



**SPI Podcast Session #105 -  
S.P.L.A.T. – The Neuroscience Behind  
a Great Presentation, a Solid Pitch and Total Attention**

show notes at: <http://www.smartpassiveincome.com/session105>

**Pat Flynn:** This is The Smart Passive Income Podcast with Pat Flynn Session #105.

**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, his wife says he sleeps with his eyes open, Pat Flynn!

**Pat Flynn:** Yeah, I mean it's true. She has taken pictures and I've seen them and they're quite frightening actually. But anyway, what's up everybody? I'm so happy you're here. We have a great episode with our special guest, Bryan Kelly over at [WhatTheSpeak.com](http://WhatTheSpeak.com). He hosts a show features a lot of experts and a lot of insight on how to better present yourself, how to better speak and pitch which is something that we all do whether we're selling products or not, whether we're on stage or not, we are always presenting ourselves. We are always pitching something trying to get people to take some sort of action. That itself is a pitch.

And so I really, really love this interview because Bryan not only brings a lot of his own experiences and actually pulls a lot from what I've done on stage, I'm talking about these tactics that work but also he pulls a lot of information from science to sort of prove or help us better understand why things work the way they work. And I feel like the more we understand why things are working and what happens in our brains when people speak or when they pitch, it can only help us all.

So why don't we just dive right into today's interview? Again, this is Bryan Kelly over at [WhatTheSpeak.com](http://WhatTheSpeak.com). He's going to help us understand how to really get into the heads of our audience so that we can better influence them and make change in their lives which will result in change in ours as well.

So everybody, let's get right to it. This is Bryan Kelly from [WhatTheSpeak.com](http://WhatTheSpeak.com). Bryan, welcome to the show. How are you?

**Bryan Kelly:** Good, Pat. I am really, really excited to be on the show. I'm a big fan and you always have such great information to share and I'm excited to be able to contribute to that.



**Pat Flynn:** Well, thank you. I mean I know after this episode, people are going to have even more great information in their brains. And speaking of brains, we're going to be talking a lot about neuroscience behind things like audience engagement.

Really, the purpose of this – I mean we're going to get into your story a little bit and talk about [What The Speak](#) as well but what's going on in our brains that can help us better speak, better present, or better pitch stuff. And it's not just on stage either, I'm sure. It's anytime you are creating content. How can you best make an impact on those who are you're creating that content for in whatever formats? So I'm really, really excited to get into that.

But before that Bryan, why don't you just tell the audience a little bit about who you are and what it is that you do?

**Bryan Kelly:** Yeah, it sounds good. Well as Pat mentioned, I run a blog, a podcast really that's called [What The Speak](#) and I bring on different guests who are either keynote speakers, presentation coaches, presentation designers, neuroscientist, psychologists, performance coaches, you name it. Anything that has to do with any aspect of getting up in front of an audience and sharing your message, I bring those people on the show and we dive into their story, what it is that got them into this particular career path.

And then we also talk about their unique expertise because everybody has got a very interesting story when it comes to the things that they've learned and the things that they've incorporated into the art and science of their presentations. And so, it's really fascinating to be able to dive into that, break it down and uncover some really helpful actionable nuggets that we can all use in our presentations.

And so, I'm a big geek when it comes to this area. Pat, I know you've kind of share a similar affinity for giving presentations. And it's something that for years, I've been giving talks at different industry conferences and other opportunities to get up in front of an audience and share my message, my ideas, products, services, or whatever it is that I'm trying to share or sell.

And for a long time, I was getting questions where people would say, "Bryan, you make that look so effortless like how do you do that?" And I was like, "Well, it's not that effortless, like I've been doing this for a long time and I've gone through a lot of



practice, rehearsal, refining, preparation, you name it. And that it's something that you just can't snap your finger and all of a sudden you're a great presenter."

And then I would also share tips with people. They'd come up to me and say, "Hey, I've got a presentation next week. Is there anything that you would recommend?" And so, I started creating little tips and tricks so to speak. And I thought, "Gosh! It would be great to be able to share this not only my insights but collective insights of so many people that are skilled in this area and then share that with my audience." And that has been blast to be able to do. We launched the podcast in December.

**Pat Flynn:** Awesome. Well, congratulations on the success. I mean I was on your [show](#). I had a fantastic time. And I see at this moment in time, you're up to episode 51 with Nick Ainsworth who's a good of friend of mine so it's really cool. Again, that's WhatTheSpeak.com. So check it out there.

Before we even get to delivering high-caliber presentations or just delivering a beautiful presentation or speaking in front of an audience, why should people consider speaking in front of an audience? And I know for me, I had the toughest time getting over that fear and I personally love to do it because I just now since starting have fallen in love with it. And I think not a lot of people would necessarily fall in love with it but why should people even consider getting up on stage versus just kind of staying on your blog or even just behind a mic on a podcast?

**Bryan Kelly:** Well, it takes your interaction with the audience, maybe it's your existing audience, maybe it's an audience of people who have never even heard of you and you're able to develop this connection with them unlike any other medium. So one thing that comes to mind right away is one of my first guests that I had on the podcast when we launched it, was Jeff Goins from GoinsWriter.com.

And he shares his story about how he just wanted to be a writer and that's – I mean that's what he blogs about is writing. And he was kind of encouraged I think by a mentor to go and just try this out. And so, he was deathly afraid, very nervous to go out and do this thing and he actually shares that story and kind of reveals that it was slightly a bit of a disaster but it ended up being OK. And he realized in that moment that, "I'm making a connection with these people unlike any other way that I might be able to do that."

And so, it's a very powerful opportunity for you to do that and layer that with all the other things. So if you've got a blog, if you've got a podcast, if you're doing webinars,



one other layer to all of those things to make a connection is to get out there and share your message and your expertise and be able to give back to folks in a way that gets them excited about taking action on those ideas.

**Pat Flynn:** Yeah, absolutely. And I had to say there is nothing – I mean the podcast is so powerful with connecting with people but they always say, “Nothing is like meeting people in person and speaking to them.” And you’re just able to share all – everything about you with everybody up on stage. Everybody is there to watch you and you can speak and you can share emotion and you can teach at the same time. And there’s really nothing like it.

And so, how do we hold an audience’s attention the whole time? I know personally I’ve been to presentations for example where I will start to yawn and I’ll just kind of doze off or I’ll find myself tapping on my computer, just for whatever reason, I’m not really intrigued anymore. How can you help us solve that problem?

**Bryan Kelly:** Well, Pat, I mean that is the problem because really when it comes down to it, these days especially, we’re all bombarded by so many different things and even when we’re sitting in a presentation, we’ve got our smartphones, our tablets handy. And if the presenter is not holding our attention, we’re off to the next thing. And so, the danger is very high for those of us that stand before audiences.

The question is how do you do this? Well, there are five principles that I’ve kind of pulled together that we can talk through today that come from the latest cognitive neuroscience. And to make that easy and a little bit more down to earth, we’ll just call it brain science. So it’s like, well, why brain science? Well, it’s because this stuff has been proven through research. A lot of folks like Patricia Wolfe, Dr. John Medina, Eric Jensen, David Sousa, Ruth Clark, the list goes on and on. These are all researchers that have shown some of the ways that we can apply these principles to really an effective use.

So the bottom line is, in order to keep the attention of our audience, we want them to be learning and this whole process of learning while you’re participating as an audience member in the presentation is key. And when you do this, your audience will then be primed to take action on the message, the ideas, whatever it is, maybe you’re selling something that they will take action on this if you incorporate these five principles that we’re going to go through.

So before I get to that, I do want to also mention, Pat, that the thing that is really key and foundational to leveraging the five principles I’m going to talk about with you is



understanding that somebody's prior knowledge is something that we seriously have to consider, what are the experiences that they've gone through or the things that they've learned that they can connect and compare with the information that you're presenting to them. And when they do, it will be integrated into their long-term memory and that's how they begin to really take action on what that message is.

**Pat Flynn:** All right. So when you can talk about things that people can relate to or that they perhaps experienced before, they're going to be paying more attention. But over the long term, they're going to be able to remember those things much longer and actually feel compelled to take action on whatever it is that you're teaching. Is that what you're saying?

**Bryan Kelly:** Exactly. And Pat, I know when you've given various presentations that I've seen you always do this right out of the gate. You find some type of common ground with you and the audience and right out of the gate they're paying attention. And one thing that comes to mind was I know I saw you give one of the breakout session presentations at New Media Expo this last January and the first thing that you started with was you played a song by – I think it was New Kids on The Block.

**Pat Flynn:** No, no, Backstreet Boys.

**Bryan Kelly:** Backstreet Boys, that's right. We're not going that far back. We're just going back a little ways to the Backstreet Boys.

**Pat Flynn:** Although they did tour together and I did see that concert but that's neither here nor there.

**Bryan Kelly:** That's another podcast episode.

**Pat Flynn:** Yeah.

**Bryan Kelly:** But the cool thing was like right out of the gate, you said – you asked the audience, "Raise your hand if you know this song." And almost everybody I would say in that audience knew the song.

**Pat Flynn:** Right. It was one of the most popular songs.

**Bryan Kelly:** Yeah. Whether we like to admit it or not, we all know the song. And so right from the gate, right from that very first moment, the audience or us as the



audience are paying attention like, "All right. OK, I remember that song and then now Pat is relating this to his story and how does this relate to me?" And you start getting pulled into and drawn into that story, that message that you're trying to communicate. It's very powerful technique to use.

**Pat Flynn:** Well, thank you. I mean that's something I sort of learned from my speaking coach to – that there's a number of great ways to start and you want to start by like you said, just really getting connected with the audience. For me, that was sort of having people sort of raise their hand and actually listen. That was their first job was to listen so they're actually paying attention and they have a task to right away, right at the beginning. And then when people raise their hand and most do because they know that song, they're already participating and they're already sort of subconsciously I guess you could say just focused and ready to go on to the next thing.

And of course like you said, I went deep into the story. I added some humor in there as well, showed a video, that's something I love to do especially for me selfishly because I get really nervous at presentations and I think having a video at the beginning allows me to just sort of calm down a little bit and especially if the video is good and pertinent, they'll laugh and that will make me feel more comfortable so that when the video is over I can – I already feel like I've done something useful and good and I feel comfortable personally.

**Bryan Kelly:** And the great thing too is for those in the audience that maybe thinking, "Oh man, I'm really not that good getting in front of a group of people and presenting." These kinds of things and Pat, just like you explained, that sets you at ease. And when you feel at ease and when you feel comfortable, it allows you to be able to continue going on. And when you feel like you're not at that place, that's when you get really nervous and that's when things start falling apart.

So these things, they help your audience and that's the most important thing but they also kind of mutually help you to be able to feel like, "Hey, I'm going down the right path with this. The audience is engaging with this information." It feels good to you to be able to share those things and share your story and have that connect with the audience.

**Pat Flynn:** Totally. Even if you aren't speaking yet, you can use those same principles in your blog posts.

**Bryan Kelly:** Exactly.



**Pat Flynn:** Start with a story. I mean I love starting with stories or start with a question that you know people are going to say yes to. Have you ever felt this? Yes. Well, I'm going to keep reading them.

**Bryan Kelly:** That's brilliant, brilliant, brilliant. All right. So the whole thing before I get into this, I got an acronym for you guys. It's going to be awesome. But the last thing I want to say is kind of a setup to this is to explain the definition of learning. So I thought this was a really good definition of the one researchers had kind of put forth and it says that, "Learning is an active process. It takes place in the working memory as the learner abstracts meaning and connects this with existing knowledge to then stick in the long-term memory."

And we're going to break that down in just a minute here but that's the thing that I want you guys to walk away from during this episode is that really it's all about learning. And when the audience member whether you're speaking publicly or you're writing a blog post or doing an online video, the learner has to understand what that is and connect it to what's important to them or what they value or the problem that they need a solution to. And when it does that, that's when they'll remember what you shared and it will stick with them and they'll very likely share it with somebody else.

OK. So the acronym I've got is called S.P.L.A.T.

**Pat Flynn:** Nice.

**Bryan Kelly:** S-P-L-A-T and we're going to break down each one of these letters in the acronym, but why S.P.L.A.T? Well, think of your brain as a blender. And let's say we're going to make a smoothie. We put a bunch of stuff into the blender. We hit the button and we forget to put the lid on and everything, all the ingredients go splat. Well, this is exactly how our brains operate.

Information comes into our brain from all the different senses, the five senses. Then it goes to the center of our brain, which is called the thalamus and it goes splat. It gets sent to all the different parts of the brain that are responsible for different areas.

So just kind of a little device to help you remember this stuff, so S.P.L.A.T that's all about the presentation of brain science. So the S in S.P.L.A.T, first is safety allows for learning.



**Pat Flynn:** Safety.

**Bryan Kelly:** Safety.

**Pat Flynn:** Explain.

**Bryan Kelly:** So attendees have to feel safe in this environment whether it's in-person or it's on a webinar or they're not going to be open to any new ideas. So one of the ways that you can do this is to set expectations or give parameters or give them a roadmap so to speak of where you're going to be going during the course of this presentation or the course of the content that you're going to be sharing. It makes them feel at ease. There's nothing that's going to set them off and make them feel uncomfortable in that environment.

So the neuroscience behind this basically shows us that the information from the five senses goes to the center of our brain first and then it decides what part of the brain to go after that point. Now, we've got this default system that's part of what they call our primitive brain, and that's the amygdala. It's this tiny little pea-shaped portion of our brain and this is responsible for emotional outburst. So if we get ambushed or somebody pushes our buttons, this get set off. And when that gets set off, our bodies are flooded with adrenaline. And when this happens, we can't think straight.

So in order for somebody to feel comfortable, we got to make sure that we're not setting that amygdala off. Now, one way that I see a lot of people doing this is they start their presentation off and they say, "We're going to be having some interactive discussions during the course of this presentation." And all of us start to cringe and we feel like, "Oh, I hate group discussions." That's just one example of what you don't want to do. You don't want to set somebody off because at a base level, it takes 20 minutes or somebody sets them to clear of this adrenaline.

And Pat, you may have been in this situation. I know I have definitely been in this situation when my – emotional ambush happens. Maybe it's a relative, my wife, whoever, co-worker, they know how to push my buttons and I can't think straight. The research has shown us that if we've got ten options to solve a problem and this alarm goes off and we get flooded with adrenaline, we lose eight of those ten options.

**Pat Flynn:** Yeah, I could see that happening. When you get in a heated situation or you are just upset or whatever, it's really hard to think straight and to think logically sometimes. And I really love what you said there because I've been in presentations





that I have said just that, "Hey guys, during this presentation, we're going to do a lot of group work together." And yeah, you're right. Immediately you're thinking about, "OK, who am I going to be working with?" You look at the people around you. "Oh, maybe this person might not be able to contribute as much." And you start thinking about things that you shouldn't be thinking of right at the beginning and your defenses are up.

I've also been to ones that say something like, "Hey, get ready because I might call on you during the presentation."

**Bryan Kelly:** Yeah, that's the worst thing to do.

**Pat Flynn:** And I'm like yes, I understand the sort of theory behind that. You want people to pay attention so they're called on and they don't know the answer perhaps. But that does make people feel unsafe. You're right.

**Bryan Kelly:** Yeah. And so the reason why this is first as we go through the rest of our acronym here is we'll see that the important thing is you would want to get people involved and you want to get them engaged but you don't tell them that's what's going to happen. You kind of weave it in naturally and organically.

Again, going back to the example that I mentioned earlier with your presentation, Pat, was you just ask the simple question, "Raise your hand if you know this song." You don't say, "I'm going to call on you guys and see if you know what this song is or I'm going to ask one of you to tell me what exactly the title of this song is." You did it in a way that was almost like people didn't even think about it. They said, "Oh, OK." They listen to the song. "Oh, I know the song." And they raised their hands.

So there are ways that you can engage the audience which is very, very important. But you don't want to do it in a way that sets off this aspect of them feeling like they're being ambushed.

**Pat Flynn:** Sure. So safety, I like what you said about giving them a roadmap. That's something that I always try to do. And in that particular presentation if you were there, I have a triangle and I say, "OK, during this presentation, we're going to go from this part of the triangle to this one, this one to this one and then we get to the top." So people knew exactly where they were at all times. It's like if you are in the car and you have your smartphone out or your GPS out and it tells you, you have ten miles left until



you get to your destination. Well, you'll feel good. You know where you're headed and how far you have left to drive. So I really like that.

I also like making sure people aren't going to be sort of scared or timid getting into the presentation especially right at the beginning. And another thing I like to do is I like to put myself out there and sort of be vulnerable so I can be on the same level as people. I'm not this big guy who's trying to teach people something and I'm the king. I am one of them. That's another way that I like to make people feel safe. And I'll often start on the podium and then when I start to get into the content, I'll walk and physically come down to everybody's level and just sort of be there with them.

**Bryan Kelly:** Yeah. I mean those are all great things. I mean Pat, I've seen you packed a room and those types of things and the attention that you give to that is the kind of thing that is inviting. People want to hear what you have to say because they know that you're going to do it.

Not only you're going to give them great content, right? I mean there are plenty of speakers out there that have great content but you deliver it in a way that people just want to participate in that. And that's really key especially for those of you that really want to either start doing this with your presentations or any type of content that you're delivering, and it's very, very, helpful.

Now, the other thing I should mention too is for you guys, this whole acronym, you can take notes I'm sure but I've got a little infographic PDF that if you go to [WhatTheSpeak.com/Pat](http://WhatTheSpeak.com/Pat), you can get that right then and there and have that as a handy little reference for future use. So I just want to mention that to you.

**Pat Flynn:** Awesome. Thank you for that.

**Bryan Kelly:** You bet. All right. So P, let's talk about the P in S.P.L.A.T. Well, P stands for problem-solving. And problem-solving is learning. The reason why is that we're all problem-centric. We are not people who are interested in content per se. We're not content-centric. We want to learn something in order to solve a problem. It's that simple. We don't want to just learn something for the sake of learning it. I mean maybe there are a few of us out there that love to learn. But usually, when we're coming to an expert, we want to solve a problem. They've got the answer. We want to get it. So that's very important to realize.



Now, what happens oftentimes is in a presentation, we just do an information dump and we just say, "Here are all the facts, here are all the data, here are all the steps that you need." And that's important but it's got to be wrapped in something to where we start to think through ourselves how does this apply to what I'm doing? So, all of your content should be geared around answering problems. This is what's going to hook your audience. And you want your audience thinking right out of the gate, "How do I apply this to my challenge?" So bottom line is learning needs to be active.

One way that you can do this is we touched upon this just a moment ago is to create something like a learner objective, learner outcomes, whatever it is where it's that roadmap. Here is where we're going. When you tell the audience to look for X, the brain goes, "I should look for X." And this is really interesting is that the brain actually puts a chemical stamp on this information so to speak and says, "When you find this information, realize that it is important."

So going the next level beyond this and how cool this is, is what happens is when the brain says, "Aha! I found X." It releases dopamine into our bodies. So you actually get a chemical positive feeling from this by realizing, "Hey, this is what I was supposed to be looking for. I found it." And that process of learning is what really makes people feel good. And we want people walking away from our presentations feeling high, high because they've learned something.

So one way that I usually tell people or coach people on how to apply this whole idea of problem-solving and building that into your presentation, your webinar, whatever it is, is to dedicate at least one third of that presentation allowing your audience to think about the content, to reflect on it, to try and make sense of it, to try and make meaning out of it. And a really great way to do this is to ask questions.

Pat, one thing that I know that you've also done a really great job with is you build into your presentation at least one or two of these tweetables where you give them a statement and you say – you have a little Twitter icon I think and I think you put your Twitter handle or whatever it is.

**Pat Flynn:** Yes.

**Bryan Kelly:** And people are like, "Oh, this is important. This is a statement that if there's one thing I should get out of this presentation is probably this." And they start thinking about that and they go, "Oh yeah, yeah. Oh, this completely sums it up really well. And this is what it means to me and this is how I might be able to apply this



principle to what it is that I'm doing." So it's a very simple trick to just weave this in to your presentation to create these opportunities, these little pockets where you give them time to think.

Another way is to just do a quick little discussion. So again, you don't want to go back and say right from the get-go, "Hey, we're going to have group discussion." But you can put it out there and say, "Hey, real quick. This is what we just talked about. Turn to the person to the left or the right of you, maybe in front of you or behind you and just say, 'What was the most important thing that resonated with you for this portion of the presentation?'"

And most people, they'll turn and they'll start talking about it and talking it through and they begin to retain this information. So it's really important to allow them to wrap their heads around these problems that they have and how they can apply your content.

**Pat Flynn:** I love that. I actually noticed that in Chris Ducker's presentation at New Media Expo. He had people three different times talk after three different sections of his presentation to each other and with each other and it was really powerful because the whole room is buzzing and everybody sharing stuff, they're taking something they learn and actually are applying it to their own businesses or solving problems, taking the content that they just listened to and applying it themselves.

But I also think it was really cool because just the way Chris did it specifically in those different three sections, it sort of marked the sort of the end of one section of the beginning of another. So when people stopped talking and Chris sort of calling everybody down, everybody was like back in their seats, buzzed from talking, and ready to pay attention to what was happening next.

**Bryan Kelly:** Well, and that energy is so good. People get excited about it subconsciously. And when they can start to interact with the content so to speak through discussion and dialogue and allowing them to internalize it, that's when you know that you've got something good versus just lecturing for 60 minutes plus and you don't know if they're getting it or not. So it's a very good barometer.

**Pat Flynn:** Right. Now, in terms of problem-solving, can this be applied – we started to talk about it being applied to the whole of the presentation. What is the transformation that people can go through? What's the problem that you're solving with whatever it is that you're teaching? But can it also be applied to specific section like having people to actually solve individual sort of problems? I guess you've said it already, ask questions.



So actually having people think about what they're doing not just – I guess that's the main theme, right? Just not having people just take it in and there it is and maybe it goes into the blender and comes out again. But they're actually applying it in one way or another whether it's a question that they answered themselves or something they talked with other people with.

**Bryan Kelly:** Right. So for example, with your presentation on creating raving fans, one of the key things that you were giving them as a tip on how to do something that's going to help them create raving fans and allowing them to just brainstorm for three minutes here, talk with your neighbor, what are some of the things that you could do starting next week when you get back to your home office.

And they may not get the – in three minutes, they may not solve that problem so to speak but the wheels are turning and they're like, "Oh, Pat said X, Y, and Z about this. Man, I haven't been doing that. Like here is one thing that I could probably start doing that he gave as an example." And they're going to walk away from that remembering what you told them versus you just dumping a bunch of information at them and saying, "Here you go. Have fun and good luck."

**Pat Flynn:** Right. Just the fact that you and I are discussing this now, I mean I did not do that in my presentation. But now, I'm internalizing it. I'm thinking about how that or where that could be added in that particular presentation. And obviously, we just talked about how powerful that was. That is something I haven't ever done yet in a presentation is sort of pause and have people talk. I've seen that in other presentations. That could be something cool to try on my next one.

**Bryan Kelly:** Yeah, for sure.

**Pat Flynn:** Cool.

**Bryan Kelly:** All right. So let's move on to the L in S.P.L.A.T. And the L stands for lectures. Now, lectures don't allow for learning. Oftentimes, we think of our brains as recording devices. But that's the farthest thing from the truth. So you can't just pour information into your audience's brains. They have to be given time to think. So we've touched upon this a little bit but let's dive a little bit deeper.

So Pat, how long do you think that the typical attention span is of an audience member?



**Pat Flynn:** I would say 15 minutes.

**Bryan Kelly:** Close. Right now, it's about 10 minutes. And I think it's actually probably even getting a little bit closer to 7 or 8 minutes. But the latest research has shown that it's 10 minutes. Now, in this piece of research, I remember seeing a chart for a 60-minute class lecture that they were measuring attention. And at the beginning, you can see on the chart that the attention is very high.

But then it drops dramatically after 10 minutes and then plateaued for the entire duration of that lecture until the last 10 minutes when the lecturer said something like, "And in summary ..." and everybody's attention jumped at that last one because, "Oh, in summary, this is the good stuff I need to know right here."

So what you can do in your presentations is start to create these roughly 10-minute segments. In fact, some of the researches actually shown we should do 5 minutes of research and then you follow that up with at least like a 2 to 3-minute discussion or some type of exercise or it could be just switching it up with a video, maybe some audio.

These are all things, Pat, that you've done. You typically have a lot of multimedia in your presentations. You do things that keep the interest throughout that presentation. You tell us a story. Maybe you throw a quote in. You share something that is a change from just the standard spouting out facts and data and information.

**Pat Flynn:** Right. The equivalent to this in the blogging world is you don't want to write a post that is all text, no paragraphs, just one long giant paragraph, no sub-headers or anything like that. That's the worst. I mean, I know if I saw that, it would be hard to read. I can't scan it and see what parts of it I should pay more attention to and I would probably get bored and leave.

And so, the best thing to do on text with a blog is to obviously after a compelling header and a great intro is to have subtopics or subheadlines that keep people's interest, that sort of break up each of those sections. You can have people reset but also including images, also including quotes or pull out quotes and things like that. We all know. We tend to be more engaged when we read content like that.

And what Bryan is saying here is exactly the same thing when it comes to speaking. You don't want to just lecture for an hour. I wish all professors knew this. I also wish



my parents knew this when I did something wrong. Don't lecture me. This is not the right way to teach me.

But anyway, yeah, I mean that 10-minute segments, that doesn't sound like it's very much time but actually that to me sounds perfect. And I think I do between 5 and 10-minute. I have different segments of the presentation and I'll often start out each one with something different like a different multimedia.

Actually, in this last presentation I did at Social Media Marketing World, I played a video at the beginning and then after about 7 or 8 minutes, I played an audio file actually which was interestingly enough because the presentation was about podcasting, it was the very first recording of my voice online ever.

**Bryan Kelly:** Nice.

**Pat Flynn:** Back in 2008 when I said I wanted to start a podcast and I didn't start one until a year and a half after that. Anyway, people love that presentation and I did that throughout. And I think maybe subconsciously I did that because I didn't want to speak about something for 50 minutes long. I wanted to, as a speaker, break it up. And actually, that makes it easier to memorize too.

**Bryan Kelly:** Yeah. Well, OK. So a couple of things here is your example analogy of the blog post is fantastic because none of us want to read a blog post that is just a long, long, long paragraph.

**Pat Flynn:** An essay.

**Bryan Kelly:** Yeah, an essay. Nobody wants – you look at that and you're like, "Oh, I don't have time for that." How many of us have been sitting in a room where a presenter has essentially done that? They've gone on and on and on and on and on and on and you just feel like, "Oh, I can't focus. There is nothing here for me to hook on to. There's nothing for me to take away that I can remember. It's just kind of a dump of knowledge."

And so, being able to break it up this way is so good. And that's why I think like you said that some of the things that you do to naturally incorporate that into it, you're always changing things up. It's not like Chinese water torture. There are different dynamics to your presentation.



And then the other thing is, "Oh man, how easy is it to say, 'OK. Well, I've got a 60-minute block of time here.'" Or some of these concurrent breakout sessions can go for 90 minutes. I was just actually speaking at a conference in Palm Springs this last week and it was a 90-minute session that they asked me to do.

**Pat Flynn:** Wow!

**Bryan Kelly:** But I broke it up. I had literally like 7 minutes of content that I would present and then we do like 3 to 5 minutes and then I do another 7 minutes and then have the audience do something, an exercise, discussion, whatever. There was a big mixture of different things in there. Or I played video like a 3-minute video. But for 90 minutes, oh man, it was so easy for me as the presenter to be able to step back and allow them to interact with the information versus me saying, "OK, how am I going to fill 90 minutes or how am I going to ..."

I could have a presentation that literally from start to finish I could deliver in 20 minutes. But through this technique, I can structure it out to an hour, hour plus. So it's very freeing for you as a presenter to be able to leverage that as well and your audience is going to love it. People will walk away from your presentation feeling like, "Oh my gosh! I've never been able to get so much great little nuggets of information that I remember from one session than I have at this one." So it's very important.

The last thing I'll say is lectures have the lowest ROI for learning. And you touched upon this, Pat. Remembering studying in college, it was like – did you learn from the lecture? No. you had to sit there and take notes the entire duration of class if you were paying attention even that much. And then you'd have to sit in the library and review the notes that you took on that lecture or somebody else's notes.

**Pat Flynn:** For me, it was flashcards.

**Bryan Kelly:** Yeah, flashcards. But you had to actually go and learn it.

**Pat Flynn:** Right, exactly.

**Bryan Kelly:** When you could have learned it in the course of that lecture if the professor would have used some of these techniques. So ...

**Pat Flynn:** Because I am not a recording device.





**Bryan Kelly:** That is right.

**Pat Flynn:** Although we are recording this right now.

**Bryan Kelly:** Yeah. So for those of you who want to zone out, you can zone out and you can come back later to a minute 30 something and we'll pick right back up where we left.

**Pat Flynn:** Cool. No, this is great. This is great stuff, Bryan. Let's move on to what is it, S-P-L-A.

**Bryan Kelly:** Yeah, we're at A. So A stands for all audiences are visual learners. Now, this is kind of mind-blowing. The idea of different learning styles which we've all kind of heard of, some of us are visual learners, some of us are kinesthetic learners which means we learn by touching and feeling things, or we're auditory learners where we have to hear something in order to learn it. Well, this has been proven to be inaccurate. Science shows we're all visual learners first and foremost.

Mixture of these different styles is important but at the end of the day, it's all about the visuals. So, latest science shows that 80% of our brain's processing power is dedicated to visuals. This is mind-blowing because how many of us have either seen the misuse of PowerPoint or misused PowerPoint ourselves with a headline, bullet, bullet, bullet, bullet, bullet.

**Pat Flynn:** Right, death by PowerPoint.

**Bryan Kelly:** Yeah. So this is interesting because reading actually makes it difficult for us to engage with the information during the course of a presentation because essentially, we have to process each letter as an image. And of course, as we learn how to read from a young age onwards, it's only by repetition that the letters begin to mean certain words to us.

So an example of this is, Pat, if I was giving a presentation and for whatever reason I've decided to talk about pears, maybe I'm giving a presentation on how to pick a pear. If I put a photo of pears up on the screen, not only is it more visually interesting but it's easier for the audience to process that than if I put the word "pears" up on the screen.

**Pat Flynn:** Right.



**Bryan Kelly:** So recognition doubles when you use images. Also, six parts of the brain have been shown to be dedicated towards processing visuals which I mentioned a little bit earlier.

**Pat Flynn:** Right.

**Bryan Kelly:** Now, 10% is the retention or recall rate when you hear something. So if I listen to this podcast and I'm maybe like, "Oh, I got some great information." But I just listen to it I'm only going to retain about 10%. Now, if I can combine that with visuals, I'll be able to recall 35% of the information. Actually, I should restate that. If I just use a visual, I'll be able to recall 35% of it.

Now, if I combine this and if you're listening to this podcast and we also had some type of visual slide running with it you would be able to recall 60% of what was said and what was shown visually.

**Pat Flynn:** Like a video, perhaps or a webinar or something.

**Bryan Kelly:** Exactly. And that's why videos are typically so powerful because that combination of those two things allows us to remember as much as 60% of the content that was shared.

**Pat Flynn:** And that's why public speaking in front of audience that combines all those things, it's the best if you can do the visuals correctly.

**Bryan Kelly:** Right. So now, here's the thing. Somebody is maybe saying, "Well, what if I give a presentation where I can't use visuals?" I mean I've been in those situations. Some, I voluntarily been in those situations. Other times, I had the projector bulb burned out on me and I couldn't use my PowerPoint slide deck.

But essentially, you use stories, you use metaphors or allegory, you paint a picture in the mind of your audience and that's how they will remember the information that you're sharing. So visuals are important. Not all of us are graphic designers that have phenomenal skills at putting together these types of things.

But the point is, you want to be able to create some type of visual whether it's imagine and you describe something with great detail where they'll be like, "Oh yeah, that really sticks in my mind." And that's why stories are so great because when somebody is



relating a story, we play it out in our heads like a movie essentially. In our mind's eye, we can see that very thing that they are explaining.

**Pat Flynn:** I really, really love that. I think when people heard visual, some people are like, "Oh, I don't know Photoshop or I don't want to spend money to hire somebody." And so I think a lot of people are really glad you said that. And I think even more powerful than actual visual slides are the visuals that are created in like you said the mind's eye when stories are told.

That's why I say over and over again, I wrote about this back in 2008, stories are the most powerful marketing tool you can use. When you think of any sort of successful marketing campaign, there's always a story behind it. Like Jared from Subway.

**Bryan Kelly:** Yes.

**Pat Flynn:** You could just simply say, "Oh well, you could lose a bunch of weight eating Subway sandwiches every day." Or you can have this person tell his story about how he did it himself. It's much more powerful, much more memorable. I mean we know him by name now, Jared from Subway.

**Bryan Kelly:** Yeah, exactly. It's so good. And Pat, I know you've got a background as an architect and you do a lot of really great things with your visuals because you have more of that artistic inclination than a lot of us do. But you hit the nail on the head that there are so many other ways that you can creatively weave this stuff into your presentation that appeals to the visual aspect of our brains and our minds.

And that's the key. You don't have to worry about creating some fancy slide deck or hiring a company to do something that might cost you a few hundred dollars or a couple of thousand dollars. It's like no, there are simple ways to use visuals whether you're actually using a PowerPoint or not. So very important.

**Pat Flynn:** Right. For me, I would love to approach every presentation, I mean I've been trying to with zero bullet points and actually, if the slide projector were to go down I would still want to be able to deliver just as powerful as a presentation so not even having to rely on the slides at all.

And that teaches me to put more stories in because just to – and I used to actually script all of my presentations but I found that it just becomes more robotic that way. It's a waste of time and I lose a lot of the natural goodness of what might come out in



a presentation where I'm just sharing a story because when you talk a friend for example, you don't tell – you don't write down exactly what you're going to say about that story. You just tell it and it sounds – people are more in tuned with that and they can visualize better what you're talking about.

Anyway, I am in love with all of this because I'm very deep into public speaking right now. And again, this isn't just applied to speaking on stage. This is in a podcast. They're on videos, webinars.

**Bryan Kelly:** Yeah, webinars, videos, all of those different mediums. Bottom line is you're interacting with an audience people, you're investing your time, your energy, your resources into creating this content. You want people to learn something from it so that they can take action.

And whatever that end result is whether you just have a passion for sharing that knowledge or if you're trying to monetize that knowledge like whatever it is, the end goal is, bottom line you want them to learn, you want them to take action. And these are the ways that you can start applying these principles to whatever it is that you're doing to get that audience engagement.

**Pat Flynn:** Awesome.

**Bryan Kelly:** Cool. All right. So we got one more to go. The T in S.P.L.A.T stands for talking. And talking is learning. This is how information gets retained. And really, talking helps our retention and also allows us to elicit feedback. Pat, you can kind of see as we've gone down this list, a lot of these interacts are kind of weave together with one another. We touched upon talking a little bit earlier on but this is really one of the most critical aspects.

So the latest brain science shows that our brain can hold five pieces of information for about 30 seconds. Now, it used to be seven. It's now down to five.

**Pat Flynn:** Yeah, it used to be seven. That's why our phone numbers are seven.

**Bryan Kelly:** Exactly. You'd have an area code and then seven digits. Well, it's easy to remember the area code but you have the seven digits. And it's five now. It's really bad. And how many of us can ever remember phone number because they're just in our smartphones, right?



**Pat Flynn:** I think at somebody, I was like – I asked him what his phone number was and he's like, "Hold on. Let me get it for you."

**Bryan Kelly:** That's really bad, really, really bad. Oh my gosh! But yeah, I mean honestly, my parents, I talk to them every single day usually or at least multiple times a week, I don't know what their phone numbers are off the top of my head. It's really sad. But this number is dropping because we're outsourcing our brains to these devices. So right now, it's five.

In order for something to stay in our brain, first, it has to be repeated. And when it's repeated, it will move to working memory. If it doesn't, it will disappear and we will forget it. So the brain neuron is waiting for this repeat signal before it resets itself. Now, if something is repeated, it will move into working memory for 60 minutes. When you talk, you're processing the information out loud and you're also hearing yourself process that information.

So Pat, I'm sure – maybe you said to a colleague that you've been working on a project with or something, you go to them and you say, "Hey John, I really got a problem. Do you have 15 minutes to talk? I really like to bounce an idea off of you or get your opinion." And he's like, "Sure." And you start talking and talk your way through it and at the end you say, "Wow! John, that totally solved my problem. Thanks so much for talking with me about this." John was like, "I didn't say anything."

So it's because you went through that exercise of just kind of getting it out, talking it through and then your brain was able to say, "Aha! This is what I need to do." So of course, the brain science shows that talking is really important.

**Pat Flynn:** Sorry. I'm just remembering a number of different stories that have had happened in my mastermind groups. Actually oftentimes, a lot of us are in the hot seat and we tell everyone else in the group something that's bothering us or a question that we might need answered and as we're explaining it, and I did this too, we'll hear the person explaining it actually say what the answer is themselves and they will be like, "I just answered my own question, didn't I?"

**Bryan Kelly:** Yes, exactly. Yeah. I mean it's that exercise of having to go through that, to verbalize it, to hear yourself verbalize it and then you're like, "Oh, OK. I got it. I got it. I'm good." So yeah, by asking your audience very strategic questions. They have to think. They can no longer be passive participants in that presentation. And that's where you don't have to be so like, "Hey, we're going to do group interactive exercises."



Because as we very much know it's going to turn people off. But just asking a simple, little question, sometimes you can just ask rhetorical type of a question or give them just a moment to reflect on that.

I actually did that recently in this presentation I mentioned last week where I presented something and I gave them just a minute just to internalize it, think about it themselves before we move on to the next thing. So they're going to analyze what they're already doing. So they've come to this session, your keynote, your webinar, whatever it is, wanting to solve a problem. They're going to start to analyze, "OK. What am I already doing? This is not working. How can this apply to what it is that I am doing so that I can start to go a new direction that is going to get me out of this rut that I'm in and achieve that end goal?"

So this is how we do it is through talking and it's very, very important to allow that, to build that in even if you're on a webinar which is really hard to get audience engagement. Just pause briefly and ask a question and you'll get people that start replying into a little comment box and you know, "Aha! All right. People are paying attention. People are thinking about this. They're internalizing, so on and so forth."

**Pat Flynn:** Yeah, so smart. I mean you don't necessarily have to interact directly with each and every individual in order for them to actually have some sort of interaction with you.

**Bryan Kelly:** Yeah.

**Pat Flynn:** And seriously, the talking is absolutely crucial whether it's in their head or to each other at the presentation or – for me, that's why I'm in three mastermind groups. I love to talk about this stuff because that's how I'm learning and internalizing everything and how I can discover what to do next. And I think asking questions, so powerful, rhetorical questions, understanding where to put those pauses in so people do have time to think about those. That way, they don't have time to think about, "Well, I wonder what my friend said on Twitter, on Facebook?"

**Bryan Kelly:** Exactly. Well, in one of the previous researchers that I mentioned at the beginning of the podcast that I've kind of culled all this information from, I remember – I don't know if I heard them talk or it was something I read that they had written, they said, "The person who does the talking does the learning."



And usually, that's us as the presenter. We know our stuff because we've been talking about it and maybe we talked about it numerous. But the audience just sitting there staring at you, they're not going to be learning anything until you give them those opportunities, those moments woven throughout your presentation to interact with what it is that you've shared.

**Pat Flynn:** Love it. And that again can apply for blog posts, for podcast episodes like this one, and videos and of course, public speaking. I'm even thinking about when I teach my kid stuff. I teach him by letting him talk things through actually. He'll ask me a ton of like a billion questions a day, right? He's at that age. And usually what I said is, "Well, what do you think? Why do you think it's like that? Or you tell me." And it gets him to talk and discover things. And if I just told him the answer every single time myself, he wouldn't be talking and he wouldn't necessarily remember those things as well.

**Bryan Kelly:** Yeah. Well, for those of you and Pat yourself included, that have kids, definitely check out this book by Dr. John Medina. It's called [\*Brain Rules for Baby\*](#).

**Pat Flynn:** *Brain Rules for Baby*.

**Bryan Kelly:** Yeah. He wrote a book called *Brain Rules* which I've read. It's very, very good book. I would recommend it to all of you. But for parents, he's got one specifically for those of you that have kids, [\*Brain Rules for Baby\*](#).

**Pat Flynn:** Cool. Awesome. So that's S-P-L-A-T. Again to recap all of those things, S - safety allows for learning, P - problem-solving, L - lectures, we don't want to lecture, A - all audiences are visual learners, and T - talking is one of the best ways to actually learn.

**Bryan Kelly:** Yes. So to close this out, I want to mention, this is not a complete list of current brain science research, not by any stretch of the imagination. However, these five principles will move you in a direction to where your information that you're sharing will stick like glue in the minds of your audience.

That's the key. And when that happens, that's when you know that learning has occurred. When people come up to you either immediately after the presentation or later that day or the next day or they email you a week later and they relay how that information has helped them or at least got them thinking about solutions to their problems, that's powerful.



**Pat Flynn:** Absolutely. I mean the more you can teach, the more you can get people to learn using these strategies like we talked about today, the more value you're going to have in that person's life. And as I always say, the by-product of doing that is earnings and change and authority and trust.

So Bryan, thank you so much for all this wonderful education here, S-P-L-A-T is something we'll definitely remember. Go on over to the show notes, you'll get the exact link for the show notes after I hang up with Bryan here.

Bryan, where can people find out more about you and what you do and perhaps even your Twitter handle too so people can hook up with you?

**Bryan Kelly:** Yeah, for sure. So, go to [WhatTheSpeak.com](http://WhatTheSpeak.com). You can check out all the latest podcast episodes there as well as the archive of episodes. We're right now in around episode 50 something. There are some really amazing stories there from speakers like Chris Brogan, Michael Hyatt, Pat Flynn himself, Derek Halpern, all sorts of great fantastic people that have amazing stories to share about their expertise, their experiences with public speaking.

And then also on Twitter, you can check me out, it's [@WhatTheSpeak](https://twitter.com/WhatTheSpeak) and I will definitely respond to you if you hit me up there.

**Pat Flynn:** Awesome, Bryan. Thank you again so much for your time with us today. I'll talk to you soon.

**Bryan Kelly:** All right. Thanks, Pat.

**Pat Flynn:** All right. Bye.

All right. I hope you enjoyed that episode with Bryan Kelly from [WhatTheSpeak.com](http://WhatTheSpeak.com). As always, show notes, the resources, and links for this episode are available on the blog at [SmartPassiveIncome.com/session105](http://SmartPassiveIncome.com/session105).

And if you have a question maybe that you'd like answered, you can hit on over to [AskPat.com](http://AskPat.com). That's actually the home for my other podcast where I answer voicemail questions from people like you. And so far, we're up to around episode 60. We're approaching one million downloads which is really weird how I said that, very awesome





powers like – anyway, it's just going very well. So if you have any questions, head on over there.

And of course I want to mention today's sponsor which is a different sponsor than what you've heard in the last eight episodes so pay attention. This sponsor is one that I've worked with several times before. I'm very happy with the results each time I've used this company. I've used this on my niche sites. I've used this on my iPhone app business. And I've always recommended it to people who are looking to get designs done in any aspect for your website.

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So thank you so much. I'll see you in the next episode. Again, show notes available, SmartPassiveIncome.com/session105. And our sponsor, 99Designs.com/SPI. Cheers. Thank you so much and have a good one.

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