



## **SPI Podcast Session #182– How to Write Copy that Converts With Ray Edwards**

Show notes: [smartpassiveincome.com/session182](http://smartpassiveincome.com/session182)

This is the Smart Passive Income podcast with Pat Flynn, Session #182.

**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 once registered a domain name while out on a run – Pat Flynn.

**Pat:** Hey, what's up everybody? Pat Flynn here. Thank you so much for joining me today. This is Episode 182 of the Smart Passive Income podcast, and I'm really, really honored and blessed to have Ray Edwards on the show with us today.

How do I describe him? He is the Grand Master of Copywriting, I would say. He and I have gotten to know each other over the last year or year and a half, ever since getting into a mastermind group together. I've always known about him. A lot of my friends have talked about him before, and to be in a mastermind group with him – I'm just so blessed because he is a wealth of knowledge, and you'll hear it when he starts talking in this episode about how we can all write copy that better converts.

This is for our emails, our sales copy, our calls to action within our blog posts and videos and podcast episodes, and you'll hear it just in the way he teaches. He's just engulfed in this world of how do we get people excited and how do we get people to take action on the words that we use.

You're going to get a Grand Master education here for free, where I would have literally paid \$1,000 for this episode and the frameworks that he talks about. It's going to change a lot of people's lives. This is one of those episodes that I feel is going to live a very long time here on SPI, definitely evergreen content, and you're hearing it here right now. Here we go. This is Ray Edwards from RayEdwards.com.

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**Pat:** What's up everybody? Pat here and I'm so excited to welcome Ray Edwards from RayEdwards.com to the SPI podcast. Ray, welcome to the show.



**Ray:** Thank you, Pat, and I'm so excited too because you don't know this – I'm going to spring this on you –

**Pat:** You're starting with a "you don't know this?" Oh gosh.

**Ray:** Yes. I first heard of you quite a number of years ago because I was listening to another podcast, one of the first business-y kind of podcasts I ever listened to, one called Internet Business Master. That's where I heard about your podcast and started listening to you back in the early days.

**Pat:** No way. I didn't know that's how you learned about me. That's really cool. I learned about you – and I haven't told you this – but I learned about you through Cliff Ravenscraft, through listening to his show. He and I became good friends a number of years ago when I was starting my podcast, and he kept talking about you and I was so happy to have recently met you too. Now you and I are in a mastermind group together and we talk almost every week.

**Ray:** It's funny what a small world it turns out to be.

**Pat:** Right? For those of you listening, it's Ray and I in a mastermind group together, along with Cliff Ravenscraft, Leslie Samuel, Mark Mason, and Michael Stelzner, a stellar group. I've learned so much from you, Ray, and everybody else in the group. I'm just very thankful and blessed to be doing this with you.

Now here you are on the show and I've looked at the outline you shared me and, oh man, this is going to be top notch stuff, not only for everybody out there who's kind of just starting out, but even for people who feel like they've got it down in terms of copywriting.

Copywriting for me is something that I've struggled with for quite a while. For me, my solution to that was just to always let my results speak for me, and I like that approach especially in this space, the internet marketing space, where a lot of people tend to not share the full story.

That's my kind of unique selling proposition and that does a lot for me in terms of helping to sell and build trust and build authenticity. If I could combine that with great copywriting skill that would be a home run, and I think a lot of people are very excited to listen to you.



Before we get into all the tactical stuff, could you just tell us a little bit about who is Ray Edwards, how did you get started, and what you do?

**Ray:** Sure, that's my favorite subject, right? It's everybody's favorite subject. That's the first copywriting lesson. It's not about me the writer, it's about the customer, because everybody is interested in themselves.

I actually started in radio, so it's funny that I'm doing podcasting now because I've kind of come full circle. I started in radio when I was 14 years old. I was a disk jockey and I just thought that was the dream job and I did that for 30 years. I became a program director and station manager, then eventually a vice president of a pretty big radio company.

What helped me succeed in that business, that other people failed in, especially people on the DJ side didn't usually last very long, but I noticed early on the guys driving the nice cars in the parking lot were not the DJs. They were the sales people, so I befriended them and learned how to help their customers – the advertisers on the radio station – sell their products and services.

I kind of had this boot camp training in how to help people make the cash register ring, because that's what local small businesses wanted. They didn't care about branding or having a great image. What they cared about was, "Can you help me sell some mattresses this weekend?"

I did that for a long time and I started studying copywriting as a way to give myself an edge over other people in radio, who didn't really spend a lot of time learning how to write copy. It was kind of a dirty chore they had to do, and I felt like "That's not serving the customer very well. How can we help them actually sell mattresses?" or get more people into their nail salon or whatever the deal was.

I started studying all these great classic copywriters, and when radio kind of went into the tank as internet came along and more and more people oddly enough started listening to music without commercials – imagine that – I made the shift. I realized I had a skill that people would pay for and I started writing copy for people online. And not only did they pay for it, they paid a lot more for it than the radio business did, so I never looked back.

**Pat:** That's awesome. I love that, and you are a very skilled copywriter. I love everything that you do. So let's get right into it. Where would you start with somebody



like me who's a self-proclaimed terrible copywriter? How would you help me learn all this, or is this even something that could be learned?

**Ray:** Absolutely it can be learned. It's definitely a skill. I think the mistake that people make is they see what they think of as 'copy' and they think, "Oh, I need to write like that," so they crank out this really weird over-the-top in-your-face salesy pushy kind of copy because they think that's what copy is supposed to look like.

If you did that, people would have a total disconnect because they'd be like, "This is not Pat. This is not where he's coming from," so I would give you what I call the PEP talk. It's the Powers of Ethical Persuasion.

The first thing I would say to you is you're a great copywriter. I read your blog and I read the stuff that you write when you do your income reports and so forth, and you're a fantastic copywriter.

In fact, there was a guy named Rosser Reeves in the early days of copywriting who wrote a book eventually called *Reality in Advertising*. It was an amazingly, startlingly, shocking theory of advertising and that was, "Just tell the truth." He wrote this slogan you might have heard before. "Melts in your mouth, not in your hands" for M&Ms, and he wrote many other slogans that we know as well.

Reality in advertising I think is what it's all about, and that defines your brand. You're just real. You don't live this Photoshopped life like so many people on the internet do. We get to see the real Pat. Sometimes you're so transparent it scares me for you.

**Pat:** Thank you, because that's how I want to come across. I want to be the real honest authentic one showing all sides of the story.

It's funny because I don't think of my blog posts or when I just write emails that are just like from a friend to a friend – I don't feel like that's copy, but then when I sit down in front of a sales page or there's an email where I know I want to get people to click on something, my brain switches my thinking and I struggle with it and I don't know what to say anymore.

**Ray:** Exactly, because now you're trying to communicate in a language that's not your native language. We'll have to flip that switch off before we're done here.



I think there's two things. First is being strategic before you're tactical, and there's a difference. Most people use those two terms interchangeably, but they're not interchangeable. I'll talk a little bit about that distinction.

Then the second distinction is the difference between persuasion and manipulation, because nobody likes to be manipulated. I think we can all agree on that. When we start feeling manipulated we immediately repulsion and we want to get away. It's like when you go onto the used car lot and the guy comes over, you've never seen him before and he slaps you on the back and he's acting like he's your best friend, and you're thinking the whole time, "You just want my money. You just want me to sign up to buy a car."

Strategy is your overall approach to doing business, and tactical is the specific activities that you do in order to support your strategy. I like to say that tactical behavior would be like you're figuring out how to arrange the deck chairs in the USS Titanic, and strategic behavior would be getting off the ship before it sinks. In that case, no matter how great your tactics are, if you don't achieve the strategic objective you're in a lot of trouble and your tactics are totally useless.

In the case of SPI, you have a strategic approach and that is you provide massive value, you have total integrity, total transparency, sometimes scary transparency, and because of that strategy, whatever tactical move you make – like if you wrote the "worst sales letter ever written," which most copywriters would probably think it would be, because you would be writing it from your true authentic voice, and I think that's exactly what you should do – then people will buy what you're selling because they know you and they know your voice.

That's why they sign up to get the Smart Podcast Player. That's why they sign up for the 1-Day Business Breakthrough workshops that you do with Chris Ducker and the other things that you do, because you already have influence with your audience, and when you put something in front of them they just say yes.

**Pat:** So a follow-up question. Because I have this great relationship with my audience – and thank you guys who are listening, you guys are amazing – do I even need to worry about copy or can I just be like "Why are we even recording this episode? I got it. People will listen to me."

**Ray:** That's a great question and I think that's where a lot of people go wrong because they think, "Well, I've got a great relationship with the audience so I don't need to do this and I'm just going to wing it."



It would be the same thing as I might ask you, "Why did you redesign your website? You had a great following. You had a great audience. What was the purpose of redesigning the website?"

Really it was to make the connection with the audience better. It makes their experience better. It makes the feeling that they have when they come to your website better, and it solidifies visually what we already know intuitively about Pat Flynn. It's important, and the words that you say are important.

Sometimes when I'm giving a seminar or a talk to a live audience I'll pick out the biggest, most brutish looking man in the audience, and I'll point to him and say, "Hey, could you hand me a pen, please?" and he'll get up and walk over and hand me a pen. I'll say, "Thanks" and he'll go back and sit down, and I'll say to the audience, "Now, I just controlled a 6'4" 240-lb muscle-bound guy with my words. That's how powerful our words are."

So yes, you have the relationship but you need to be able to say the right words. I mean you have a relationship with your wife too, but I bet you can't just grunt at her and get her to do what you want.

**Pat:** Uh, no. Definitely not.

**Ray:** So especially in your case where you're going to be selling something at some point, you want to write in a way where you're influencing people before you meet them, before you ever have to ask them to buy something. You've already done the hard work of writing for what I call strategic influence, and we'll come back to that.

When you influence people strategically with your writing so that they know you, they like you, they trust you, you move into the area of now you're going to write some copy to sell something, and you want to persuade and not manipulate.

That's why weird copy always feels weird when it's those big gigantic headlines that say, "You Can Make Money With The New 2015 Internet Income Exploder System!" and you're like, "That's the weirdest thing I've ever seen. It makes me feel gross."

**Pat:** You see that everywhere, though, so part of me is like, "Oh, that must work."

**Ray:** And that's why the people who write that kind of copy will tell you, "Well, this works." It does work in a weird little subset of people who are – I like to describe them



as the internet MLM. They're internet marketing people who sell internet marketing stuff to internet marketing people, who sell internet marketing stuff to internet marketing people. It just goes all the way down like that, and they've trained one another to think that this is how you're supposed to write copy.

For those people, that kind of copy they look at and say, "That's good copy. They must know what they're doing," but to all the normal human beings in the world it's like, "That's weird. Don't talk to me like that. You're shouting at me."

The difference between persuasion and manipulation really is the difference between external pressure selling and internal pressure selling. External pressure is where the customer buys because of pressure that you're exerting on them for your reasons. "I'm exerting pressure on you because I want to make money." That feels weird to us.

Internal pressure is where the customer buys because of pressure they exert on themselves for their own reasons. So our challenge as copywriters is to understand our customers well enough so that we can tap into and communicate with them directly at the level of their internal desires.

There's a great copywriter named Eugene Schwartz who wrote a book called *Breakthrough Advertising* back in the 60's. It's really expensive now because it went out of print, but you can get it for like \$150 on Amazon. If I only had one book that I was ever allowed to own about copywriting it would be that book, even though the language is a little dated. It's like *Mad Men*. It's a totally different era.

One of the key distinctions that he makes in that book is you cannot create desire in people, you can only channel desire that already exists. You can't make them want your stuff.

This is the difference between persuasion and manipulation. On an external level, persuasion is when you're selling to a customer for their reasons, and manipulation is when you're selling to a customer for your reasons. That's the external. That's the way to identify it from the outside.

From the inside, on an internal level for the customer, when I'm manipulated I make decisions that I regret later on. When I'm persuaded I make decisions that I am celebrating later on and I'm glad I made that decision.

**Pat:** I love that. It's almost like the difference between inbound marketing and outbound marketing, where you're kind of getting cold traffic on Facebook. This is



outbound marketing. You're really reaching for it. Then the inbound is you're just doing your own stuff and other people are being attracted to you based off of what they can connect with.

**Ray:** Exactly. Seth Godin calls it interruption marketing, and who likes to be interrupted? None of us.

**Pat:** This is great. So how can we apply this in terms of the specific words we use? When do we get to that level of choosing words, or do we just simply keep these principles in mind when we're just again being ourselves when we're writing?

**Ray:** There's more of a path to follow. I'm not a fan of being overly formulaic because I have this feeling that if I can see the formula as a reader, then it's probably not very effective. It's like if you watch a movie and you've seen this plot 100 a times in different movies and you go, "Oh, I know what's going to happen next. That guy is going to say, 'It's quiet, too quiet,'" then it feels predictable and we're like, "Eh, I'm not really thrilled by this story." You don't want to be that predictable.

**Pat:** I've just got to point out you're really good at pulling out examples, it seems like out of thin air. You make these analogies and similarities that make it very easy for me to understand what it is you're talking about. Like I might understand kind of the words you say, but then when you say, "It's kind of like this," like the example you just gave, then it just really makes it easy for me to understand.

I see this used in copy and emails as well. Let me ask you, do you have like a bank of these analogies that you just pull from that you know make it easier for people to understand, or are you just that good that you come out with them on the fly?

**Ray:** I'd like to tell you that it's either/or. It's a mixture. I aspire to have a bank of all of them in Evernote. I do have a huge number of them in Evernote, but I don't get as many of them into Evernote as I wish I did. I will see a great example and I'll think, "That'll make a great example and I should put that in Evernote, and I will in just a few minutes," and then I forget, so I'm not perfect about it.

I'm fascinated by this stuff. I'm fascinated by communication and why people respond to communication a certain way. It's like anything. If you're a football fan you probably don't have a lot of notes in Evernote about football, but you probably know everything about it, and especially about your team and the league that you're most interested in. I don't know much about football so I probably just said something that made me sound like an ignoramus.





My wife loves football. People get weirded out because they're like, "You don't like football but your wife is a football nut?" "Yes, that's correct. That's how it works in my house. Deal with it."

So I do study it and I do think about it. It's an important point that you brought up because we get so caught up in our language. Like I could talk to copywriters and just use copywriting lingo and they would all understand what I'm talking about, but again I don't really deal mostly with copywriters. I work mostly with small business people and online entrepreneurs to help them sell more of their stuff.

They probably think that copywriting is about how to protect your intellectual property by having that little © on the paper. I run into that all the time. It was a shock for me and I realized, "They don't know what I'm talking about. I need to stop using that word with normal human beings because they don't get what that is."

So you do need to think about, "If I were hearing about this for the first time..." and I love using analogies and examples because that's the way we learn everything. As a small child you learned everything by association. Even the alphabet you learned through singing a song. You could probably sing it right now. "A B C D E F G..." We all know that song if we were raised in the culture that uses that alphabet, so I think that's important.

That's one of the reasons why sales copy ends up being long. Have you ever looked at a sales page and thought, "Man, who reads all this stuff?"

**Pat:** Yeah, all the time. Is all that stuff necessary?

**Ray:** Good question, and a lot of copywriting colleagues of mine would want to take me out and burn me at the stake for saying this, but I think copy is getting shorter now than it used to be, and it still works. It works better now. I still think it needs to be longer than most of us are comfortable with, because we feel like we're just going on and on about ourselves, but the reason that it's so long in the first place is because, if you think about it, we're making a presentation to people about buying into an idea or a product or a service, and we're not having a 2-way conversation.

If we were having a 2-way conversation, you and I could talk. If I were showing you a car, Pat, we were walking around the car right now I could say, "This is the new Tesla and I know you've wanted one for quite some time and you're thinking about making



the jump at some time in the future. If you follow Ryan Moran's investment advice, maybe you'll be able to get one." That was a great show, by the way.

**Pat:** Thank you.

**Ray:** We're having this 2-way conversation and I can look at you and see your facial expression, and you can ask me, "How long does the battery last? And how does it work? What kind of leather is in the seats?"

So we sit down in the car and you're asking questions and I'm watching and listening, and the conversation can be a lot shorter because we've got that 2-way interaction going on. But if I was going to write you a letter about a Tesla, now I would have to answer all those questions in advance because you might ask all of them and I need to make sure I've answered all of them.

That's why copy is often so long, but it doesn't have to be as long as it used to. This is what other copywriters get annoyed with me about, because they've preached the 'long copy gospel' for so long that they just believe it without thinking about why it may or may not be true anymore.

Now copy is much more visual, because we've changed as human beings. We're much more video- and image-oriented on the web than we were when the web started. When the web started it was just all letters and links. Then we got 56k modems and we could actually look at pictures on the internet. Then we got DSL and we could actually watch video, sort of.

Then we got broadband and things really started to get really different, because now we can watch full-length high-definition videos, and we can have great high-res pictures, and so much communication is visual now.

I think it's great because you can have less copy, more imagery, and you can be speaking to both sides of the brain. I know there's research, so don't write me emails and say, "Ray, that research is no longer true," but I'm just generalizing. We have a creative side of our brain and a linear side of our brain, and we can speak to both parts of our consciousness at the same time with words and pictures.

So it doesn't have to be as long as it used to have to be, but it has to be longer than you're probably comfortable with.



**Pat:** And if I were to ask you what makes the perfect sales page – I know that’s a loaded question – but would it be a mixture of video with images and nice graphics, along with the text as well?

**Ray:** I would say yes, but I’ll qualify it with this. It also depends on your audience. Sometimes I sell products to writers, and writers – guess what? – like to read. A lot of them have this kind of innate kind of prejudice against video and imagery. I know it’s weird, but they respond better to longer blocks of text, and less images and less video, although they still respond to video. But for most people, a combination of those things is best.

You just have to look at the page and ask yourself, “Is this telling the story that talks about their problem and what we can do about it and how we can help them with it?”

One of the first things you have to know is like what level of awareness does this person have about their problem or the product that I offer? I have a little acronym that I use. This is one of the most important things, like if you wanted to stop listening to the show – you shouldn’t because we have really great stuff we’re going to talk about – but if you wanted to, you could walk away with I’m about to tell you and it would make a huge difference in how you sell things to other people from now on. I call this acronym OPEN.

### **O – Oblivious**

O is the oblivious level. This is the hardest person to sell to. This is like a vacuum cleaner salesperson comes to your door and you’re in the middle of dinner with your parents. If you’re the vacuum cleaner salesperson you’re an annoying pest. These people don’t know about you. They don’t know about your product. They don’t know that they have a vacuum cleaner problem because they think they’ve got a great vacuum cleaner already, so they’re totally oblivious to you and they’re extremely hard to sell to.

### **P – Pondering**

The next level is P for pondering. This would be the person who, for whatever reason, has started thinking, “We might need a new vacuum cleaner. Our carpets are dirty. The old one’s not working as well. It was a hand-me-down from my parents when we got out of college, so maybe we should think about getting one.” Maybe they’ve even looked at Consumer Reports for vacuum cleaners. Then you show up at their door and they’re at least a little more open to have a conversation with you.



## **E – Engaged**

E is the person who's engaged. They're actively searching. They may be out in the store looking at vacuum cleaners. That's when the salesperson descends on you because they know – whether they thought this through or not – they know if you're here looking for a vacuum cleaner, you must want one.

## **N – Need**

Then N is for need. A colleague of mine, this is kind of graphic but he says this is the person who walks into the ER with a bleeding neck. They want treatment immediately. This is the person who's got a party at their house tonight and their vacuum cleaner broke and they haven't vacuumed in a week and they need a vacuum cleaner right now. They're going to go to the nearest store and buy whatever is available that they can get back to the house with the quickest.

I like to share with people that the best group of people to focus on is those who are in the most need of your solution. If you can talk directly to those people, you'll draw in people on the periphery just because they may have some interest. But it's the people who need what you have who are the ones most likely to buy, and by the way they're the ones you don't have to hard sell.

**Pat:** So when we're coming up with copy, when we're writing our emails to get some sort of action – a click or a purchase or something – think of the people who need what it is that you're offering. There's going to be different ranges of people – people who don't even know what you're talking about, to people who are kind of thinking about it, to like you said the people who want it now. Those are the people that we should be imagining and visualizing on the other end. What does that mean in terms of the tactics we use?

**Ray:** Great question. I have this other acronym. I love acronyms. I'm sure you've noticed by now.

**Pat:** I like it, though.

**Ray:** I call this the PASTOR system. I think you need to pastor your readers. I always have to tell people up front, I'm not suggesting you become a preacher. The original meaning of the word pastor meant to shepherd, and what does a shepherd do? The



shepherd cares for the sheep and takes care of the flock and protects them from wolves and makes sure they have water and food and that they're taken care of.

When you pastor your readers or your customers or your listeners, if you think of it as shepherding them to a point of making a decision that's good for them, that totally feels different than "I'm going to sell you something because I need to make some money."

**Pat:** Absolutely. And to kind of precursor all this, you obviously have to have a product that you believe is going to help.

**Ray:** Yes, and I laugh but you are so right. I've actually had situations where I've had people talk with me about a product that they wanted me to write copy for, and as I dig and ask questions they will say something to me that indicates they don't even think their product is good. That's when I say, "I'm not your guy. I can't do that."

David Ogilvy said something, and I don't have the quote exactly right, but something like, "Nothing exposes a bad product faster than good marketing."

**Pat:** I've heard something like that before, too. It kind of reminds me of this product that I was in the middle of creating in 2011. It was off the back of my initial niche site duel, where I built that site from scratch and I publicly shared all the results and how it went step-by-step.

People wanted coaching, and I coached some people, and people became very successful with that. Then I was on my way to doing a course, and then a number of things started to happen with Google in terms of changing their algorithm which made a lot of my material half as good as it was.

So I got through and I finished all the videos for this course, and I never released it because I didn't believe in it. I even remember working on the sales copy, and word-for-word I felt like I was lying to myself, so I'm glad I caught myself before I launched that because obviously that could have been detrimental to my reputation and how people feel about the things that I come out with.

Yes, I spent hundreds of hours on that, but I pulled it back because so I lost 100 hours. I still have the trust I have with my audience.

**Ray:** And you made the right decision obviously, but those are hard decisions to make.



**Pat:** Very hard, yes, but when it comes down to it – going back to what I originally mentioned – you’ve got to believe in the product. If you don’t believe in that, then it’s not going to work, no matter what words you write.

But then also on top of that, I feel like a lot of people do have great products, but it’s in their mind that they don’t believe it’s going to help, or some sort of phantom thing comes in and tries to stop them from doing great things and helping others too. Do you have anything to say on that before we get into the acronym here?

**Ray:** Yes. In fact, it’s so important. We start with the people that we’re selling to, like how we’re serving them. What do they need? What is their biggest problem that we can help solve, and how would that look if we solved the problem for them?

I actually learned this when I was working with the Tony Robbins organization and writing some copy for some of their events. I don’t write for clients anymore – very, very rarely – but whenever I’m on a project, the first thing I do is I want to know everything I can about their customers. Usually bigger organizations like that have customer files where they can tell you the average age, income level, etc.

But more than that they can tell you the education, the political leanings, what TV shows they like. I mean it’s kind of spooky sometimes how much information companies can have about their customers, but it’s good for you as a business owner to know as much of this information as possible because you really get into their life in your head.

I have a friend named Brian Keith Voiles who has this thing he calls the Instant Empathy Exercise. He sits and imagines himself going through a day in the life of the person he’s writing to, like from the moment they get out of bed until the moment they go back to bed at night – when they get up, what they have for breakfast, what they do during the day, what they do at work, what it’s like when they drive to work, what kind of car, the sounds, the smells, the sights – and he’s got a huge amount of empathy built it by the time he starts writing.

But then, not only do you have to know your person really well, but you have to know your product just as well, too. A lot of times when I worked on copy for clients, I would know the product better than they knew the product. This was something I picked up from reading about Eugene Schwartz because he used to sell books back in the 60’s at like 10 times their retail value, and he sold them through newspaper ads.



One of the ways he did that was he would read the book like four or five times and take 100 pages of notes. Then he would make a claim in the copy, and this happened a lot. He would make a claim in the copy, and the author or the publisher would say, "You can't make that claim. It's not in the book."

And Gene would say, "Well, yes it is, because on page 172 you said this, and on page 37 you said that, and if those two things are both true, then this conclusion I came to must be true, so it is in the book." He had such a more deep-seated belief in the product than even the person who wrote the book because he had studied it so carefully.

If you can do both things – if you can deeply empathize and get into the mind and the life of the customer that you're helping, and you can deeply walk through in your mind how the solution that you have can really change their life, and where they might end up if they didn't have the solution – then copy flows from a totally different place. When people don't believe in their product, that's when they end up writing that over-hyped, over-pushy copy.

**Pat:** I love that exercise, the Instant Empathy Exercise. I'll have to do more research on that. I know a lot of the listeners out there listen to John Lee Dumas from Entrepreneur On Fire as well, and he talks about Jimmy, his avatar. In his presentations he tells us about Jimmy and where he goes and what his day is like. He's driving to work and so on and so forth.

It helps him to understand what decisions to make, but I definitely feel like that kind of exercise can also help you with what words to write and how to write as well.

**Ray:** Yes, absolutely. When I was in radio, we had an avatar for every station. We had a light rock station and the avatar was Carol. We knew everything about Carol and we always asked before we did anything on the station, "Would Carol like this or would this upset her?" It's a powerful exercise.

**Pat:** I love it, so let's get back into the PASTOR.

**Ray:** Okay. We're shepherding people to a place of decision, so the P stands for two things.

**P – Person, Problem**



First it stands for the person you're writing to, and you want to know as much as you can about them. Then the P also stands for the problem you're proposing to solve. You need to know right up front what that big problem is.

## **A – Amplify**

Once you've figured out what the big pain point of this problem is for the person that you're writing to, the next step in PASTOR is the A, which stands for amplify. What you're doing is you're amplifying the cost of them not solving the problem, because the easiest thing in the world for all of us to do about a problem is to be in denial about it and pretend it doesn't exist.

It's like a person who needs to lose weight. I can speak to this from a place of authority because I'm now 50 pounds lighter than I was a few months ago because I looked in the mirror one day and said, "Who is that fat man looking back at me?"

**Pat:** Congratulations, Ray.

**Ray:** Thank you.

**Pat:** Are you training with Cliff?

**Ray:** I am training with Cliff, in fact.

**Pat:** Nice. #trainwithcliff

**Ray:** Correct. He just did a great Periscope on FitBit and why he doesn't use it anymore, just FYI.

**Pat:** Oh cool. We're talking about Cliff Ravenscraft, for everybody out there listening.

**Ray:** Amplifying the cost of not solving the problem for me looked like this. I began to think about, "If I don't take care of this, obviously by not doing anything about it I'm going in the wrong direction. I'm getting bigger. I'm getting less in shape, and that could lead to my having heart disease or diabetes or other problems, so I need to do something about this because the ultimate outcome of that could be all kinds of things that are bad, like glaucoma and being in the hospital or being dead." I have great hope in the hereafter, but I'm not in a hurry to get there right away.





So amplifying the cost of not solving the problem now is really important. A lot of people get hung up on this because they feel like, "Are you using fear or manipulation?" and I say no. What we're doing is we're using reality to show people what's really going to happen if they keep going down the road where they're traveling.

**Pat:** Right. It's a realization or helping people understand, "These are the consequences that could happen."

**Ray:** Right. I referred to this earlier, that interview you did with Ryan I think was a real wake-up call for me because I realized I thought, "I'm doing pretty good with money. I'm doing pretty good with my plan for the future," but as I listened to him talk I realized I've got some real areas where I need to work on this.

He just exposed some of the problems in my thinking and amplified the possible outcomes that would happen if I didn't care of them, so I thought that was very powerful. So we're amplifying the cost of the problem.

## **S – Story**

Then we have a story. That's what the S stands for. The S actually stands for two things. The first part is the story, and I think of it as the story of tragedy into triumph, because that's really what every story is about, right? Anything we're selling, whatever it is, we're going from a frowny face to a smiley face and there's a process in-between. That's what it breaks down to.

That's what my friend Paul Evans says. He draws it on a board and makes a big deal out of it. He's very sophisticated. He draws the frowny face and the smiley face and it's very powerful. It is powerful but it's not nearly as complicated as most people think.

So you tell the story, and there are quite a few story archetypes that people talk about.

**Pat:** This is literally in the copy on your sales page, for example. You're telling a story?

**Ray:** Yeah. Let's use an example. If I was writing about how to lose 50 pounds, something I know how to do, I could say, "Here's my story. I looked in the mirror one day and I saw this fat guy and I thought, 'Who is that guy?' and then I started thinking about what's going to happen if I don't do something about this." Now I've got to choose how I'm going to frame that story or what way I'm going to tell it.



Archetypes are just these big universal kinds of story types that we're all familiar with. If you think about your story, it probably fits into one of these five. There's many archetypes. People argue about how many there are, which I think is ridiculous, but the five I think most-used and most powerful ones are:

1. The reluctant hero. That's like Frodo Baggins or Luke Skywalker
2. The accidental discovery.
3. The hometown boy makes good.
4. The rags to riches story.
5. Us versus Them.

Us versus them can be a very powerful story, but it's my least favorite because it just ends up feeling kind of angry, but it can be a powerful story if you're on a mission. Like some people are in the health care field and they have strong feelings about one group or another group and they may feel that it is "us versus them."

I think for a long time the tobacco industry and the campaign to stop smoking was an "us versus them" kind of movement in the advertising campaigns that were telling people, "Look, it's us versus them. They want you to smoke, we want you to stop, because if you don't stop you're going to die." I'm making no judgements about you if you smoke. I'm just using an example that I think most people can understand what I'm talking about.

**Pat:** It's like in the internet marketing space, a lot of people I know use the "us versus them" in terms of freedom versus being locked up in the corporate life and really making that distinction a big part of the story, for sure.

**Ray:** Yes, and your story could be the reluctant hero story. I know you didn't set out to be this famous heroic guy, but you are that guy to a lot of people now because you've shown them a way that they can get free and be ethical and do it in a way that doesn't make them embarrassed when they tell their family what they do.

Yours could also be the accidental discovery or the hometown boy makes good story. It's the same story, just depending on how you want to frame it and how you're comfortable with framing and telling the story. You can choose which way to represent that story.

## **S – Solution or System**



Then the next part of the S of PASTOR is the solution or the system. You tell that story of how “I made this amazing discovery and it changed my life, and I realized this maybe would work for other people too, so I started writing about it on my blog and explaining to people how they could create their own niche sites.”

You’ve done this incredible thing, Pat, with the way you have built your business. You went for years just giving away the information about how to do what you did and what you do, and other people were charging for that information. It was like a protected deep dark secret, and you’re putting it out there on your blog for free. That developed huge loyalty and connection with your audience, and you’ve got a lot of loyal followers because of that.

## **T – Testimony**

You’ve also got the next thing, T for testimony. This is proof that what you’re saying is true. You need to have proof if you’re selling something. You need to have proof on three different levels because there’s three different questions that people are asking themselves.

If you’re offering a course on how to have a successful food truck business, for instance, then the person who’s looking at your training on this is going to ask first –

1. Has this person actually done what they’re talking about, or have they done the research with people who have done it?
2. Has this person been able to help others do this thing better? If you’ve been able to help other people with their successful food truck business.
3. Can this person teach me to do what they’re talking about?

That’s the big one. That’s where you’ve got to have the know, like, and trust factor that we hear so much about. Then you also have to do something that has been referred to – and I don’t remember who originated this, or I would give credit, but I can’t remember who it was – but it’s called results in advance.

You actually give them some information or teaching or training or tool that they can use to start getting results based on your product or your service. You’re giving them a little piece of what you sell for free, and it helps them really, so they get results before they even spend \$1 with you. That’s some of the most powerful proof on all three levels that you could possibly offer, and a lot of times the sale is made right there.



## O – Offer

O stands for Offer. Most people think that this is where you talk about the stuff that you're going to give people like, "I'm going to give you a stack of CDs," like if it was P90X. The offer is not the DVDs and the wall charts and the chin-up bar and all that stuff that comes with it. That's not the offer.

The offer is, "If you will work your guts out, you will look like these people in this commercial. You'll have chiseled abs and you'll have definition in your arms and legs, and you'll look really good in exercise clothes. Other people will look at you and say, 'Wow, you look fantastic!'" That's the offer.

I tell people when you're writing about the offer, you want to spend 20% of the time writing or talking about the deliverables. That's the CDs and the wall charts and the manuals and the membership site or the seminar. Then you want to spend 80% of the time talking about the transformation, the change that you're bringing about in their life.

You do need to talk about the deliverables, but that's not really what they're buying. They're really buying the result, so you need to spend your time talking about that in the offer.

**Pat:** A lot of times I see it flipped the other way around.

**Ray:** Oh, most of the time. There's a saying in this business called the "thud factor." That's a reference to the more stuff you can put in the box, the louder the thud it makes when it hits the ground. A lot of people would take a manual and they'd print all the pages on one side of the page and they'd do whatever they could to make the box the biggest heaviest box they could think of. It wasn't really about creating value, it was about having a big thud when the box hit the floor.

I think that mindset of, "Well, if I tell them all the stuff that they're getting, they'll clearly understand that it's valuable," but I think actually the reverse is true nowadays. That may have been true in the old days, but what about you, Pat? If you're going to buy a training, do you want something that's 25 hours of training or do you want a training that's 25 minutes long that just shows you how to do the thing?

**Pat:** That's why Michael Hyatt's "5 Days to Your Best Year Ever" course was so great because it was just what you needed to know and that's it. Actually, compared to a lot



of other courses and memberships that I've been a part of, it was very, very short. If you just look at how many hours of video you'd be like, "Wow, there's hardly anything here. Is this enough?" and yes, it absolutely was. I know Michael's course did very, very well, so that's definitely proof that it's not about the quantity, it's the quality.

**Ray:** Absolutely, and I had the same experience with Mike's course and I had the same reaction. When I first saw the inside of the membership site I thought, "Whoa, there's not much here," and by the time I was done with it I was like, "This is the most awesome thing. This is the way it should be done."

**Pat:** Right. "Thanks for not wasting my time."

**Ray:** Yeah.

## **R – Response and Results**

The R of PASTOR stands for two things – first, response. This is where you request a response. You ask for the sale or the opt-in or the new behavior if you're just selling an idea or a concept. What do you want them to do? Just tell them what you want them to do and how you want them to do it, and you don't have to be pushy about it.

R is also for results. That's where you show them the pain they will experience by not getting your solution, or the pleasure that they will enjoy when they do get your solution. You don't have to be pushy about it. You don't have to be sleazy about it. You can just remind them, as we were discussing earlier.

"When you lose this weight, or when you stop that habit that you're trying to stop, or when you learn this way of building your business, things will be so much better because you can work less hours, you can get more done, you can be more productive, and you can have less stress in your life and make more money all at the same time." You just paint that picture for them about what life's going to be like once they get the solution that you're offering them.

And I want to be clear, that's not necessarily an outline for your entire sales page, but you could take those pieces of that PASTOR framework and write those pages of copy up, and you would have much better copy than 90% of marketers on the internet do because at least you would care about the people you were writing to.



**Pat:** That's awesome. I love it. For a sales page it makes complete sense and I can see it working very well. Now in terms of an email, long versus short is another conversation but is this the same sort of sequence?

Again, I love the shepherding thing. I feel like that's a great way to approach it. A lot of people know that that's kind of my style. It's not about forcing something on them, it's not about that, it's about just kind of guiding people along the way, and this is a great framework for that.

But in emails, because email is where a lot of things happen even before people get to the sales page, how do we best craft our emails? I'm working on email copy right now as well, and I'm trying to provide as much value as I can, while also trying to be persuasive in getting people to click on things.

Can I use the same PASTOR structure or do I break them down? Maybe one of the emails is a story that then goes into the results, or does it go in the same order and has to include each and every one of these pieces?

**Ray:** The answer is yes. You can mix and match. There's different ways. I don't think there's any one right way to do it. Some people say, "I've got the one and only blueprint to how to sell by email," and I think that's just bullfeathers. It just doesn't work that way, but I do have some thoughts on this, and then I have a framework that I can share that I think works for writing just about anything. It's a good skeleton and we can go over that. If you want to go over those two things, I could share that.

**Pat:** Yeah, let's finish up with that. I think that would be great.

**Ray:** Okay. For emails I like to talk about putting a SPIN on your emails.

**Pat:** Another acronym?

**Ray:** It's an acronym

**Pat:** I knew it.

**Ray:** S stands for the State your reader is in when they read your email, so just think about what state they're in.

**S – State**



Nobody probably woke up this morning saying to themselves, "I hope somebody will send me an email today that markets a product to me that I hadn't thought about that I could buy." I don't think anybody had that idea.

What state do they come to email with? When you open your email, just think about it in your own case. What you want is you either want important information that you're expecting from certain people, like on your team or something, or you want something funny or engaging from your friends, or you want to hear important news from your family, or maybe something you've subscribed to that you really like to read that are important to you.

Maybe you subscribe to Michael Hyatt's blog. You like to read the blog posts that come in the email. Whatever the case may be, you're looking for stuff that you anticipate receiving.

A lot of us, like me, subscribe to a lot of different email newsletters, but I delete most of them – sad truth. I delete most of them, and I stop when I see a personal email come in from somebody that I know, or one that looks like a personal email. So I think the first step is to think about writing emails that speak to me less like a corporation and speak to me more like a person.

## **P – Purpose**

The P in SPIN stands for Purpose. That is, know the purpose that you have for writing the email and the purpose that your reader has for reading it. If they expect certain things from you – and Pat, your readers have certain expectations from you, so if they get an email from you about something, they probably know what your purpose is because they know you well and they know the purpose that they have for reading it, and so do you. That's important. That gets back to knowing the person and the problem really well, from the PASTOR formula.

## **I – Idea**

The I stands for the Idea of the email. Every email should have one, just one, big idea, and this is a mistake that so many people make. They try to cram three or four different ideas into an email. Some people that I respect and love and admire send out emails that have five or six different items in them, like they're a newsletter, and those may work for some people. I've never had great success with that.



I've always had more success with an email that's about one thing, because we all probably have enough stuff coming at us that we don't need four or five new ideas thrown at us all at once. There's a saying that the confused mind decides nothing, so I'd rather have them decide to do something.

## **N – Next**

And that's the N in SPIN – it's what do you want them to do next? What is the call to action?

In email it's almost always the same. "Click this link." Whether it's to go listen to my latest podcast episode, or to go see this great video that I found, this TED talk on YouTube that I found, or whether it's to click and learn about my new product that I want you to know about, there's always a next thing that you want them to do, and that's usually to click the link. So that's how you put the SPIN on your emails.

So within the framework for writing anything there's two things you need to do first. Whether you're writing an email or a blog post or a sales page or a chapter in a book, the first thing you need to do is you need to accurately identify what you're writing and why. So thing #1 is to know your most desired outcome. "Why am I writing this? What do I want people to do?"

Even if it's a book, if you're starting to sit down and write an outline for a book, "Why am I writing this book? What do I want people to do? What's the call to action that the book has?" It doesn't mean the book has to sell anything. Maybe the call to action is you want people to be better people. You want them to help the starving and the hungry and the uneducated across the planet. That's a call to action if I ever heard one, but you need to know what that most desired outcome is before you start writing the book.

The second thing is I believe you need to state in a single sentence the thesis that supports your call to action. You're going to make a statement that says, "I believe that we all should be working together to eliminate poverty, hunger, and disease in the world because we can – and because we can, we have a responsibility to do it, and that's what this book is about."

**Pat:** I heard of an exercise once for a book in particular, where you take a page and you just write exactly what this book's about and make it a page length. Then you take that page, you take the best stuff from it, and then you try to sum it up in a paragraph. Then you take that paragraph and you try to bring it down to just one single sentence.





It's for the same exact reason. That's just what you know the book is about and how you can best share it with others in a very short succinct manner.

**Ray:** I think that's a great methodology for writing a book, and it's a great methodology for writing an email as well. What you're really doing is you're really thinking about, "Why am I writing this? What do I want people to do as a result? And how would I say in one sentence what the purpose of this email, this blog post, or this podcast is?"

Then I suggest crafting your writing – and I'm not going to use an acronym this time – shocker! I'll switch it up for you. I have something I call the 7 P framework. That is 7 pieces of whatever you're writing, that if you do it in this sequence I think you'll usually come out with a successful piece.

### 1. Provoke

Say something provocative. That doesn't mean it has to be improper, it just means something that provokes a response from people. You might say, "I don't think money is bad. In fact, I think money is extraordinarily good and let me explain why." You've said something provocative, and then you move into talking about P #2.

### 2. Problem

You describe what the problem is that you're addressing in this article or this book or whatever you happen to be writing. "I think there's a problem in the way we perceive money. We have a lens that we look at money through that says money is evil. Maybe we think money is the root of all evil. That's not what it actually says, by the way. It says the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil."

"That's a problem. The way we perceive that is a problem, and because of that we often don't bring enough money into our lives. We don't bring as much as we could, and that makes us unable to help people in the way we need to help people." Then you make it personal.

### 3. Personal

You might tell a story about how you went to Africa and you saw how badly help was needed there and you felt personally drawn to do something about it. You may tell a



story about a particular child or a person that you encountered there, and you tell a personal story.

#### 4. Promise

Then you make a promise. The promise is "By the time I finish talking to you today or writing to you today, you'll understand that not only should we do this, but we can and I'll explain how."

#### 5. Proof

Then you have proof. This is where you demonstrate that what you're saying is possible and that it works, and you show actual examples of how it's worked.

#### 6. Proposal

Next is a proposal, and this is where you're proposing that they do something. Maybe the proposal is your offer if you're selling something. If this is your sales page then you're making a proposal. You're saying, "I propose that you buy this training system, this product, this service, and if you do you'll get this outcome."

#### 7. Prompt

Then there's the prompt. If it's a sale page the prompt is "Click here to buy now," and if it's a blog post it might be, "What do you think about this issue? Post your comments below or post them on social media." You're prompting them to do something.

Or if you've been writing about kindness and doing one kind deed every day, your prompt at the end of that article might be, "Go out and do something nice for somebody today that's totally unexpected that you can never be repaid for. They won't even know you did it. That's your assignment for today." That would be a prompt.

So Provoke, Problem, Personal, Promise, Proof, Proposal, and Prompt.

**Pat:** I love that. That's a great way to think about it with anything – books, emails, blog posts, maybe a script for a video, or even a podcast episode.

**Ray:** Absolutely, anything non-fiction. I mean if you're writing fiction we're talking about something different, but anything non-fiction you're either selling people on the idea that they can do something or that they should do something, whatever you're



writing. Maybe it's just that they should think a certain way about a certain political issue.

You might say, "I'm not selling anything." Well, you're selling a point of view. Or maybe it's that they can make a difference in the world if they will simply go out and do the following things, so you're not selling a product again, but you're trying to get people to act in a new way and have a new behavior. Anything where you're trying to persuade or where you're trying to empower, this is a great structure for writing that kind of piece.

**Pat:** That just makes it so much easier to think about and tackle. When we approach a blank cursor or a blank paper or a blank book it's very difficult to get started, but when you can break it down in this way it becomes a lot easier.

I just also notice that through talking to you, Ray, the way that you present things – going back to what I said earlier about all those examples that you have and the analogies – it's inspiring to see because you've taught us a lot of stuff here today that is going to be very helpful and life-changing. In the same way, we should be able to take a lot of these strategies and share them with our audience in terms of how we present what we have to offer them as well.

I definitely think this is one of those episodes where there's going to be a big butterfly effect. Some people, even though they might not consider themselves great copywriters, are going to at least have some framework to work off of and inspiration listening to this episode as well.

Ray, before we finish up I just want to thank you so much for taking the time to come on today and sharing all this, and not only teaching everybody listening but teaching me, too. I'm right in the middle of all this as well with the books that I'm writing, the email copy that I'm writing as well, and also future sales copy. Thank you so much for that.

**Ray:** You're certainly welcome. I came here with the intention to really serve your listeners as much as I possibly could because I'm a listener and I feel the love in the Smart Passive Income community and I just wanted to contribute to that. Then of course if you ever need some help with some copy, Pat, you can always give me a ping.

**Pat:** Thanks, Ray. I know that you have some stuff that you have available to help other people with their copy as well. Do you want to talk about that really quick?



**Ray:** Yes, we've got some free things you can pick up. We set up a special page for the SPI community, so if you go to [rayedwards.com/spi](http://rayedwards.com/spi) we've got a couple of gifts. We've got a guide to my 100 best-tested subject lines for emails. This is where we took all the emails we've ever sent and we looked at the open rates and identified which emails got opened the most often, and we compiled the top 100 subject lines.

I give you instructions in there about how to use them, but you can feel free to borrow them or even take them wholesale if you want to and copy them word-for-word. It's okay with me. People do it anyway, so I might as well give permission.

Then we have three email templates. If you're stuck with that blank page you were talking about earlier and you just would like a template to use to sort of get you started and maybe just start working with it and changing the text, then I have three different email templates that's in the second document that you can use.

Then I also created a new mini-training on the framework for writing anything that we were just talking about. It's not a full-fledged course. You can go through it pretty quickly, but I think it will really help and it goes a lot deeper into what we just briefly touched on with those 7 P's and how to really put them to work in writing a blog post or anything else.

**Pat:** I love that. Again, you can find that at [rayedwards.com/spi](http://rayedwards.com/spi). Ray, thank you so much. Besides [rayedwards.com](http://rayedwards.com), where can people find you online?

**Ray:** On Twitter I'm @rayedwards and on Facebook I'm [facebook.com/rayedwards](http://facebook.com/rayedwards), and pretty much everywhere. On Google+ I'm RayEdwards. That's the easiest way to find me.

**Pat:** Nice, love it. Thanks, Ray. We appreciate you and we look forward to digging into more of your stuff.

**Ray:** Thank you, Pat. It's my honor.

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Man oh man, I hope you enjoyed that episode because, like I said earlier, this is one of those that's going to live on forever because the frameworks that Ray teaches are so relevant to everything we're doing, because we're trying to make change in people's lives. But in order to do that we have to get them to come with us, to get excited about what we're saying and what we're writing.



Ray just laid it all out, and I can't wait to hear the impact that this episode is going to have when you put these principles into place and these frameworks into place.

If you want to check out more of what Ray talked about and the giveaways that he has for you, all you have to do is go to [rayedwards.com/spi](http://rayedwards.com/spi) to download all those free resources that go along with this episode.

You can also check out the show notes and the links to things we mentioned at [smartpassiveincome.com/session182](http://smartpassiveincome.com/session182).

I also want to thank today's sponsors. First up, [99Designs.com](http://99Designs.com), making it super easy for all of us to get any graphic design work done that we need for our business – everything from a logo design to a complete overhaul of your website to business cards and letterhead and even an ebook cover, or maybe a truck wrap if you're doing a food truck, for example.

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You can check it out at [99Designs.com/spi](http://99Designs.com/spi). If you go through that referral link you'll get a \$99 Power Pack of services for free that you can put towards your next design project.

I also want to give a huge shout-out to [Edgar](#), which is a web app that I use to manage my social media updates. You know doing that can take a lot of time, and the sad thing about it is when we post something on Facebook or Twitter, for example, it only has a short period of time to be seen before it gets gone forever. But Edgar allows us to make sure that these updates that we post get seen and don't go to waste.

If you remember Laura Roeder, a previous guest here on the podcast, she created this tool because there was nothing out there that could solve this pain, and it is amazing. I use it every single day. I also know a lot of people who use it, and it has honestly shaved hundreds of hours of time off my social media workload, so I highly recommend this, and actually I worked out a deal with Laura.



You can try this out for free. Only my listeners can get to try Edgar for free. Just go to [meetedgar.com/pat](https://meetedgar.com/pat). Again you can try it out for free and see how it can help shave hours of time off your social media workload. [Go to meetedar.com/pat](https://meetedgar.com/pat).

Thank you again for listening in, and I can't wait to serve you in the next episode of the Smart Passive Income podcast. Until then, make sure to check out the show notes at [smartpassiveincome.com/session182](https://smartpassiveincome.com/session182). Thanks so much. I appreciate you, and let's keep moving forward. Cheers.

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

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

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