



SPI Podcast Session #164:

Michael O'Neal from Solopreneur Hour Talk Shop – His Success Journey and Actionable Tips for Interviews

Show notes: www.smartpassiveincome.com/session164

This is the Smart Passive Income podcast with Pat Flynn, Session #164.

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 shoots an 85 on the golf course—Pat Flynn!

Pat: What is up, everybody? Thank you so much for joining me today. By the time you're listening to this, at least if you're listening June 3rd, I will be on my way to Ghana. I'm going to head over to Ghana to visit a couple of schools that you and I built together, actually. Last year, for my birthday, I did a campaign where, together with the SPI community, we would raise funds to build a school through PencilsofPromise.org, and I said if we get to \$25,000 dollars I would match that, and we got to \$28,000, so combined we were able to together build two schools, and they're built. I'm headed over there to visit the schools, to visit the students, and to see the little plaques that we put on them. You'll see, in a later episode of SPI TV next month, exactly what those plaques say, and I do give you guys credit for what you guys did. Again, thank you so much to everybody who contributed to that campaign. It meant so much to me that you did that. I can't wait to bring back footage, since my good buddy Caleb Wojcek is coming with me, and I know that, by the time I get back, my perspective on everything is just going to change. I'm going to be even more motivated to give more and to do bigger and better things for as many people as I can in the world. And again, I have a lot of you to thank for that. This podcast and this whole world of only business is just incredible, what opportunities it has opened up, so thank you so much. I'll see you in Ghana. Hopefully I get internet connection, so I can post a few Instagram photos and things like that, but if not, I'll see you on the flipside.

In the meantime, I'm really excited because today's episode features a great friend of mine, a fellow San Diegan, Michael O'Neal. You might recognize that name, because he's the host of Solopreneur Hour, which is a podcast that I love listening to whenever I have the chance. It's great because he's taken a great approach to his podcast. It's not an interview type of episode, and I've been on his show a couple of times. It's literally a chat, as if both of you were in a coffee shop together, and Michael and whoever is on the show with him, it's just like you're a fly on the wall listening to a couple people chat about random things that friends who are interested in entrepreneurship talk to. It's so,



so good. So I highly recommend you check his show, Solopreneur Hour, it was nominated for a Stitcher Award, and it's just great. Michael is a fantastic interviewer. He seems to, through these conversations, get incredible information out of the other people.

We talk a lot about, in this episode, more so toward the end, some actionable tips for you if you do any interviews down the road, some specific questions you can ask to differentiate yourself and also get some golden answers. And we just talk shop, as if Michael was bringing his show, the Solopreneur Hour, over to the SPI podcast for a little bit. It's a great episode, a lot of back and forth, everything from what he's learned from watching comedian to men's fashion to interviews and other marketing tips and strategies that you can use for your business as well. So here we go, this is Michael from SolopreneurHour.com.

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Pat: What's up, Mike. How are you? Welcome to the SPI podcast.

Mike: It has been a long 6-year journey for me, so this is really coming around. I'm so excited and I'm full of gratitude that you're having me on your little show here.

Pat: Dude, we go way back and you've had me on your show, of course. Solopreneur Hour is just such a great show. Everybody should check it out at SolopreneurHour.com. You were nominated as best new show in 2013 at the Stitcher Awards, and it's just always a pleasure to be on your show. Your show is one of the most unique out there.

Why don't you just tell us about your show really quick. How were you able to kind of differentiate yourself, because there's so many interview shows out there. I love how you decided to go in this direction. How is it different?

Mike: They say that successful people put their pants on the same way the rest of us do, so my show is about watching them put their pants on. That's what I've been saying.

Pat: Through audio.

Mike: You were one of the original guests on the show and I said, "If you really want to hear about Pat's story of becoming this online entrepreneur from being an architect,



go to his About page or listen to the other 374 podcasts that he's been interviewed on and told that story."

A lot of it was triggered by a lunch that you and I had here in San Diego. We just hung out for a couple hours and we just chatted.

Pat: How long ago was that?

Mike: It was May of 2013, I think, a couple years ago. We talked about our lives and we talked about our significant others and cars and break dancing and men's fashion and all kinds of stuff. As we were walking back you literally stopped, you turned and said, "Dude, thank you. I never get to do that. I never just get to talk about my real life."

I thought, "Hmm, what an interesting idea for a show. What if I had a show that was really just about the actual life and not just 'the journey,' because everyone has their story of what their journey is, but their actual life and what it's like to have to get up and manage a couple of kids, and how do you structure your days, and what's the fear factor that goes into, 'I'm going to endeavor on this brand new thing and I've never done it before and I'm really exposed. I've got a million eyeballs looking at me, so if I fail it's going to be really public.' How do you muster up the strength for that?"

To me that was something that I think people were missing was the, "Yeah, but...I get that he had this journey. Everyone has their sort of hero's journey, but how does he do his day, and what did he do as a kid?"

The idea for me is like if I can identify one little spot or a number of little spots in someone's journey and their lives that my audience was at some point, they can look at them and go, "Wait a second. This person had two kids and did this, and this is how they managed that. I can totally do that." It's not like "I want to be the best person in the world." It's like, "If I hear enough of this I can take the right steps to further my life and become a successful solopreneur."

Pat: Your show is not about, "Give us two of your favorite tips on email marketing." It's not that. It's just the daily life. I remember that lunch we had. We had a pizza with – was it macaroni and cheese on it?

Mike: No, mashed potatoes and bacon.



Pat: That's right, something interesting, and we had just such a good conversation. I remember at the time you didn't have your podcast then, of course. You didn't even really have your own business at the time.

Mike: I didn't know I was going to do a podcast. I was doing production for the Kick*** Life with David Wood, which is a personal development show that I was doing all the back-end on.

Where I was in my brain at that time was, "I'm going to reach out to successful public speakers and personal development folks, and I'm going to have a kit of parts for them. I'm going to say, 'Hey, you're going to talk into the microphone and I'm going to do everything else.'"

With that show I developed the brand, I did the intro/outro, I did all the social media, I built the website, I did all of that, and I would edit and produce the show three times a week. I did that for 18 months, essentially for free. I was growing the brand of the Kick*** Life and it went really well, which is where I sort of got my first exposure into what podcasting was, on the production side anyway.

Pat: And then we had this lunch and what changed for you?

Mike: So I was like a year into that program with David, and I had a percentage deal. If we made \$1,000 I'd get a certain percentage of that, but despite my hoping and my planning that we would have, we hadn't really monetized yet because he didn't do that kind of marketing. So after a while I was like, "Man, I've got to figure something out."

We had a guest on, this guy Mike Johnston, who you have to have on your show. He's one of the best drummers in the world. He's been on the cover of all the magazines. He's running a 6-figure+ per month drum coaching business that he's essentially modeled after iTunes. He's super smart, has a great marketing mind, and is quite truly like the top 2 or 3 guests of all time on my show. You can go to MikesLessons.com.

He was on the Kick*** Life, and because I was the producer, as I chatted with him before the show we got along smashingly well. It was just one of those things where we were just talking for two hours and we're both like, "Oh, we've got to go, like we've got to go do life," and he's a famous drummer and I'm whatever.

He loves learning. You'd be really surprised at the shows he listens to, like astronomy podcasts and things like that, and he's totally non-sports but he listens to sports



podcasts just because he loves to learn. So I said, "We should do a show, Learn to Learn with Mike and Mike. That would be really cool," and he was totally into it. We started figuring out how we were going to do it.

Then literally it was right around then that his career took off. He was already good and sort of famous, but then it really blew up and now he's on the cover of all the magazines. So our conversations went from like 2-3 times a week to 2-3 times a year, and now I'm lucky to talk to him once or twice a year.

So it was, "All right, I think I want to do this," because David from the Kick*** Life was climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro and we got stuck not having a show, so I'm like, "All right, I'm going to jump on. I'll record a show about teaching social media for solopreneurs," because that's what I was doing at the time. I was traveling around and would speak to big groups on social media.

So I did the show, I flipped the mic on, and dude, I found it so natural and comfortable. It was one of those things like – have you ever seen The Bourne Identity?

Pat: Yeah.

Mike: Remember the part where he's sleeping on the park bench in Poland I think it was, and then the two guys poke him with the stick to wake him up and like in 3 seconds he knocks them both out and he has the gun and he kind of looks at it like, "How did I just do that?" That's kind of what it was like when I podcasted because it was so second nature for me to just be on the mic and start talking.

All the sudden I could do ads really well and I knew how to introduce people and stuff like that, and I thought, "Huh, that was kind of easy. That was a thing I could do." Then I got tons of feedback from the audience. They said, "We loved that show. You should totally do a show." So between our lunch, the thing with Mike, and the fact that I just did that, I said, "I have to start a show," but I didn't know what it was going to be about yet.

Pat: I'm really glad you did, though, because now things are taking off for you. How is life and business now?

Mike: Tough to complain. There's nothing about my life that didn't change. Like all of us, I think we all are trying to find our way and trying to figure things out. There's like 7 options. You can write a book, you can be a social media person, you can have a



YouTube channel, you can do Google Hangouts, you can do a podcast, you can be a blogger, or you can do traditional media. Those are pretty much your 7 options that you can start an online kind of career on, and I figured out one. I said, "Okay, I'm going to do this."

I was a branding and web guy for years before I started this. It actually took me three months – May, June, July. Yeah, that's about right. When we met was May. It took me three months to figure out the show was going to be the Solopreneur Hour.

I guess this is the difference between what a lot of people do, including you. Like you have SPI, and the podcast is part of your SPI offering. When I submitted my RSS feed I was a podcaster. If somebody asked me what I did for a living I would say, "I'm a podcaster." The podcast is the product for me.

Pat: You didn't have an audience before this. You didn't have an email list or anything.

Mike: No, nothing. I had a little bit of a Twitter following. I had like 6,000 on one of my accounts and I had probably 3,000 or 4,000 on Facebook, but I started over. I started @solohour on Twitter with zero, and now I'm just approaching 5,000, which is cool. I feel like that's a number. That matters.

But anyway, to answer your question, everything changed. The podcast – between advertising and coaching – did well over six figures in the first year, and I moved into a great place. I also live in San Diego, and I live in this great place with 2 bedrooms and a garage, and one of the bedrooms is a studio.

I think more than almost anyone else I know, I really took the lifestyle part seriously. I won't go back to my dog not seeing me from when I leave in the morning until I get back at home and it's night. I don't want to ever do that again.

Pat: You had these shirts printed out that I see people wearing every once in a while that say what on them?

Mike: I have three. The first one I did, which I think is maybe the first viral thing I ever did, was at New Media Expo last year. I thought it would be cool if I tried to put the show on the map, so I printed out 50 t-shirts and I paid for them myself, whatever it was, and they were good. I don't believe in bad t-shirts. I want stuff that people will wear, so they're all American Apparel 2001 like real t-shirts. They're bright yellow, which is the color of the brand, and they say "I'm unemployable."



Me and Nick Unsworth from Life on Fire decided the day before that we should bring t-shirts to New Media Expo, so I called a t-shirt printing place in Vegas, where New Media Expo is, and I can said, "Can you guys turn t-shirts around in 24 hours?" I had to call a couple and one finally said yes. I said, "Great," so I went and did the art work and I sent it to them. We had such a crazy deadline.

After I sent it to them I said, "I didn't do the right art work," because it said, "Become a soloist" on the front. That's what it said originally. I was riding my bike and I was like, "That's the wrong art work," and I bee-lined it to a Starbucks, changed it to "I'm unemployable" and then sent it to the guy, who'd already started making the screen. I was like, "I'll pay for the screen, don't worry about it," so he printed them out. They were delivered at the hotel 10 minutes before we got to the hotel. Then I had this box.

So I had my bag I was still checking in with, walked upstairs, put my bag away, threw one of the t-shirts on, walked back out and I was on my way to get a salad with Nick or maybe a burger, and I literally got stopped 10 times by random strangers, people that would stop and take pictures with me. I was like, "Whoa! I think I did my first viral thing."

My move was I would give the t-shirt away to anybody that would be willing to wear it at the event during the event, because I wanted it to be visible. I think I made 30 of them, and I think it was \$500, but I thought, "That's \$500 of good advertising in this group," so now I have three of them. I have the one that says "I'm unemployable," I have one that says, "Proudly unemployable," then the one that I made for World Domination Summit says, "I think we're Facebook friends."

Pat: Yeah, that's a good one too. That's really funny.

What I wanted to do, Mike, was just you and me chatting, just kind of like how when you had me on your show, just kind of talking about life and just chill out a little bit. Maybe this episode isn't for people who are looking for the Top 10 Facebook Tips or the actionable stuff that people get on the other shows, but it's good to chill out every once in a while. I think this could be a good lesson for people just to kind of reflect on things and understand that sometimes you have to slow down and just be grateful for things have happened.



Mike: That sounds great. I do have some tips. I've got great podcasting tips, I've got great solopreneur tips, but you lead the way and I will go down whatever path you choose, Mr. Flynn.

Pat: Okay, and we'll try to inject some of that in there, so keep those in your back pocket. Whenever I'm with you, Mike, we have such good conversation. I wish we could have recorded some of those conversations, like that lunch we had. How cool would that have been to share?

Mike: I've thought of it. One thing I wanted to do, and maybe we should still do it, but we have so many of us podcasters that are here in San Diego, I thought it would be really cool – and it's funny because you sort of did this with Chris – but I wanted to do a thing called The Mastermind Podcast where it's like me and you and John Lee Dumas and Nick Unsworth and Amy Porterfield all on one show at a time, and really just talk about our week and what we were working on.

Don't you think people would love that, just to see what the behind-the-scenes of everybody businesses were?

Pat: Yeah, and the chatter and the back and forth. Everybody's personalities are really cool when they come together.

Mike: Totally. It would be #1 in Business for eternity.

Pat: Maybe that's an episode we could do. We could all get together on a Skype call, record it, and then we could each put it on each of our podcasts at the same time. That might be kind of fun.

Mike: Yeah. You know one thing you did recently, and I did as well, you did a narrative podcast.

Pat: Yeah, SPI 138.

Mike: Yeah. I did Episode 200. My Episode 200 is I took over 100 clips from listeners. I don't utter a word on the show. All I did is put clips together for whatever it was, 40-something minutes, of sort of what the show meant to them and what they've done, and it was a crazy thing to put together. It took me 18 hours to edit that one show.



Pat: 18 hours? Wow, you've got me beat for my storytelling, so that's Episode 200. Again that's SolopreneurHour.com. I'm looking at it right now. It says "A very special episode starring you." I think it's a great idea.

Mike: By the way, since no one can spell preneur, I always say on the show "SoloHour.com," so you just can go to SoloHour.com. You can actually go to SoulHour.com/200. Then how long did yours take?

Pat: I think it was 8-10 hours for 30 minutes.

Mike: It's crazy. Everyone was like, "You should just do that all the time," and I'm like, "Really? I'll have 12 producers like This American Life does."

Pat: One thing I remember that we talked about during that lunch was we just talked about comedy for a while. I don't know if you remember this, but we had referenced our favorite comedians and you had talked about how you learned from watching comedy. Can you talk about that a little bit?

Mike: Yeah, it's my first love. I mean I think I'm a frustrated stand-up that never got on stage. My brain thinks like a stand-up. I've had a couple on my show and if I talk to them in real life they kind of look at me like, "Wait a second, you know way more about this than most people do," because I love both sides of it.

I think no one has a harder job than a stand-up comedian because you've got this audience of people that have arms crossed and they're like, "Make me laugh," and that's not an easy thing to do. But when you think about the parallels between what we do as entrepreneurs and what comedians do, they're almost exactly the same, meaning that what they have to do is first make sure the audience understands the concept of what they're talking about. They call it the premise in comedy.

We call it, "Here's why it's important to have a good mailing list." That's a premise. You have to set up, "Here's why. This way you can connect with your audience and blah blah blah." A comedian has to set up the premise first.

Chris Rock does it. "Women can't go down in lifestyle. They can't! They can't go down in lifestyle!" and then he'll just hit that premise 10 times. He'll kind of work around that idea, and every time he delivers a little bit of value on his side, that's a punchline. So he does that throughout a whole set, just like we would if we were launching a product. At some point he's finished with that set, which is usually like an hour long, and then he



takes it to HBO or to Showtime and they publish their full set. We turn it into a product launch.

When they're on-stage and they've got to speak to this group, they're trying and failing in real-time. When they have a concept or a premise for a joke they'll try it out and if people don't laugh, "All right, I've got to tweak it a little bit." But then sometimes it's just a matter of literally taking two words and interchanging them and all the sudden it works and people totally get it and you go, "Okay." So they just keep refining and refining and refining.

I know for a fact that you do that in almost every facet of your business. When you launch a course, that's not just a launched course. You will continually get feedback and continually test until you keep getting it more and more refined.

Pat: Yeah, and even on-stage when I speak, like a comedian would, I try different things and see what sticks, and the next time I do that same presentation I'll keep in what worked and take out what didn't. A lot of people know my recent presentation at NMX, which I believe you saw in 2014 about raving fans, that was my first run with that.

Mike: Yeah, fantastic.

Pat: Thank you. I've done that 8 or 9 times since then, and each time I've been able to improve. It's not just what I say in the content, but also the timing of it. It's kind of crazy how important the timing of everything is. There was one time I went into a presentation just truly working on the timing of everything, and it just killed it, like the jokes stuck.

It's amazing how much even a little bit of joking around inside a presentation can just really make it a memorable thing for people and fun and exciting. It kind of resets everybody, and the more you can make people smile in your presentation, the better it's going to be.

Do you do that on your podcast or when you get on stage too? I know you've been doing some stage work too recently.

Mike: Yeah, I love that. Again, before the podcast I did four years of live social media training for thousands of people, so I had my jokes and I had my timing. I would always set the premise of Facebook as, "As a solopreneur you've got to grow your



audience as big as possible, because when you launch that thing you want to be able to put it on Facebook and have people share it.”

Then you run into that privacy situation where a lot of people are like, “Yeah, I don’t know. I don’t want to friend a stranger,” and I would always say, “Ladies, people are innocent until proven creepy,” and that would always get a big laugh. I said it offhand one day and it killed, so I integrated that into everything, just like we do.

Most recently at Podcast Movement – you guys all know John Lee Dumas – John and Kate were in the audience, and I thought of this a few days before. I said, “I wonder if I’m going to have the cajones to say this in front of a full room,” because I had a full room for my thing. I think you were there, and it was almost a full room.

Again with the timing I said, “John and Kate are here, and Kate I was wondering something. I wondered is it possible that John’s ever just sort of walked into the doorway of the bedroom and kind of leaned on the doorframe and said, ‘Kate, are you ready to ignite?’” and it killed. It murdered the room, but I paused and it was really like a good kind of gentle delivery. I didn’t rush it, and that’s the kind of thing that a stand-up has to do. They really have to figure out that timing aspect. I love it, man. Speaking on stage is like my favorite thing to do.

Pat: So did you practice that beforehand to try to get the timing down?

Mike: Just in my brain.

Pat: Because I do that. I don’t do it just in my brain. I literally do it.

Mike: You are a consummate mirror practicer.

Pat: There was one that I put in my presentation that you saw in NMX the first time I did the raving fans one, where I talked about the first level of Angry Birds. The whole premise behind this was you’ve got to give your audience small quick wins, and that creates this habit and can help keep them coming back for more.

With the first level of Angry Birds I showed the left-hand side where you have the three red birds, and the right-hand side you have one bad piggy on the top of this wooden tower, and just off the top of my head I said, “If you hit this thing you win. It’s like the worst architecture I’ve ever seen,” and that got one of the biggest laughs in the room. I mean there were a lot of laughs during that presentation, but I was very surprised that



everybody laughed at that so I just kept that in there every time, and every time it worked.

Mike: That would kill at an architecture seminar as well.

Pat: I guess partly because I came from the architecture industry too, so people know that story and so it had a little bit to do with that.

Mike: Yeah, it's like plumber jokes with a bunch of plumbers, right?

Pat: Now, one thing we recently did together was when we were at Social Media Marketing World. I actually had to fill in a role for somebody who couldn't make it to one of the author spotlights. You were given this role at Social Media Marketing World to interview people. You got to interview Guy Kawasaki and a few other people, and I had to fill in for somebody who wasn't there.

We had like 7 people in the room because it was so last-minute, plus John was speaking at the same time so most people were with John, but it was fun to talk to those 7 people and we talked about a lot of cool things. One of the things we talked about – and we were just kind of looking at each other, and you looked amazing in what you were wearing, and I was wearing...what was I wearing?

Mike: You had a purple shirt with a vest, I think.

Pat: Was it the vest day or was that the suspenders day?

Mike: It was vest day. I might have poked some fun at suspenders day.

Pat: Okay. Anyway, we had a pretty long discussion about men's fashion, something that I first got in tune with in 2011, thanks to Antonio from RealMenRealStyle.com. Apparently this is a story that some of you know. Back in 2011, Antonio heard through my blog that I was going to be speaking for the first time.

I didn't even know who he was at the time, or this website that he had, but he sent me an email with a 25-minute video that was all about men's fashion, and it was tailored just for me. It said my name and it said, "Pat, this is the kind of clothes you would look good in," and he talked about why it was important for me to dress well when I'm on stage.



I had never really even considered that ever. It was one of the coolest things somebody has ever done to take that much time to help me out in that way, and it was extremely helpful. I went on a spree at Men's Wearhouse after that and got a whole bunch of stuff.

It's incredible how much that actually plays a role in how people interact with you, but before I get onto that, I asked Antonio, "Why did you send me this?" and he said, "Because I downloaded your free ebook, [Ebooks the Smart Way](#)," and he wrote an ebook of his own that he used as a lead magnet for his list. I think at the time he said he'd gotten over 75,000 or 100,000 people on his list because of that, and this was his little quick way of thanking me. It was just so cool because I didn't even know this person existed, and here he was giving back to me in a way that was very special and very impactful, actually.

When I started paying attention to what I wore at these events, I started to get treated much differently and it's kind of interesting. I wish it wasn't that way, but that's how it is. Then we had this whole discussion, you and I, about first impressions and entering a room and what you wear and what that says about you and stuff like that. I know you pay attention to that, and you have a funny story about clothing too, actually.

Mike: It's so funny too, and it's really appropriate. As we're recording this, ICON is going on right now, which is the Infusionsoft conference, and our buddy John is speaking at it. I made John over three weeks ago.

Pat: I remember. This was after the San Diego half-marathon.

Mike: That's right, because we were going right to Nordstrom. We spent four hours at Nordstrom, and that's a really long story. I won't get into it on your show, but he ended up literally with a ground-up brand new wardrobe – two suit jackets, three button-downs, a couple of t-shirts, four pairs of jeans, three pairs of shoes, shorts – I mean literally everything in a wardrobe.

Pat: He kind of needed it, though.

Mike: He needed it.

Pat: John, if you're listening to this, I'm sure you know you needed it.



Mike: And it's not anybody's fault. First of all, not everybody follows this stuff, especially us dudes. Second of all, as you continue to sort of up-level in your career you keep becoming exposed to people that are sort of that higher echelon. There is a sense of being appropriate.

It's one thing to be sort of Richard Branson and show up wearing cargo shorts and a Tweetie Bird t-shirt, but you're kind of Richard Branson. Generally when you're at Pebble Beach you need to sort of look like the right thing at Pebble Beach because, as you've seen, doors open for you when you're presented well.

Trust me on this. When you go to the airport with a well-fitting suit jacket – and well-fitting is key, you don't want to look like David Byrne – watch yourself be the one that gets upgraded over the other people. If you want to be in first class, dress like you're in first class.

Anyway, John posted this picture today and I feel like a proud papa. He posted this picture of him right after his speech. He's got his gray jacket on. He's got his black Simon Cowell t-shirt and his little purple pocket square. And I don't know how many comments are on here, but a good half of them are, "Looking sharp! Styling! Looking good! Looking sharp. Looking dapper."

People's perception immediately went up, and it's not like they had a bad perception of him, but now all the sudden there's this air of professionalism. Again, we like to say how you do one thing is how you do all things.

I learned this lesson when I lived in Boulder, CO. I used to walk around always in flip-flops, cargo shorts, and a t-shirt. That was my uniform. At some point I befriended a really good friend of mine, this guy JJ Collier, who's a professional designer. Just being around him and seeing him wearing like a white t-shirt with khakis I was like, "Why does his look really good and mine looks like this?" It's because all of his stuff was fitted, like it fit right, and fit trumps all.

If you can just get close, like if you have an idea of what the rules are, and you go to Marshalls or TJ Maxx or Nordstrom Rack and buy a couple of shirts and have them tailored the right way, it changes everything about how you look.

Pat: And you just feel more confident too. That's the one thing I found. It helps me when I'm on stage knowing that I look sharp, and people have this idea that my presentation is going to be sharp too.



Mike: Right. How you do one thing is how you do all things. There was an American Idol guy who won Top 10. His name is Bucky Covington, a country dude. He was on one of the first seasons, and his brother, Rocky Covington, they're identical twins and they're both like 6'3" or 6'4", blond hair down to their shoulders, country dudes.

I ran into them on a rooftop deck in Boulder, CO. They were both wearing long-sleeve black t-shirts, black jeans, boots, and a stainless steel watch. That was what they were wearing, and they were twins. Here's the difference. Bucky made it to Top 10 of American Idol. Rocky did not, so Rocky was wearing like a Gap t-shirt and Levis and whatever boots, and Bucky was wearing like an Armani t-shirt and 7's or whatever for jeans, and nicer boots. It was crazy to see on two identical humans what a difference fit made.

Those other brands, even though they're more expensive, they pay way more attention to the tailoring of them. I had this A/B where I was looking left to right going, "Whoa, look at the difference of how these two guys look, and they're exactly the same guy," and that was kind of cool, so it was interesting.

Pat: That's pretty funny. Speaking of watches, you're a big watch guy.

Mike: Oh yeah, man. I can't seem to find a hobby that's inexpensive.

Pat: Yeah, right? What's up with that. Chris Ducker I know has a couple watches and I know he's talked about you and how you're a watch guy. I'm not a watch guy. I just have this one giant triathlon training watch which is a Garmin.

Mike: It is giant, and we have to talk. When you're going to wear fancy clothes you can't wear your giant Garmin. You need something more appropriate.

Pat: But it tells me how many steps I take during the day.

Mike: Don't you have an iPhone that does that in your pocket?

Pat: Well yeah, but then I have to pull it out and look at it. [laughing] That's the whole premise behind the Apple watch.

Mike: Are you going to get one? I think I might.



Pat: I don't know.

Mike: I'm going to wait, though. I'm not going to be a first adopter. I'm going to wait and see what the deal is.

Pat: I did the same thing for the iPhone. I waited and saw what it was like and got to play around with it a little bit and was like, "Wow, this is impressive," so I'll probably do the same thing with the watch, but I'm not as convinced yet.

Mike: Right, but we guys don't have much in the way of bling. We don't get a lot of jewelry. You might wear a necklace if you're from the northeast like, "Hey, how you doin'?" and that's okay. I used to when I was there.

We don't wear a lot of bracelets, and the earrings are hit or miss. If you're a rocker or something it's all good, but watches are really one of the only things we have to accessorize, if you will. We get pretty much a watch, a tie clip and a pocket square. Those are the things we get that we get to play with a little.

The watch thing used to be the iPhone. They were the apps of their day, where it's not just about telling time but you can look at GMT and things like that. What I like to do is I like all the old stuff, so I have a couple of vintage watches. I have one newish one, but I like the older ones that have a history behind them.

One of my watches that I want to get is called the Omega Speedmaster. For those of you who don't know, the Omega Speedmaster is also called the Moon Watch because before Apollo something or other, NASA went around to all the jewelry stores where they were in – it's not Cape Canaveral, where is "Houston, we have a problem"? Wherever that base is.

They went around and grabbed all these watches and they did tons of testing on them and they decided on this Omega Speedmaster that would be the watch that the astronauts would wear on the moon. So when you see these iconic pictures of these guys getting off the lander onto the moon, they've got an Omega Speedmaster with a Velcro strap on the outside of their suits, and that became what they called the Moon Watch.

You can buy a 60's-era Speedmaster and they're \$5,000 or something. They will never go down in value. They'll only go up in value and you've got this great story with a



bunch of history behind it. That's what I like. I like the story and the history behind all these watches. I don't much care for the brand new ones.

Pat: That's cool. I love that. Before we finish up here you mentioned that you had some podcasting tips. I think it might be kind of cool to start talking about those a little bit. I know obviously we have a lot of podcasters in the audience too, and I'm always looking to improve as well, so tell us a little bit about what you're doing. Your show is doing really, really well. You're up to Episode 248 at the time of this recording, so you've obviously passed where we're at with SPI. How often are you doing your show?

Mike: Three times a week, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Monday and Wednesday I like to have what I call co-hosts, because I like to be able to banter with them back and forth, almost Joe Rogan style, and as you can attest they are like we hit Record and we start talking. This is not structured questions, although one of my favorite questions lately has been, "What did your childhood smell like?" although I don't think I've ever asked you that. Pat, what did your childhood smell like?

Pat: It smelled like pizza because I had pizza all the time, and Filipino food. It smelled like the corner of the room, because I was so shy and always put myself in the corner of the room. I was never really somebody who would raise their hand and start talking. I was always the person in the back.

I remember one time I was playing baseball and we were all kind of in the dugout, and the coach is like, "Okay, let's make a line-up. Who's going to go first?" and I raised my hand and said, "Coach, can I go last?" The coach was like, "Why do you want to go last?" and I said, "Well, I want to see how everybody else does first, for one, but also it might be important in the 3rd or 4th inning and that's my time to get up there and maybe be a hero," and I thought that was kind of cool.

I've always been the person in the back who kind of lays back, watches everything, and then when the time is right then I go and do what I need to do.

Mike: So that was podcast tip #1, everybody. I like to Trojan horse the tips on you guys.

Pat: That question is the tip?

Mike: I'll get there, hold on. I always find my way back.



Pat: See what happens when I don't wait until people finish, and now I'm getting in everybody's way.

Mike: That question is a two-parter. This just happened to me after Podcast San Diego. I asked this question to someone on my right, someone on my left, and I had a right-brain and a left-brain person. So the first thing is when you say that question, "What did your childhood smell like?" – and by the way, don't lead with it. You need to warm up a little bit before you ask weird questions to people.

They say that establishing rapport takes five connecting points. That's the general psychology of establishing rapport with another human, and that question, bar none, is the best question I've ever asked to establish rapport with a new person I don't know, and here's why.

First and foremost, when you ask the question, the left-brain people, the scientific people, will question the question. The right-brain creatives will answer the question right away, so immediately you know whether or not somebody is on the more technical side, the scientific side, or they're going to be on the more creative side. Thus you know how to structure your questions or how to structure the conversation. That's tip A.

Tip B – never, not one time have I ever asked that question – and it's been in the hundreds – that someone has not answered the question and then explained why they answered what they answered.

I just want to break down what you just said. First you said pizza, and that didn't give me a lot. You said, "I ate a lot of pizza when I was a kid," and I'm thinking, "Maybe he was a fat kid, I don't know." The second thing was far more telling when you said Filipino food. Check that box. Got that going on.

Then you said, "It smelled like the corner," and I didn't push you on it. I would have said, "What does the corner smell like," because that's not a regular smell, but you went into a two-minute story about you being super shy, you not being like the #1 guy for the baseball team, and then you were kind of like, "Then I could be the hero."

I could immediately from that go, "Okay, I have a Filipino connection." I grew up in Toledo, Ohio and Derek Segosio was my best friend. My brother's best friend was Perry Palmegil. We have all this Filipino connection that I could talk about for 10 minutes with you.



Next we could talk about you being a shy kid but you had these almost fantasies of being the hero, so you already had that in your brain that there was something bigger than you were, even when you were a little kid.

Then I also know what the Filipino life is like because I grew up around that, so I would say, "It was probably strict. Every morning you woke up and it smelled like rice in the house all the time," because my friends always had rice cookers going at any given moment.

There's easily a half hour of conversation for what you just said with the answer to that question, and that should give you a little bit of insight as to how I think proper podcast interviews should be done, not with that particular question but in general.

Right now I think new podcasters are looking to other podcasters for inspiration, and I think they're looking at the wrong place. They need to be looking at the 80+ years of radio broadcasting for inspiration, and look at what has been best practice in society versus what someone has done for – really when you think about it, how long have you been podcasting now, three years?

Pat: Almost five years.

Mike: Wow, good for you. That's impressive actually, it really is, but FYI, how much has your show evolved from Episode 1 to now? Even when I launched my show, I would have said the Pat Flynn type show is he has an idea of what he's trying to teach, and then he'll go through that show and teach that concept, and he may have a guest on that will teach that concept. It's really all about value and actionable content.

Now your show is a little more loosey goosey. I've heard you follow up with questions and start talking about things that aren't necessarily on-topic or on-brand for them, which I think is cool.

Pat: You're absolutely right, and I always like to try new things and things like that.

Mike: Yeah, so a couple of do's and don'ts. #1, don't do the move where I say, "Today's guest is Pat Flynn. Pat Flynn was going to be an architect and then he got laid off, and then he decided to start an online business. Thanks for being on the show, Pat. I told them a little bit about your thing. Why don't you tell us the rest of the story?"



There's so many things wrong with that. First thing, when you're introducing someone think about how for your whole life watching Jay Leno, watching Jimmy Fallon, think about how they bring a guest on to a show. They say, "Our next guest has won 5 Academy Awards. They've won 3 Emmy awards for their amazing work on the News Room. Ladies and gentlemen, Jeff Daniels," right?

The last two words of every intro should be someone's name. You never say their name beforehand and here's why. You're trying to edify them. You're trying to make it so you build them up in the audience's brain, and there's a little bit of tension and anticipation that happens. That really comes clear when you're the guest. It makes someone feels really good as the guest.

The second thing you can do with that if you really want to take it to the next level is you can do the 8 Mile approach. You ever see the movie 8 Mile, Pat?

Pat: I love the movie, 8 Mile. [musical interlude by Pat]

Mark: Literally the best "hype me up" song ever. The last scene where Eminem and the other dude are in the battle – do you happen to remember what happened in that, the reason why he won?

Pat: He won because he had just clowned himself before the other guy could do it for him.

Mike: That's right. He took away the other guy's ammo because he used it all on himself, so think about this as an interviewer. If I were bringing Pat on the show for the first time and I really wanted an insightful interview – Pat, if you had to make a guesstimate, how many podcasts have you been on, 500?

Pat: Close to that, yeah.

Mike: So you've said this story at least 500 times. So if I wanted a different story from you, what would be my best move? Of course my best move would be in the intro I would tell the story. I would tell my audience, "My next guest is a guy that many of you know, but if you don't know him, he was going to be an architect," and I would go through your story. It might take me a minute to get through it, however... "Ladies and gentlemen, Pat Flynn."



Now Pat's got no ammo left, which means that Pat has to actually talk and be creative and interesting and fresh and original. As Pat, wouldn't that be way, way, way more interesting of an interview than if you'd said the same thing, even if you weren't ready for it?

Pat: Oh yeah, totally. I love sharing my story, but I love when people ask me different questions.

Mike: Then you're not on autopilot.

Pat: Right. Sometimes, however, people interview me and they say, "Pat, I know you've told this story 100 times, but would you mind telling us how you got to where you are today?" and I'm like, "That's not the way to kind of get into it."

Mike: It's a really hacky interview technique because let's say you went to a college and something big happened at that college, like there was a protest or something. You didn't go to Stanford, did you?

Pat: No way! What?

Mike: USC?

Pat: Gosh, no! You know where I went and that's why you're saying those things.

Mike: I forget.

Pat: You're saying those things because you know where I went – Cal, UC Berkeley, which is like the opposite of those schools.

Mike: I know, I'm kidding. So let's say there was a big protest happening at Cal the years you were there.

Pat: Every weekend, actually.

Mike: Right because it was southern California, but let's say that that happened and I knew that because I did a little bit of research. You don't need to go days and days and days, but you did a little bit of research on Pat Flynn and said, "Okay, in 2008 this happened."



So I could say, "Where did you go to college?" or I could say, "You know, in 2008 there was a massive protest about blah blah blah. What was it like for you to be on campus during that time?" How much more interesting is that as an interview? It's so much richer to have a little bit of research.

The final tip I'll give you is that you know your audience. I'm not going to put him on the spot but I think if I said to Pat, "Give me your avatar" you could probably spit it out pretty easily and be pretty darn close.

Pat: I'm still trying to get up to where John is with his. He has it down.

Mike: Yeah, it's crazy. He's like, "He's like 20 years old, he has a commute of 20 minutes and two kids." If you know that off the top of your head and I'm your guest, I don't know your avatar at all. I have no idea because I haven't maybe listened to every single one of your episodes, and maybe your guest hasn't listened to every single one of your episodes.

So if you do the move, which I think is killing podcasting in the outside world, when you say, "Hey, I've said a little bit about you. Tell the rest of the story," I'm like, "Wait, wait, wait, stop!" Specifically that is your job as the host, for you to narrate that story to your audience because guess what? The guest doesn't know who your audience is.

You need to be the Rosetta Stone. You have to be the translator between that guest and filtering what your guest says to the audience so they can hear it and interpret it in the way that they will get the most value. Does that make sense?

Pat: Completely.

Mike: When people don't do that and they essentially hand the microphone to a stranger and they say, "Yeah, provide value to my audience," whenever anybody does that to me on their show I go, "Well, I start playing racquetball in 2007 and I really hustled. I did a lot of practice," and they're like, "No, no, no, I was talking about.." and I go, "Well, you didn't specify what you were talking about. You just said...."

I do it sometimes, but sometimes I'm nice to them and I say, "Can we not do that? That's really a bad thing to do."

Then I said that was the final one, but the real final one is that you can't launch a podcast with bad audio unless you're Tim Ferriss. Then you can get away with it, but if



you have crappy audio, someone's going to listen to your show for the first time and they'll go, "Oh, this sounds like they recorded it in someone's basement," and they'll never listen again because that's just not how it works anymore. You've got to imagine they're going to be switching from NPR or Howard Stern or Morning Radio to your show, so it should sound as good as those things going out of the gate.

Those are my four bid podcast tips, Pat.

Pat: I love it, Mike. Fantastic tips, I mean stuff I've never heard before either, so a lot of people are going to get a ton out of this. We didn't reach an hour but that's okay because I'm not the Solopreneur Hour. That's you.

Mike: Well, you know, I've got plenty of time. [laughing]

Pat: Dude, I'm really glad you came on the show finally. Mike and I have been talking about doing this for a while and I'm glad we're able to put him in here in the summer of 2015. You'll have to come back on at some point. I've been on your show before and I can't wait to do it again, and I know you always love having guests come back and I'm always happy to do that. I'll make sure to link to all of those episodes on your show here in the show notes of this episode.

Any final parting words, Mike, before we head out?

Mike: Other than just saying, I kid you not, this is a thrill and I'm so honored. I can attribute a huge percentage of my show's success and my success as a solopreneur to Pat Flynn and Smart Passive Income. You're the guy I've referred to 80 million times and you're doing the good work, kid, so thank you very much.

Pat: Thanks, man. So are you. We appreciate you and we'll see you later, Mike.

Mike: Bye bye.

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Pat: I hope you enjoyed that episode with Michael O'Neal. Again, you can visit him at SolopreneurHour.com. I highly recommend you check out his podcast. You can also check out all the links and everything mentioned in this particular episode over at SmartPassiveIncome.com/session164.



I also want to thank today's sponsors. First up: 99designs.com, helping you with all of your website design needs. Whatever you need designed, from a logo to a landing page to a website, to even a t-shirt, you can put up your description of what you want there, and within a couple days, you're going to have dozens of designers from around the world competing for your favorite design. You award that person your design, they get to keep the cash from the contest, and then you get to keep the design.

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I also want to give a shout out really quick to Jordan Harbinger and the crew over at The Art of Charm—one of the other podcasts I've gotten tuned into recently, I've subscribed, I've listened to the show every episode, it's great. I actually asked Jordan the other day if there was one particular episode that stood out to him, and here he is talking about one episode of The Art of Charm podcast.

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Jordan: Recently I interview a buddy of mine, his name is Alex Kouts. He's just this guy who comes from the Silicon Valley business development world, and he's talked about public speaking, he's talked about negotiating, and this episode with negotiation—talk about a surprise. The guy who works on The Art of Charm app, he worked for a large software company, and he recently left, and he's trying to get another gig. And so he walks into this investment bank, going into their IT department. They asked, "What do you do for fun on the side, when you're not at work?" And he said, "Well, I'm working on this app for this company called The Art of Charm that my friend owns." And she said, "Are you serious? I listen to The Art of Charm as well." This is the person interviewing him for the job. "I listen to The Art of Charm as well, and the reason I'm sitting on this side of the desk is because I'm hiring you as my replacement, because I used the negotiation strategies from the Alex Kouts episode to get a promotion and a raise."

Pat: What? Are you serious?



Jordan: I was like, this is unbelievable.

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Pat: Crazy, right? Anyway, Jordan's a great guy, he's a great interviewer, has a lot of content on his site. Go to TheArtofCharm.com, you can check out his podcast, you can also check it out on iTunes. I highly recommend you subscribe. And that particular episode he talks about with Alex Kouts, that's episode 326, and that's where I would start, actually.

Thank you once again for listening in. I appreciate it. Always happy to be here to serve you, and I can't wait to serve you in the next episode of the Smart Passive Income Podcast. Thank you so much for joining me. If you have sec, please go to iTunes and leave a review for the show. I really appreciate it. Cheers, take care, and I'll see you next week. Bye.

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

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