we created around Pencils of Promise and building one of the largest social media followings in the philanthropic space.

And then the second one that really helped us scale was ...

Pat Flynn: Hey Adam, is there something brushing up against the mic?

Adam Braun: I think my shirt. Sorry about that.

Pat Flynn: OK. Oh no, no worries. Sorry, everybody. Cool.

Adam Braun: So, the second one that I think really enabled us to grow very, very quickly was again, this kind of idea of being a for-purpose rather than a nonprofit. We decided to start earning money rather than asking for it and that meant using the size of our digital and social following or the desire for certain people to bring philanthropy into their family in a way that taught their kids real philanthropic values.

And so, we started to build cause-marketing campaigns and those could be with foundations, those could be with individuals and companies as well. And that led to I would say, partnerships with everybody from Google and Delta and Office Depot to the hottest startups like Warby Parker and Birchbox and the list goes on and on and on.



And so through those partnerships, we are able to really grow from the place of small contributions to then big contributions and now fortunately, that has continued to scale. We raise millions a year.

Pat Flynn: Yeah, that's awesome. Man, first of all, just congratulations on all the success. I mean it is changing lives. I think that's what's most important. That's really what I want to end on is what is the mindset we need to have in order to affect the most people in the world?

Adam Braun: Yeah. I mean that's a great question. So there's a guy who has been a real mentor of mine that changed my thinking drastically when he posed a very simple but really profound question to me because I would always ask him, his name is Ray Chambers, he pretty much created leveraged buyout in the '80s, responsible for modern private equity, made gobs and gobs of money but retired to focus on literally transforming the world and will be responsible for eradication of malaria. He's now the UN Special Envoy for Global Health.

Pat Flynn: Wow!

Adam Braun: And so, he's just a legend. It's like Bill Gates, Warren Buffet, George Ross, Ray Chambers like that's the kind of I would say, caliber of people that he's in. And so anyway, he joined our board about two years ago. He has become my real personal mentor. And so I asked him this same question. And what he said to me, I would share with your audience which is, "Think about where the world will go in the next ten years and where your life can go during that same period and the difference in capabilities and resources and networks that you will have access to and then craft a path to play the most meaningful role that you can in creating the world that you want to see."

And as soon as he said that to me, it changed my thinking. I stopped kind of thinking about how do I do something now? And you first have to understand and essentially kind of make that bet like where do you think the world is going to do in the next ten years? And then within your own networks, resources, capabilities, how can you play the most meaningful role? Not how can you solve this one thing yourself but how can you play the most meaningful role in building the world that you want? And if you follow that as a guiding compass, inevitably I think anybody out there would truly transform the world with that.



Pat Flynn: I love that, perfect way to end the show. Thank you Adam so much for coming on. Actually before we end, tell us where we should go to check out your organization and also check out your book too?

Adam Braun: Sure. So the organization is called Pencils of Promise. You can go to PencilsofPromise.org and you have the kind of social channels that you can find us on. Then personally, you can go to AdamBraun.com and you can add a slash book at the end to check out details on the book and reviews and all that good stuff. And then the book is called *[The Promise of a Pencil](#)*, how an ordinary person can create extraordinary change. And it's available on Amazon.

Pat Flynn: Thank you. I'm actually on PencilsofPromise.org right now. And actually before I let you go, if you have a couple more minutes, I'm looking at your social numbers here and right here on the front it says tweets: 6,938, Google +1: 226,000. Are you finding that Google Plus is working better for you or what are the sort of main social channels you're using to help spread your messages I guess is what I'm asking?

Adam Braun: Yeah, sure. So we focus on I would say Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and Google Plus. We tried Pinterest a bit. We didn't see huge traction for our specific industry although if I was in retail, for sure I'd be using Pinterest pretty aggressively. We've tested out Tumblr a decent amount. It skews younger and there's really good engagement. It doesn't always convert into whatever kind of activity you want them to take. But definitely for engagement, it's high.

I would say on a personal front, I use Twitter most actively. I have about just over 300,000 followers on Twitter so that's where I tend to speak to my audience most. I use Instagram just for story-telling to kind of try and bring people into my eyes and something travelling and usually people want to know and kind of see what it's like to be in some of these places. And then I would say – I've started to use Google Plus more aggressively. It's a different crowd but you end up finding some real gems there. And then I love LinkedIn. I used to never use it but lately, I think the LinkedIn Influencer program has brought great content to the platform.

And then finally Medium, I just think is a great resource for any aspiring writer. I put a lot of my early writings up on Medium. And I wrote one blog post called [The Most Important Lesson That I Learned in My 20s](#). And I put it up on my 30th birthday and it became one of the most read Medium posts out and just truthfully led to so many opportunities from people reading that one post and then reaching out to me.



And then I use WordPress for my personal website which I love.

Pat Flynn: Can anyone write on Medium?

Adam Braun: Yes. So originally, it was a smaller group of curated writers and a friend of mine was the original head of content so she reached out and fortunately put me on the platform. But now, I'm pretty sure they opened it up for anybody. And it's just a beautiful, beautiful platform aesthetically. And there's kind of this unwritten rule that you don't put crap up there. You post quality content. And I think that that's carried through.

Pat Flynn: Yeah. I mean everything I've read on Medium has been fantastic. I've read articles from good friends of Smart Passive Income like Srini Rao and Chase Reese and there's a lot of good stuff there. So thank you for mentioning that. I think that's a really interesting thing people can check out.

And again, make sure to check out Adam and his book. We'll have all the show notes for you up on the blog. Again Adam, thank you so much for your time today and best of luck to you and your organization and the launch of your book.

Adam Braun: Oh, my pleasure. Thank you so much for having me.

Pat Flynn: Thank you. All right. I hope you enjoy that interview with Adam Braun from PencilsofPromise.org and author of his brand new book, *The Promise of a Pencil* which is available now on Amazon and anywhere books are being sold. And you can head on over to SmartPassiveIncome.com/session102 to get the show notes and link to that book and all that good stuff, everything we mentioned in this episode.

I'm just looking at the website right now, PencilsofPromise.org. I mean it says, "Our impact: 200 plus schools, 20,000 plus students impacted, and 15 million plus instructional hours completed." I mean that's huge. And like I was talking about at the beginning of this episode, I need to think bigger. I really do need to think bigger about the impact that I want to have on this world. I mean I know I have an impact on people's lives. I'm getting emails and handwritten thank you letters and things like that, which is amazing but I want to do more.

And so, you're going to hear me for the first time tell you that I will do more. I don't know when it's going to happen but it will. Like I said, I do donate some of my money but I need to think bigger. I need to do something bigger. I have a lot of clout and



authority in this space and I think I could use it for so much more. So I'm just going to dwell on that for a little bit but I want to – I'm just being honest and I want to share that with you here today.

So again Adam, thank you so much for the inspiration. I hope other people are thinking in that same way too, thinking much bigger than themselves, and trying to make an impact on this world. Thank you so much for that. And yeah, so again, the show notes can be found at SmartPassiveIncome.com/session102.

And of course, I want to mention our wonderful sponsor of this particular episode which is Audiobooks.com, an amazing service you can use to listen to books on the fly. If you go on to Audiobooks.com/SPI, you will get not only a 30-day free trial, not only a credit to download any book that you want that you can listen to but you can also download the audio version of my book, *Let Go*, which is exclusively available right now on Audiobooks.com through that promo at Audiobooks.com/SPI.

A lot of people have been checking out the book and getting those free credits. Awesome to hear that people are loving it. And again, thank you to those at Audiobooks.com for the wonderful sponsorship here at this episode.

And thank you to the listener for spending time with me today. I really, really appreciate it. I hope you're thinking much bigger than you are right now because there are a lot of people out there who aren't as fortunate as us who deserve a better life and we have the ability to give to them.

So thank you so much. I will see you in the next episode of the Smart Passive Income Podcast session 103, which you'll hear a really, really good friend of mine who is back for the third time. Who is it? You'll have to say and see. Take care. I'll see you in the next episode. Peace.

Outro: Thanks for listening to The Smart Passive Income Podcast at www.SmartPassiveIncome.com.