



## **SPI Podcast Session #167 – Chalene Johnson and the Lowdown on Lifers**

Show notes: <http://www.smartpassiveincome.com/episode167>

This is the Smart Passive Income podcast with Pat Flynn, Session #167.

**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, who's 167 pounds of pure hustle, Pat Flynn.

**Pat:** What's up everybody? Pat Flynn here, and thank you so much for joining me today. That song cannot get out of my head. That is is See You Again by Wiz Khalifa and a tribute to Paul Walker from Fast and the Furious, who passed away not too long ago.

I'm so thankful that you're here today because we have an amazing show featuring the one and only Chalene Johnson from the Build Your Tribe podcast, from The Chalene Show, and a whole bunch of other things. You might actually know her as the fitness guru, somebody who's in a lot of DVDs that have come out, millions and millions of copies up there with Tony Horton and Shaun T from Insanity.

I was actually quite surprised that she reached out to me not too long ago and invited me on her podcast. She's made some big shifts in her life since doing the fitness thing and moving on to more of the business and entrepreneurship life-changing type stuff, and she has a lot to say in this episode about that shift - kind of how things were going, and then some bad things that happened and she had to get therapy and all this incredible stuff that she was very open and honest with.

That's partly why I love her so much, but I also love her because she is just a fun beatboxing dancing amazing heartfelt person. When I got invited to her event, The Success Summit, which was in Anaheim not too long ago, I didn't really know what to expect. I didn't know her tribe very well. Again, I had been on her podcast and I had such a great time, so I was more than happy to come and do one of my presentations.

Oh my gosh, it was the craziest coolest most fun crowd I've ever spoken in front of. I've never seen people who were such raving fans of a single person all in one spot, outside of a concert or anything like that. Man, she has some amazing fans, and she calls them



Lifers. You'll hear us talk about Lifers and what she's done to build this amazing fan base.

I know I have amazing fans. You guys are incredible, but the fans that Chalene has are just on a whole other level. It's just insane, and you're going to hear us talk about it in this particular episode. I'm just so thrilled that she's here. Without further rambling, this is Chalene Johnson from the Build Your Tribe podcast, The Chalene Show, and also ChaleneJohnson.com.

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**Pat:** What's up, SPI? Pat here with Chalene Johnson, one of the most incredible people I've met in the last year or two. Chalene, welcome to the SPI podcast.

**Chalene:** What's up? I'm so excited to be here.

**Pat:** You had me speak at your recent event, Success Summit, and I had such an amazing time. Not only were you and your team just incredibly hospitable and just great with keeping me in check with what was going on, but your audience – oh my gosh! It was the best audience I've ever spoken in front of, so thank you and thank your tribe and just thank you.

**Chalene:** Thank you! I really love my Lifers. They are people who I would hang out with, so I'm glad you said that.

**Pat:** And we'll get into your Lifers. Some of you may be going, "What are Lifers?" They are Chalene's raving fans. That's what she calls them, and they call themselves that too, which is really cool. We're going to talk about how she's built that tribe, and I also want to talk about life/work balance too, which I know you are very, very passionate about.

For those of you who don't know who Chalene is, why don't you tell us a little bit about how you got to where you're at today.

**Chalene:** For sure, and thank you for this opportunity, Pat. I've been listening for a long time and sending my customers to listen to Smart Passive Income. The stories you feature on the show are so inspirational because I think they're a lot like ours, just people who are really passionate about helping other people.



If I were to tell you the quick story, it is that I am an entrepreneur at heart. I'm probably best known from doing fitness infomercials. We've done millions and millions of DVD sales of exercise videos, but it's never what I set out to do. I studied justice, morality, and constitutional democracy in college. I know, right?

I put myself through school at Michigan State by flipping cars. I would buy a car from the State of Michigan really cheap and then I would just basically buff it out, have it painted, clean it up, clean the engine, and then sell it to a private owner.

**Pat:** So you're like the original Pimp My Ride?

**Chalene:** [laughing] Yeah, totally! But you know I'm 5'2" and blonde, and a lot of these transactions were in not very nice areas of Detroit, and I did this on my own. I was this 17- and 18-year-old girl with a purse full of cash going to buy vehicles in sketchy parts of town, or I was waiting for someone to come to my house so I could show them my vehicle. Then they wouldn't show, or they would show up and they were kind of sketchy.

**Pat:** That just sounds sketchy overall.

**Chalene:** When you're young you don't know, but I did sense that there was something probably not that safe about it. If nothing else it was inconvenient, so my first business was I provided a place where anyone who was selling their own used vehicle and anyone who was in the market to buy a used vehicle – not from a dealer but from a private owner – we would all meet on a Saturday at a location I rented from the state. I called it the All-Michigan Auto Swap Meet. Then I would take a percentage of the sale of the vehicle.

I was solving my own problem. This was great for me. I could sell a vehicle in like an hour, and then look at all these other people. I could help them because they were in the same boat. It wasn't a huge business but it was enough to help me get through college and pay my bills.

I was thinking I was going to law school and I was studying to be a paralegal and teaching fitness classes because I loved it. It just gave me joy. We both share that in common. Fitness just makes me patient. It makes me happy. It makes me balanced, so I loved teaching these fitness classes but it seemed like a losing proposition because there was so much time spent creating these workouts and they don't pay much.



So again I thought, "Well, I'll solve this problem for people who love teaching fitness classes. I'll develop a kind of paint-by-number workout so that instructors could just buy this program and they would know then what to teach to their students, including music."

That really took off, to the point that I decided, "Okay, I'm not going to go to law school. This is huge." At one point we had almost 100,000 instructors around the globe in 30 different countries, and I turned it into a certification for instructors, which developed into 5 different formats and a fitness apparel company, just a whole culture.

Then I started doing these motivational camps around it called Camp Do-More, and we had 70 area promotion directors. Those were the people, a couple in each state, who would book the events and pack the events, and it was huge and it was successful and it was very stressful.

**Pat:** For those of you listening, you probably don't know how big Chalene Johnson is. She is huge! She's sold millions of DVDs. She's up there with the likes of Shaun T, who I've gotten to know very well through Insanity, and Tony Horton and all the Beach Body people. She's got Hip Hop Hustle, Turbo Kick, Turbo Fire, PiYo, and all these other incredibly successful fitness programs.

That's what you were well-known for, but now you've sort of walked away – or not walked away but you've switched gears. Tell me the reason for switching.

**Chalene:** Probably like most entrepreneurs, I just always thought everything I could do myself would save us money. We were a shoestring operation. We never took out any loans. It was my husband and I doing it ourselves.

Really a lot of it in the early days I was trying to do everything myself, giving everyone else as little as possible because the honest truth is – I think sometimes we like to say, "Well, I was a control freak or I thought I was saving us money," but in order for me to be honest and to change I had to really take an honest look at why I wasn't letting go of things. I can say today that the reason why I didn't let go of things is because I wanted the credit.

If someone would say, "Wow, that was a really great design for that t-shirt," if that wasn't something I designed then I would feel inadequate. I needed to get all the credit. I wanted everyone to say, "No way! You did that too?" and it was at a cost.



So then what happened is we have this company that's growing through word-of-mouth by serving fitness instructors and building this popularity through word-of-mouth for Turbo Kick at the time, and PiYo and Hip Hop Hustle, but really Turbo Kick. It was about the same year that – do you remember Winsor Pilates?

**Pat:** Yeah, I do actually.

**Chalene:** Winsor Pilates and Tae Bo were really big that year, so all the infomercial companies were kind of on the hunt for the next big group fitness program. I'd collected over the years this book of people's weight loss, their photos and their stories. They weren't my students, they were other instructors' students, but I was proud of their results and that they were doing it for years, so I would save these photos and emails, and that book became legendary. We started getting calls from everybody who wanted us to do an infomercial with them.

We did sign with Beach Body and they were the new guy on the block at the time, but there was something about the fact that they didn't want to change a thing. They were like, "We get it. We get you. We're not going to try to make this anything that it's not. We like the sound effects. We like your edge. We like that it doesn't make sense." They liked all of that, so we did our first couple infomercials with them.

Now I was answering to consumers and all of the huge number of moving parts of a big corporation that's doing infomercials, and I'm running an apparel company, and I'm overseeing 70 area promotions directors, and I personally am starring in and creating every one of these exercise programs, and I'm cutting the music, and I'm licensing the music, and I almost killed myself.

**Pat:** You had books too that you were writing at the time as well, right?

**Chalene:** No, not yet. That came later. That was part of the revelation, but it was too much. I always knew it was but I was doing a lot of this from home, so I could always justify it. "See? I'm a stay at home mom. I'm running my business from home. Isn't this great?" but I really was never present and I couldn't relax. The truth is I was really resentful if I saw anyone else relaxing or sitting still.

**Pat:** Talk more about that. What do you mean by that?

**Chalene:** I was probably awful to be married to, because if I saw my husband sit down on the couch and doze off I could feel anger bubbling up inside of me like, "I



can't rest so why does anyone else get to rest?" But the honesty in the situation was I couldn't rest because I wouldn't allow myself to. It was my own prison.

I felt sorry for myself, which is so weird. I felt sorry for myself like, "All of this is on my shoulders. It's all on me," yet when anyone would try to help me I'd be like, "Oh no, no, I got it, I can do that. No, I got that. I'll take care of that too," so everyone just kind of let me keep doing that because I would force people to let me do everything.

There were a lot of signs. I don't want to say it was like one big day. There were lots of signs. There were lots of red flags that this wasn't going to go well. I couldn't keep this up – not just the way I felt, but other signs, a lot of them. I think people are always waiting for that big sign to make a change in their lives, like a car accident or a serious illness in the family, and those things were happening but that wasn't the sign I needed.

My husband just one day was walking out the door and he was in a really bad mood and I said, "What's wrong? Why are you in a bad mood? What's wrong?" and he just looked at me and he goes, "This will never end, will it?" and I was like, "What? What will never end? Of course it will. Honey, when this project is done then..." and I could tell there was a look in his eye and he just said, "I'm not happy with this." I said, "You're not happy with us? What are you saying?"

It was the first time in my whole life I just felt my stomach drop, and it was a shock because my husband is just always the guy who's like, "Hey, whatever. If that's good for you it's good for me, honey." I'd never heard those words and it was like somebody had told me my life was over.

I really felt the bottom drop out, just the look in his eyes. It was something that scared me to the core and I'm like, "I'm not happy and you're not happy. Why are we doing this? Let's end it. Let's sell everything and let's just go live in a cardboard box, because dude, I don't need to do this."

The funny thing is we were in business together and we talked all the time, but we didn't really talk about that kind of thing. He'd never told me. I saw he was in a bad mood, and he would see I was in a bad mood, and if I saw that he was kind of like on eggshells I could figure out that if I could come up with a quick fix, like we could run a sale or I could book another event, that he would kind of get in a better mood.

I always thought, "Okay, so if I can find more ways to earn income that keeps him happy," and he thought, "Well, she's happiest when she's doing lots of things." We just



never really talked about what we wanted – what we wanted to feel, what we wanted for each other, what really makes us happy. We'd never had that conversation.

**Pat:** Yeah, until it finally came out, so what would you recommend? I think a lot of people can relate to that, just chugging along, not really focusing on why even sometimes. What would you recommend for people to potentially avoid that situation, hopefully before they get to that burnout period?

**Chalene:** First of all, I can't prescribe priorities to anyone other than those who are ready to just really look at what's important to you. For me it was my family. Nothing matters more than my family – not money or toys or notoriety, none of that, and that's the truth. I really was willing to go live in a cardboard box, as long as I had my husband and my children with me.

I think that people have to stop just going after goals because it seems like a great goal to chase after. Instead of setting goals based on what I would like to have or what I would like to accomplish, I ask people to sit down and say, "What do you want to feel? A year from now, if I had a magic wand and I could change everything that wasn't working, everything that caused you stress, everything that upsets you, everything you're doing that you don't like doing, what would you expect to wake up and feel?"

That's what we started with, and I didn't want to feel responsible anymore. I didn't want to feel tired. I didn't want to feel distracted. I wanted to feel one word – I wanted to feel peace, and we both did.

Pat, I have to tell you it felt like a desperate moment for me and for Brett, but I knew there was no other option. The worst case scenario is we live on the streets, but who cares, we're together, but we have to get out from under this.

Then we set out to create a plan to reverse-engineer what we had done, basically. We sat down and put together a plan to figure out how to get ourselves out of a business that at that point completely was dependent upon me. We had to figure out how do we transition our customers so that they will accept and love seeing other people in the videos, and how do we train somebody else to do the music, and how do I not be the brand.

**Pat:** I think that's a big struggle that a lot of us go through. Even with the Smart Passive Income, a lot of people know that although it's called Smart Passive Income it's Pat Flynn's website. I know that I'm dedicated to this website, although sometimes we



get into this mode where we feel like we have to just keep going and keep producing and this sort of thing. We often forget sometimes why we're doing what we're doing.

I'm very lucky to be working at home and being here with my family, which motivates me all the time and does remind me from day to day why I continue to do the work that I need to do – that, and also having an amazing audience who is there and very responsive and very thankful for the work that I do. I'm so thankful for all of you, obviously, just like I know, Chalene, you are to your audience as well. It's very, very obvious.

In terms of the actual things you put into place there and taking yourself out of the business a little bit, can you walk us through kind of what that looked like and what the end result was?

**Chalene:** We started by thinking about what would the end result need to look like. We knew at that point we wanted to sell the business and we wanted to sell a profitable business. At that moment it was profitable, but we worried that – for example, if Smart Passive Income the podcast each week was suddenly being hosted by someone else, will you lose listeners? So we set out to create brands that weren't dependent upon me, and then worked backwards.

If at the end it's all other instructors who are in all of the videos, then what would it look like 6 months before that? Then maybe I'm only in one per quarter. And what would it look like a year before that? At that point maybe I'm just introducing new instructors. We kind of gradually went backwards and sketched out what it would need to look like in every single area where I had put myself on the reins.

Then we had to go, "How long is this going to take, and how do we stay accountable? What can we agree to between the two of us?" Ultimately we just kept reminding ourselves what it is we wanted. At every turn, each time I turned something over I felt better and better and better.

The other thing I think is really important to be honest about is therapy. Brett and I had to do therapy. We've done marriage counseling, but I think the piece that really made it possible was Brett doing counseling to figure out to have a voice, how to speak up. In the past I would say, "Hey, let's take on this new project!" and he'd be like, "Okay, if that makes you happy," so he needed to have a voice.

I didn't know it at the time but I was like, "I'll do therapy but my only problem is I'm a workaholic. I don't know if that's a bad thing," you know what I mean? I really kind of





thought, "Well, I just have to work less." But what I realized by doing therapy was that there was, for whatever reason, this belief I held that there wasn't value to me unless I was creating income for other people, unless I was making money for people. If I wasn't doing that I wasn't important.

I had to figure out where that came from and why I thought that way, and that was kind of a surprise to me. It was like, "Oh! That's why I will work through the night. That's why it bothers me if somebody else were to get the opportunity."

I'm so glad I did therapy because I know I would still be dealing with that today. I know I would still be saying yes to everything, for fear that I might not be making enough money or that I wasn't valuable.

**Pat:** I think a lot of people think therapy is a very negative thing, sort of like an emergency situation or a last resort. But I heard you speak about it at your event and it was completely the opposite actually.

**Chalene:** Yeah, we won't take on clients unless they agree to do therapy, because for most people that's the breakthrough. You would go to the dentist if you had a toothache, so if you have what I call "the same skip in your record" and you keep doing this thing like, "I wish I didn't feel so compelled to work on the weekends" and you keep having that "skip in the record," that skip in the record is a groove in your brain, so go to an expert and have them smooth it out for you.

It's like the ultimate shortcut. I always say, "Smart people do therapy," and I hope we change the stigma, because we'd save lives, we'd save marriages, we'd save children. We could save the world if more people would go and talk to someone.

**Pat:** So you were able to eventually turn things around and sell the business, correct?

**Chalene:** Yeah, we sold our business.

**Pat:** And what was that like internally? That was such a huge thing. You took yourself out of the business and finally sold that. Was that like a weight lifted off your shoulder?

**Chalene:** It was a weight lifted off my shoulder and it was also a grieving process that I wasn't expecting. I had to grieve because it's like raising a baby and then turning it over to an orphanage who didn't give birth to this baby. You're like, "Wait, wait, wait! Don't forget to hold the baby's head!" I'm not going to lie, it was really hard for me to let go at first.



Part of my consulting with Beach Body, I'm sure they would tell you I was such a pain in the butt. I was supposed to be consulting but I had my foot in every door like, "Wait a second! Let me re-read that email before it goes out." Then eventually they were like, "We got it. By the way, we're a billion dollar company. We got it."

**Pat:** You sold your business to Beach Body, and then they kind took over what you had started, but you kept wanting to adjust things and make things your way.

**Chalene:** Yeah, and then I got some advice from a retired physician, a friend of the family, and he explained something to me. He goes, "Chalene, you know I sold one of my businesses once and I'll just never forget when I showed up to the board meeting one day and I was pounding my fist telling them how they're doing everything wrong, an older gentleman put his hand on my shoulder and he said, 'Hey Mark, they just want you to be quiet and sit in the corner.'"

I was like, "Okay, I get it." I have to let them do it their own way or what would be the point? It just came to the point where I'm like, "They're going to do it their way and they're going to do it better and I just have to let go so I can do my own thing as well as I can," but I did feel guilt and I did feel a sense of relief.

During the negotiations of our business we couldn't tell our employees. We just couldn't, so because of that and knowing that was our plan for about three years, at that 3-year mark this is what we did. You can ask any of my former employees.

We said, "Y'all are going to start your own business, every one of you. You need to start your business and you can work on it here at the office during office hours once your own work is done, because we love you and we believe that everyone should have their own business someday, so you guys should do that," and most of them did. I'd say 80% of our employees, because we were teaching entrepreneurship, were starting their own businesses online and trying to create passive income.

We did that because I didn't want to pull the rug from under anyone. In my perfect vision of how this would go down, I wanted us to be able to sit down with our employees when we were able to tell them and say, "But now you have a choice, and now you can decide to go with our new parent company or you can decide if it's the time for you to embark on your own full-time business," and I'd say we were about half and half.



**Pat:** That's incredible, Chalene. Thank you for being honest with all that in this sort of first part of your journey here, but obviously this is the closing of one door and opening of another. What does that new door look like at this point?

**Chalene:** I'm always trying to solve problems for people, and once this chapter – I don't want to say it's over because it's fitness and I'm still working with Beach Body and still consulting, and I'm still obviously doing fitness videos, but it's not my primary source of income.

Now my primary source of income, my passion, my purpose is #1 it has to be passive, as passive as possible so that my day is balanced so that I can say no and I can say yes to my family and so I can relax, and so I can see somebody else relaxing and I can think, "Hey, maybe I'll take a nap too."

So today what we do is teach other people how to do what we've done, how to get themselves out of what I call success prison, how to get yourself out of that, what that plan looks like, and more importantly how to execute it and then maintain it so you don't fall back into those trappings.

We have an online academy called Smart Success and that's what we teach to entrepreneurs, how to do it the right way, the smart way from every inch of your life so that you have more time and that you don't fill that time with more work. Then we also teach online marketing.

I always want to teach whatever I've just figured out, so for me I had no clue. I'm like, "Okay, we're going to start a business where we help people with personal development," because I was writing this book, *Push*, and my agent said, "I'm not going to take you to New York and shop you around..." because I didn't want to do a diet book. He was like, "I can get you a diet book tomorrow, but without an email list, Chalene – you say you want to write a personal development book – you can't get that book deal, not with the companies you want unless you have an email list." I was like, "Okay, how do I get one?" [laughing]

I just took every seminar and workshop and just decided to study it. It's not my natural propensity, all of those pieces, so once I figured it out I was like, "Oh, this is kind of fun. It's a constantly moving target. I want to teach other people who are like me who are creative and don't necessarily love that stuff, but you have to know it and I want to teach them how to do it."



**Pat:** That's great. I think the email list is obviously very important, but to a lot of people who are getting into new things, when they hear that they're like, "Ugh, that's such a mysterious thing." So you went to these seminars and what was it about these seminars that helped you build up your email list and begin this following?

**Chalene:** Well, if I had been smart I would have listened to a lot more podcasts, but at the time all I could think to do was to Google it. I would look for a seminar that would teach basically list building or online marketing, and just learned by piecing it all together.

The first thing I figured out was that I had to give people a gift. My goal was to have 100,000 people on my email list in the first year, so that's what we did in the first year. I created a series, and you can still see them – some of them are even still the original videos if you go to [30daypush.com](http://30daypush.com).

This was the plan that I hatched to help people identify with me as someone who helps with personal development, so here's what I did. I flipped over my laptop and I filmed like a 5-minute video every day for 30 days, talking about how I kind of organize my life on my iPhone. I talked about this concept that I have called a push goal, and how I create a special way of making a list, and all these pieces.

It was very, very informal and no budget. I literally flipped open my laptop, and then I hosted those videos and would exchange people those videos, which they would get dripped out one per day for 30 days, for their email address.

I spent 30 days with people. The ones who get through it, we've been through the trenches together. I don't know if I'd recommend that to people because 30 days is a long time to keep people's attention, but if people spend 30 days with you, you're like buds.

They were in my home and it was very informal and it felt very natural and real. I was honest and you'd hear the dogs barking in the background. A lot of those videos are still up, and I've updated some of them just because I was like, "Oh my god, why did somebody even let me post this? It was so bad."

Here's a great story. The year that book released, I published with Rodale and I was able to get that book deal not because of my notoriety. I didn't have a show on the air that year. Nobody knew my name, but that year P90X, the Tony Horton show, was #1. People were singing about it in pop songs and they were talking about it on late night TV and every celebrity was doing P90X. It was like THE program to do.



Tony and I are friends so he knows I share this story, but we both published our first books with Rodale. That year, despite his popularity and notoriety, because I completely focused on an email list, my book hit the New York Times bestseller list the first week and his didn't make the list.

It has nothing to do with the content of the books, unfortunately. You can have a phenomenal book and it can be the most unique thing ever, it can be earth shattering, but if you don't have an email list it's just really hard to reach people, so that's what we did.

It was that 30 day push. It was those videos I created from flipping open my laptop and just talking from my heart, not with a teleprompter, just from my heart. "Here I am and here's how I've created my success, and here's how I want to help you." It really created a tight bond with people.

**Pat:** I love that because that was your goal, just to build that email list, and that had this dramatic effect on other aspects of your life. We talk often on this podcast about the book called [The One Thing](#) by Gary Keller and Jay Papasan. They talk about this thing called the domino effect, where if you just focus on that one first thing, it kind of affects everything else. That one focus which made it really easy for you to decide what to do and what videos to create and things like that was all about that email list.

That's a funny story because I was big into Tony Horton and P90X. A lot of people know that I actually did the program. I have a before and after shot on SPI somewhere in the archive. I'm going to pull that back up for this podcast.

If I were to ask you now, Chalene, how big your following is, how big would you say it would be?

**Chalene:** I don't know. Do you include email list and social media platforms?

**Pat:** How big is your email list now?

**Chalene:** I think we're probably around 400,000 or 500,000. We clean it up a lot, but it's hefty.

**Pat:** That is hefty. Your super power, Chalene, is your personality. When we see you on stage and even when we hear you on this podcast you can tell it's very easy to



connect with you. I believe that's been part of the reason why you've been able to create these Lifers, as you call them, these incredible raving fans.

I was at your event, and every time you walked in the room the whole space would just flock and everybody's eyes were on you and it was incredible! I'd never seen anything like that. I go to events every once in a while and I get people coming over to me saying, "Pat, I love your show" and things like that, and that feels incredible. I can't even imagine what it would be like at yours. I mean you're a celebrity, Chalene.

**Chalene:** It's interesting you should say that because you just made me flash to a thought. When I go into a fitness event, like for example I'll do these large fitness events where there's 10,000 or even 20,000 people at an event, I don't feel that same connection as I do when it's one of my events where I'm looking for you and I'm going to find you and I'm going to know when I find you.

My parents were attendees this year and my mom goes, "Hmm, you certainly have a type, don't you?" and I'm like, "What does that mean?" because you look out in the audience and they're all ages and sizes and shapes and ethnicities, but there's a type, and the reason why is this – I want to be happy so I only want to work with people who I really like. If I don't like you, I don't want to work with you. I don't want you to buy my products. I don't want to try to please you. Go find somebody else.

I want to be happy, so I want to serve people who I like in real life, so I have to be so mean that I'm going to offend somebody who wouldn't like me and I wouldn't like them. But it's so boldly me that someone's like, "Oh, she's exactly like my best friend."

Like today just before our podcast I connected with this gal on Instagram. You get that call all the time, people who want to come over and pick your brain. I say no 20,000 times a year, but there was just something about her, and she's not a paid client. I'm like, "Yeah, get over here. I'm going to give you 2 hours," and I just sat across the table from her.

I thought, "I already know you and I already get you, so let me just take my brain out and download it into yours because I get you, I know you, and I want to take care of you for nothing because that makes me happy." It makes me happy to be around people who it's like, "I like you. I know you're a good person and I want to help you."

That's what a Lifer is for me. I can tell you the qualities I look for and I'm going to find you:



- A sense of humor
- You like pop culture and rap music
- You don't take yourself too seriously
- You're very humble
- Faith is important to you and family is paramount
- You might be opinionated, but you're always kind to people
- You're a helper and you're a giver
- You are my girl, you are my guy, get in my car

**Pat:** I think that's why we've connected really quickly.

**Chalene:** Yeah. I mean I could tell the first time I listened to your podcast. I'm like, "Wait a second, is he rapping?" [laughing]

**Pat:** We were up together on stage and that was fun. That was really cool. Do you get the opposite too, which I know a lot of us get. Do you get haters?

**Chalene:** Sure. Delete, delete, delete, delete.

**Pat:** If you are you and it's real easy for people to not like who you are, that can be hard sometimes.

**Chalene:** Yeah, but you have to let them not like you and just say, "I'm not supposed to be your cup of tea." Recently I was consulting with a client of ours who's opened up a fitness studio, and they were telling us all about the brand and the image and this experience they want people to come in and have, but they just opened their doors and they've had a couple complaints the first week or so from new customers.

My client called and said, "We need to refund these people their money. We want them to come back so we're going to tell our staff how things kind of need to be a little different."

I'm like, "Don't change your ways for that customer you don't want anyway, because then when someone comes in who was looking for what you intended to create it's not there. Give people something that is so bold that they're like, "That is exactly what I've been looking for.

**Pat:** Right, or it's very clear on the other end, "That's something I'm not looking for."



**Chalene:** Yeah, and I personally am affected by that so I don't expose myself to it. If there are negative comments on Facebook, my staff knows to delete them. Don't let me see it because I'll spend all day composing a reply that I never send, you know what I mean? Just delete it for me so I don't let it get into my brain.

I really had to learn this by doing consumer videos because people buy exercise videos and they would just want to hammer you because they didn't do the program. In the beginning I would read the reviews and they were just like so mean. I was like, "Wait a second. This is affecting my confidence, which then doesn't allow me to make a difference in people's lives, so I have to stop reading this."

I always say unless it's something I can truly change and it's going to help me, I don't want to hear the negative. I want to be around people who get me and I don't have to change, because I get them. If they feel that way, I will take care of you. That's why I call them a Lifer because no matter what I'm learning next, for the rest of my life I'm going to help you.

**Pat:** Haters used to ruin me. I would stop working for weeks.

**Chalene:** You'd stop working? Or would you do that, "I'm going to compose this 'This is going to change your life' email."

**Pat:** I've done that. I've written the emails, pages and essays long, and then I don't send them obviously, because when you finally sleep on it it's like, "Oh, that was dumb." It would accomplish nothing.

**Chalene:** Yeah. I know I shouldn't reply, but if I just can't help it I have one phrase. I'll say, "Maybe we should break up. We're not good for each other." If someone has something rude to say or is disagreeable I'm like, "You're probably right. Maybe we should break up. There's probably somebody out there for you and it's probably not me."

**Pat:** There are plenty of fish in the sea.

In terms of your Lifers, again, they're incredible. They lift you up so much. How do you nurture your raving fan base? How do you nurture your Lifers? For all of us out there, no matter how big or small our raving fans are – and it's great to have raving fans, you want to be somebody's favorite; that's really what your goal is, you are the favorite to a lot of people – so how do you nurture them?





**Chalene:** I've heard many tremendous interviews on your show and I think the theme is you give and give. For me, I want to give sometimes, and I do give sometimes, what I know you need, even if it's not what you want. I think I have a motherly instinct, I guess. I don't care if you want to break up with me and you get mad at me and you don't want to hear it. I know you need to do this.

I have an academy called The Marketing Impact Academy, and when people go into it I tell them right away, "Everybody wants to learn social media. That's what they want, but I won't give it to them until they do what they need to do, which is really identify their Lifer and then create several different premiums. Then you go to social media."

What's the point of going, "Hey, follow me on Facebook if you like this video. Head on over to YouTube for the rest of this video. And if you like us on YouTube, why don't you head over to Instagram?" You just keep sending people on this wild goose chase because you have no place to send them.

It's like tough love and total honesty and transparency. All I have is my word, and that's important to me, so I do things not because you're supposed to, I do things because it feels right. It feels like this is a way to treat good people.

**Pat:** Another thing I know that you do is you put on these events, and they're amazing. They're some of the most fun events I've done. Obviously you have a great team to help you put those together. Kristen is amazing, and all the other people on your team.

In terms of events, this is something that I'm starting to get into now. I've done an event with Chris Ducker, the 1-Day Business Breakthrough event, and that's always a fun thing to do. How do you make sure your audience when they're at these events gets the most out of it?

**Chalene:** From my own experience. You've attended seminars or live events where you're like, "Okay, so what did I love about this and what did I hate about it?" That's what I'm always doing, is thinking about things in terms of what I would want, because I'm serving me. Everybody in my audience is a lot like me. We're just in the same boat.

I know you hate to sit. I know that you don't need motivation. You're the most motivated person on the planet so you don't need more motivation. You actually need to be locked in a room and told how to do it and then given the time to do it.



I would go to seminars and it's like I don't need to be motivated. I'm very motivated. This is great, all this theory, but now I'm going to need to take a month off to do this stuff. That was always a frustration when I would attend seminars, workshops, single-day events, so one thing I said is #1 I'm going to get people up all the time. I'm going to make it comfortable to network, but not awkward, not force it. I'm also going to make sure that if people are going to come to an event, I owe it to them to help them get a lot of that work done while they're there.

**Pat:** I've been to events and those are my favorite, actually, where the director or somebody even in a specific presentation will give people time to implement or write things down.

That was something I noticed after I spoke at your event. You were on right after me to talk about something, and then you had people fill out these worksheets or something, and you were getting into it. I think you were in the crowd and reading people's answers and stuff. That was really cool.

**Chalene:** You know, I think people walk away with this high and this euphoria from live events, but the power is while you're at a live event. You and I have both talked about this. I'm what I call an outgoing introvert, so I have to pick and choose very carefully what things I'm going to go to.

It's very powerful to do that because when you're in a room there's this energy force where suddenly you have like this flood of your most brilliant ideas and your juices just start flowing. It's incredible what you can accomplish with all the focus and all the synapses are firing, and it's because you're in a room full of people who are doing that same thing. It's just insane how powerful that is.

Then you go home and your wife is like, "You take the kids. I've had them all weekend." Then you're back to the grind and there's 400 emails that you neglected to return because you were in a seminar, and you've lost that energy, that power, those synapses. It gets tucked away in a notebook and you never implement.

I just said, "I've got to take advantage of all these people in a room. We're going to do the work." We're not working the entire time, but instead of being at the bar or instead of long breaks in-between it's like, "Fine, if you need to leave, leave; otherwise, these doors are closed and you should do the work. Let's sit down and do the work. Let's do it," and we walk them through it and they do the work.



In some of my seminars I just tell you, "You should write this sequence of 4 email, and now we're writing them. Let's write these emails," and you actually do it while you're there. People are like, "I've been putting this off, this simple task, for a year."

**Pat:** I love that. I'm thinking if I'm at a conference and I'm sitting in a presentation and it's great and I want to implement, I should just raise my hand at the end and be like, "Hey, if anybody else wants to do this, I'm going to spend the next hour doing this. Who wants to do it with me?"

**Chalene:** Wouldn't that be huge?

**Pat:** That would be awesome.

**Chalene:** Yeah, and that's the key I think for most entrepreneurs and people who are listening to Smart Passive Income and listening to Build Your Tribe. It's not just the knowledge or carving out a half hour or an hour to listen. It's then the extra hour that you are scheduling to implement it. You've heard the idea. Your brain just came up with a flood of possibilities, so now schedule the time to implement it and then your life changes exponentially.

**Pat:** I love that. You actually scared me a second ago because you were like, "You get home from a conference and your wife tells you to take the kids," and my wife told me to take the kids the last few days. She's had a couple days off. And then you're like, "And then you have 400 unread emails." I'm looking at my inbox right now and I have 397 unread emails.

**Chalene:** See? I have spyware on your computer.

**Pat:** Yeah, where are you in my room right now? This is tripping me out.

**Chalene:** That does happen because most of us are attracted to an opposite, which is really good because she keeps you grounded.

**Pat:** Oh yeah, she's amazing. I talk about her all the time. She's the unsung hero of Team Flynn. Everybody knows that. But it's funny because I also know that after conferences I get all these emails and then I schedule ahead of time, because I plan ahead, a day or two to go through these emails, and I'll catch up by the end of the week.



That's what I've learned after these conferences. Plan ahead. Give yourself a few days to recover, but also schedule in the things that you know you have to do to get back to where you were.

**Chalene:** There's more time for vacation if in those times where your brain is on fire and you have all these great ideas, instead of using that last day to lounge by the pool, use that last day to implement. Then you'll have more time for vacation later, when you can actually enjoy it when you're with your family.

If there's one take-away I hope people hear today it is you've got to schedule time to implement these incredible ideas, or they just keep piling up and then you just feel like a failure. You're like, "Aaahh! There's all these things I know I should be doing. There's all these things I need to get to, and I'm not doing it."

You just keep seeing people, "Oh, this person's doing Pinterest now, and that person's doing a podcast, and maybe I should do this." You just start to feel overwhelmed and like a failure.

**Pat:** So after this podcast or after any podcast you listen to, any blog post you read, any video you watch, any conference you go to, put in the time afterwards. Schedule it in when you're going to do whatever it is that you need to do. I love that. That's a huge take-away.

Let's talk about your podcast really quick. I want to make sure people listen to it because it's awesome with your personality, obviously, and amazing guests. I'm not just saying that because I was a guest on the show, too, but I've listened to a number of episodes and they're fantastic.

You even did, like I did in Episode 138, one of those NPR storytelling type episodes. Do you remember the episode number?

**Chalene:** I don't give my podcast episode numbers. I just give them titles.

**Pat:** What was the title of that one?

**Chalene:** "The End." I have two shows. The business podcast is called Build Your Tribe, and The Chalene Show is kind of like life balance. It's everything.

**Pat:** I love that, so we'll put those links in the show notes for everybody out there.



**Chalene:** Boy, that was a lot more work than I thought it was, that NPR-style episode, but gosh it was fun! I'm like, "I'm addicted!" But I've got my husband to keep me in check. I'm sitting in my podcasting room, which is a tiny little wine closet and I had everything removed and soundproofed, so I call it my little introvert hide-away.

**Pat:** But if you had the time you would do those all the time?

**Chalene:** Oh yes! I just love that someone would listen, especially that people who listen to podcasts are learners and I dig that. I love that people are curious and want to hear these stories and find inspiration in them and change their lives and change the world. To think that someone is actually listening to us is like the coolest thing in the world.

**Pat:** There are tens of thousands of people listening to us right now.

**Chalene:** Oh, there's more than one? There's more than just my mom?

**Pat:** Thank you so much for all the inspiration, all the honesty, and obviously the advice. This is great. We're going to do what we can to put all your good stuff in the show notes, everything that we mentioned in the Resources. Chalene, any final words before we head out?

**Chalene:** I just want to commend you for being such a cool and committed dad and husband, because that to me is what really attracted me to what it is you do and why you do it, so thank you, Pat.

**Pat:** Thank you, Chalene. I can't wait till we see each other again, and hopefully we can share a stage together again sometime soon.

**Chalene:** I'm going to challenge you now to a lip sync battle.

**Pat:** By the way, I'm going to link to this too in the show notes, because this just popped in my head. You had challenged me on Instagram a couple days ago to a Dubsmash challenge. For those of you listening, if you don't know what that is, it's basically when you put on some audio and then mouth it, pretending it's you, whether it's a song or just people talking. Did you see my response Dubsmashed?

**Chalene:** No, I did not.

**Pat:** It's on Instagram, and somebody said that I killed yours.



**Chalene:** Really? We'll see about that. No, it's okay.

**Pat:** So there might be some back and forth, but it's there for you. Thank you for the challenge. I think it's always great just to challenge each other like that. I love how you just kind of randomly, "Hey Pat Flynn, this is for you. See what you can do." It's always good to have friends in business, and you are definitely a big friend of mine, so thank you.

**Chalene:** Thank you, Pat.

**Pat:** Take care.

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I hope you enjoyed that episode with Chalene Johnson. I also recommend checking out our Instagram accounts. She's @chalenejohnson, I'm @patflynn. For a while there a month ago we were going back and forth with some Dubsplash competition videos and having a lot of fun with that.

If you're in the Chalene Johnson tribe, if you're a Lifer, thank you so much for listening to this. I appreciate you. If you're not a Lifer yet, go ahead and check her out at the [Build Your Tribe](#) podcast. You can also find her at [The Chalene Show](#) and also [ChaleneJohnson.com](#).

Thank you so much, and don't forget to go to [SmartPassiveIncome.com/session167](#) to get all the links and the resources mentioned in this particular episode.

I also want to thank this episode's sponsor, 99Designs.com. If you go to [99Designs.com/spi](#) you'll get a \$99 Power Pack of services for free, which you can put towards your next design project, whatever you need designed for your business.

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Thanks so much. I appreciate you and I'll see you in the next episode of the Smart Passive Income podcast. Cheers!

**Outro:** Thanks for listening to the Smart Passive Income podcast at [www.SmartPassiveIncome.com](http://www.SmartPassiveIncome.com).

### **Links and Resources Mentioned in This Episode:**

[ChaleneJohnson.com](http://ChaleneJohnson.com)

[Chalene on Instagram](#)

[Build Your Tribe Podcast](#)

[The Chalene Show](#)

[Push: 30 Days to Turbcharged Habits, a Bangin' Body, and the Life You Deserve](#)

[30DayPush.com](http://30DayPush.com)

[The One Thing by Gary Keller and Jay Papasan](#)

[AskPat.com](http://AskPat.com)

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