



**SPI Podcast Session #51 -
Tim Ferriss on Promotion from Scratch, Accelerated Learning,
Experiments Gone Wrong, Publishing and More**

show notes at: <http://www.smartpassiveincome.com/session51>

This is the Smart Passive Income podcast with Pat Flynn, session #51!

Announcer: 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 had a crush on Kelly Kapowski on *Saved by the Bell*--Pat Flynn!

Pat: Hey, what's up? This is Pat Flynn and welcome to the 51st session of the Smart Passive Income podcast. And, wow! Today's session--just the fact that I have this guest on my show blows my mind! I have the honor of having this guest who many of you probably already know. He's the author of the New York Times bestselling book, *The 4-Hour Work Week*, a book that actually helped shape how I built my first online business back in 2008. Without that book, [The 4-Hour Work Week](#), I know I wouldn't be where I'm at today. This podcast, and my blog, wouldn't be around either.

He's also the author of [The 4-Hour Body](#) and then most recently [The 4-Hour Chef](#). I mean, he's making headlines with it. We have none other than Mr. Tim Ferris on the Smart Passive Income podcast today. I'm super stoked about that. I can't believe this is happening! The cool thing is, his people reached out to ME, which I'm really stoked about, and of course I'm more than happy to welcome him on the show and just pick his brain here for you today.

Now, I could've talked to him for hours, and I personally had a lot of questions to ask him, and unfortunately I didn't have enough time to ask them, but even more than that, I actually published a blog post just yesterday, actually, one day before the interview which happened today--if you're listening to this in the future, this is the end of November 2012--so just yesterday I asked my readers on the blog to submit a question if they had one for Tim, that I might be able to ask him during the interview.

And I got nearly 400 questions, many of them sort of similar, and I did my best to ask those questions, but many different questions, too. And I know I said I was going to give away three copies of *The 4-Hour Chef* to those whose questions I asked during the interview, but I'm actually going to give away seven total copies of *The 4-Hour Chef*. Some people I mentioned by name during the interview, and some I realized at the end that they were actually questions that were inspired by people who left comments on the blog.



I wish I could give books away to everyone, but of course Tim's team only sent me a limited amount of copies to give away. Either way, I hope you get the book, but wait until the end of the show to make that call. We're going to talk all about that book for you. Wait until the end of the show to hear your name if you did leave a comment or question on that blog post where you could win a free copy. I'm going to mention your name again at the end of the show to make sure that all seven of you are covered. Again, I wish I could give copies to everybody!

A couple of quick notes before I switch to the recording that I did earlier today, which is about an hour long. It's jam packed full of information, I mean a TON of links, a ton of names that you should know, books that you should read, strategies, bullet points--stuff that you could write an entire book's worth of notes about. So as always I have the show notes for you, conveniently at smartpassiveincome.com/session51. Head to the blog, go there now, or go there after the show to get all the information you need.

If you want to buy *The 4-Hour Chef*, and want to go through my affiliate link, which means I get a commission if you go through that specific link, and if you do that of course, thank you so much in advance, that affiliate link is smartpassiveincome.com/4hourchef, or like I said, you can head over to the show notes, smartpassiveincome.com/session51 to get everything you need there. You know how it is.

There are so many more questions that I wish I could've asked him, but here's what I pulled out from my brain and from all the questions on the blog post. Enjoy listening! I know you're going to get a lot out of this and I really know you're going to enjoy the first question I asked him. Let's get right to it! Here's the interview with Tim Ferris.

Pat: Hey Tim, what's up? Welcome to the Smart Passive Income podcast! Thank you for joining us today!

Tim: Thank you for having me.

Pat: You know, this is funny, yesterday I published a blog post telling my audience about this interview with you and I asked them "If you have a question for Tim, please leave it in the comment section. If it's a good one, I might ask him for you!" Right now, there are 384 questions.

Tim: Well, it's--bird by bird, man. Let's take one at a time.



Pat: I don't think I'll be able to get to all of them, unfortunately. We'd be here for DAYS, but I'm going to ask a few. There's some really good questions and also we're going to get to...we're going to skip over a lot of great ones, too. So if you ever needed a sort of resource for what people want to know from you, that's a great place to go.

Tim: Ha ha!

Pat: Before we start, I just want to make sure I say this to you publically here on the podcast. Just--thank you. I mean...thank you. Your book, *The 4-Hour Work Week*, a HUGE inspiration for me. I know there was a lot of controversy about it. I mean-- "Really? 4 hours?" I mean, I bet we can all assume that you're working more than 4 hours in a week at this point, especially with the launch of your book, which I'll get to.

But to me, *The 4-hour Work Week* is not about the 4 hours, exactly. For any of your 4-Hour branded books, *The 4-Hour Body*, *The 4-Hour Chef*, to me it's about the idea that we have this ability and we can learn the skills necessary to become more efficient. To open our eyes to being able to do things that we never thought were possible or that we could do, whether that's work less hours than we work now so we can spend more time doing the things that matter to us, for me it's being with family, for you it's obviously creating more books and running these amazing experiments, or it's about achieving goals in fitness or being in the kitchen--and just general learning. So again, from all of us here on the Smart Passive Income blog, thank you.

Tim: Well, thank you for putting the words into action. My pleasure entirely. And just to address that topic, because I think it's an important one to hit right from the onset. The objective of *The 4-Hour Work Week* is to maximize your per hour output so that you have, then, control of that resource. If you, let's say, increase your output 10x per hour, then you can do a number of things. You can either reduce, then, your hours from 40 to 4, say. Or you can continue to do what you're doing to maximize results.

During a book launch for instance, like this, where there are a lot of challenges involved with, let's say, the retail boycott--we don't have to get into that right now, but--I'm utilizing every hour that I can, but I'm applying those hours in the highest leverage places. And I think that's the key, whether it's *The 4-Hour Work Week*, *The 4-Hour Body*, or *The 4-Hour Chef*, is finding the places where your effort gives you the most in terms of outcomes and results.

Pat: Thank you for addressing that. I mean, a lot of the questions that my audience was asking was about that. I mean, a lot of people were asking "How do I do what you tell me to do when I have a family or I have another job? What can I do? How can I



find more time?" And it's not really finding more time, it's enabling yourself to essentially have more time because your output is more efficient.

Tim: Yes, that's exactly right.

Pat: First question I have for you--actually, the way I'll do it is I'm going to take you through *The 4-Hour Work Week*, and then I'll ask you a couple of questions about *The 4-Hour Body* and then finally go into *The 4-Hour Chef* and then finish off with that and hopefully people will get super-stoked about it as I am when we leave this so people can go out and get their own copy if they don't have it already. So, first question:

How did [The 4-Hour Work Week](#) become so successful? I mean, the book itself was unique, which helped, but more than that you just seemed to be everywhere right from the start. Every blog that mattered was talking about the book. You just--you got so popular so fast. How did that happen? How can someone like that with no following who is starting from scratch...maybe they have their own book, or a product, or a blog, how can they do what you did?

Tim: Wow. We could spend the entire time just talking about that. I would say that the book was not a success from the very outset. People, I think, miss this, It was turned down by 26 publishers, the initial print run was 12,000 copies or so, and...

Pat: That's not very many.

Tim: I did not know anything about--yes, not many. It's not enough for even partial national distribution. And I think the approach that I took that was different, perhaps, and the way I approached *The 4-Hour Body* was a more elegant, refined approach to what I did with *The 4-Hour Work Week*, and there's a blog post called, I think, [The 12 Lessons Learned Marketing The 4-Hour Body](#). You can search for that on my blog, and it'll pop right up.

It's written by my assistant at the time named Charlie Hoehn. And at it's purist, the approach I took is very similar to what's echoed in an article called [1000 True Fans](#) by Kevin Kelly who was the founding editor of [Wired Magazine](#).

I chose the least crowded channel, i.e. in person meeting as opposed to phone or email to connect with people who were thought leaders in specific audiences, specific blogs, etc., by going to events like [South by Southwest Interactive](#), [Blog World Expo](#), and so on. And I never hard sold the book. What I mean by that is, just shouting louder or trying to do a better job of selling in a very mechanized way is not the best way to find a fit for your content, for talking about content.



My general approach was, because I knew no one, is I would sit in on the session, listen to panelists on topics that interested me, then approached the moderator of the panel and give them ten seconds on who I was and ask them who they thought I might get along with who was attending the event, whether it was a speaker or an attendee. And then I would meet person after person, approaching things very similarly, and ask each person "Is there anyone else you think I should meet while I'm here?" and I asked a lot of questions.

What I mean by that is, from the very outset I wanted to understand what people were doing, what they were planning on doing, what they did outside of work, and if they asked me "Oh, what are you up to?" I'll say "Oh, I'm working on my first book, it's pretty nerve-wracking, I don't know what I'm doing, but I'm here to try to figure out digital because my publisher has their hand in everything else and this is really the only thing I can do myself and I don't know the first thing."

I would pretty much stop there, and then go back to asking them questions. And if they dug deeper, "What is your book about?" or "Oh, really!" and they asked about certain aspects, I would answer it. And at the very end, if someone genuinely seemed interested--and if not I never pushed it--if someone genuinely seemed interested I would say "Look, I have a bunch of advanced copies that I don't have places to send.

If you would like, if you could just--I don't necessarily think you'd like the entire book, but I could use Post-It notes to pick the 20 pages I think you would really like and send it off to you if you'd like that." If they said yes, great. If they said "No, I've got too much going on" that was fine, too.

What that ensured was a few things. #1, not only did I identify in many cases single-author blogs with audiences of 100,000 or more in many cases where the content was a perfect fit because they'd gone through these filters of just questioning back and forth.

Secondly, I ensured that I was developing friendships and relationships with people I liked as people anyway and who liked me as a person anyway, so that when I had the next launch, *The 4-Hour Body*, when I had the launch after that, *The 4-Hour Chef*, these are the same people I'm still friends with, starting 2007, so it was relationship building as opposed to transactional. And those are a few of the things I would say.

My approach was very much informed by a book called [The 22 Immutable Laws of Marketing](#), and I would encourage people to look at *The 22 Immutable Laws of Marketing*. Not the new one for the Internet or anything like that. Get the original



edition. And with that, in the beginning, there is a fair amount of grunt work involved. And I talked about this in *The 4-Hour Work Week*.

Whenever you're starting a new business or trying a new industry or testing a new type of marketing campaign, you have to throw a lot at the wall and see what sticks before you can do an 80/20 analysis. So, with *The 4-Hour Work Week*, I mean I threw in everything including the kitchen sink.

Most of it didn't work, a handful of things did work, and then I applied those much more effectively and efficiently with *The 4-Hour Body*, which is why I think the article, *Lessons Learned Marketing [The 4-Hour Body](#)* is a good encapsulation.

Pat: Awesome. Okay, so for everyone listening, all of those books and all of the links that Tim just mentioned, they're going to be in the show notes, smartpassiveincome.com/session51.

Now, there's a couple of key points I want to point out there, and it's funny that you mentioned how you did the grunt work and you went to these events like Blog World Expo and built these relationships with people and I really like how you use the word "friendships" because that's what you want to do. You don't want to build relationships just to build a relationship for your business. You actually want to build friendships because that's what people are going to remember you, they're going to do you favors, and that's where I think all of this comes from.

And I remember a story that two friends of mine, Jeremy and Jason from [Internet Business Mastery](#), they told me a story about when they first met you, actually. Which was Blog World Expo 2007 or 2008 I think, and they were like "Oh this guy named Tim came up to us, and he was talking about--just asking us questions and talking about his book, and I didn't really think anything of it but other people started talking about him so we got in contact with him." And that's how I learned about you, was through them.

Tim: Oh!

Pat: So your strategy worked on me, and you didn't reach out to me directly, but it was someone who had influence on me that you reached out to. I think really you never know exactly the returns on something like that, but like you said, the more you throw at the wall the more is going to stick. And some people that you build a relationship with, that might not amount to anything, but the more people you build relationships with and actual friendships...it can't hurt.



Tim: Yeah, it can't hurt. And a few things I would say. Number one is that, if you meet a really high profile blogger, and in many ways the tables have been flipped now that I have a blog that gets 1.2 million uniques a month, I get pitched all the time. I mean, ALL the time. I would say my assistant gets a couple hundred emails a day, 80+% a day are just pitches of some type.

So I get to see the good, the bad and the ugly. And someone has to trust--speaking personally, I have to trust the messenger before I'm going to trust the message, which is a point I think a lot of people miss. They'll say "Hey, I have this book, it's a perfect fit for your audience, I know blah blah blah" which is really presumptive, first of all. But secondly, if I don't know you and I'm worried like "Wow, what if I endorse this book and then this guy goes out and does something really stupid that reflects badly on me...I'm not going to do it."

It really pays off to get to know people on a personal level and to have that human-to-human interaction.

The second thing I would say is that often times the way to get to the biggest outlets--if we're talking about media, and there's a lot more to the launch than just PR and media. The indirect path is often the best path. So one of the things I did is I looked at the--this is back in the day so things have changed a bit, but you can still do this.

I looked at the blog rolls, i.e. the list of blogs that the high traffic bloggers had on their own blogs, and I started to note not necessarily traffic leaders but thought leaders with smaller blogs that were read by a lot of the high traffic blogs.

So I went to those guys. I went to the thought leadership blogs that didn't necessarily have millions of uniques or whatever. And put a lot of thought into what type of content I could provide them that would be of value to your audiences, as much time as I would've spent pitching to The New York Times, and I know because I did both.

Then when the thought leaders put my stuff into the common circulation, that gave the traffic leaders the introduction and the permission, effectively, to link to that content or put it on their homepage. Which is how I triggered a lot of these snowball effects.

Pat: That's awesome. Also, something else that you mentioned, actually, that I learned from [Derek Halpern](#) whose show you were on recently, and also heard you and [Ramit Sethi](#) talking about...you were talking about--also, if you wanted to reach these thought leaders and top bloggers and people with big amounts of subscribers is to actually put their advice into action and do it and kill it and crush it and then send them information about how much they've helped them, because I mean--that's how people get on my radar.



They follow my advice and they...you know, Benny Tsu, for example, started an iPhone application company, because I did one too, and he got app of the week and started making 10s of thousands of dollars a day.

And you know, of course I'm going to share him. He took my advice! And if you can combine that with what you just said--so maybe I take your advice but someone else that you know shares that "Hey there's this guy named Pat that took your advice, you guys should check him out" that's going to be worth even doubly, I guess.

Tim: Absolutely. And do your homework. I mean, it's--what really--if you're trying to promote online, which I assume a lot of people will be, do not treat a blogger like an afterthought compared to traditional media. It's really irritating and it's completely misplaced priorities, in the sense that--the Wall Street Journal, I believe, has a subscriber base of something like 2 million. 2.1 million or so.

If you have a blog that gets 2 million uniques, you should treat an email to that person as just as important as an email pitch or query to the editor in chief of whatever section--or of The Wall Street journal or a section head.

And if you don't, and it's some type of spammy template or it's a note that just says "This is perfect, here it is attached, thanks so much, I would really appreciate it running at this time." Like, oh my--you're not the only busy person in the world, so be...have hat in hand. This sort of the bowl in a china shop bravado approach is NOT the best approach.

Which is perhaps funny to hear from me, because some people think of me as a very boisterous guy with a lot of swagger and stuff, but when I am talking to people about what I am up to, I really--I do not hard sell.

If I make a pitch, I even close my emails with giving them an easy out, and I'll say "I really appreciate you reading this far. If you can't do it, I totally understand, but even a sentence or two in a response would mean the world to me. Thanks so much, have a great week." I do NOT, I don't close with a "thanks for your favorable response" or whatever.

Pat: Haha, that's so arrogant sounding. Yeah, that totally aligns with how I run my business and how a lot of SPI readers and listeners know how I treat them. I think, really this all comes down to building relationships with people, human/human interaction, and really just treating people with respect, really.



We've been talking about a lot of things, we covered actually a lot of questions I had already, so I'm going to skip around. Next question I have, which was asked by probably the most people out of the comments on the blog post I was talking about is this--It's 2012 now, almost 2013.

The 4-Hour Work Week was written in 2007, 2nd edition December 2009. A lot of principles, I'm sure, still apply--I mean, they do, obviously. But what things do you feel need to be updated in the book, and how would you address those updates, say maybe one or two things?

Tim: The principles all apply. And I think that what is important. . . it's important to realize that a doctor can prescribe medicine, but the patient has to take the medicine, number one. Number two, I don't have any desire to be a guru in the sense that...and I never use that word when describing myself, but some other media do.

Because a guru implies that people come to me for answers. My job is to create independent learners and entrepreneurs who do not need me. So, I want to make myself obsolete as quickly as possible.

Here's why I say that. There's a lot of links in the book that I'm sure need to be updated. Or there are online resources, let's say for landing page testing. Maybe I'd recommend [inaudible] instead of something else that's in the book.

Maybe for email testing or even Google keyword tool I would have separate suggestions and would point people to Average Multivolume or I would point them to an article that Noah Kegan of [AppSumo](#) wrote on my blog about testing and market validation which was very much worth reading for anyone who is listening to this.

But here's the thing--all of the principles, the broader techniques and principles are the same. They still apply. What I would say is, if you are not able or willing to take the time to discover some of those new tools on your own, you're absolving yourself of the responsibility of making things happen. You can't do that. You cannot do that.

So yes, I would certainly hope to have a revised edition in the next few years, but the book gives you all of the raw materials and the portfolio of techniques that you need if it's--let's say, a new source for drop shipping or identifying manufacturing aside from contract manufacturing, aside from [alibaba.com](#), it's not hard to figure that out within five minutes of Googling. So I would just say that, fortunately, the principles themselves, like [Pareto's Law](#), [Parkinson's Law](#), Fear-Setting, whatever they might be, those are all timeless.



Those are things that people have been doing since Seneca and long before, certainly. Thousands of years. And I think it is that philosophical operating system, choosing the distributed lifestyle design approach as opposed to the deferred life plan, for instance, that has the greater impact. And then the box of crayons, the set of tools du jour, is going to continually change. So a book will never be fully up to date with any type of, let's say, online resources, but those are things that people can find themselves.

Pat: Awesome. thank you! Now let's move on to [The 4-Hour Body](#), because I do want to make sure we have enough time to talk about [The 4-Hour Chef](#).

The 4-Hour Body, your second book. The second time you hit The New York Times best seller list again, congratulations. This book a little different. It's a fatty, sort of choose-your-own-adventure type book, which I thought was really interesting.

What I really loved about it--you know, it's all about hacking your body. You actually used yourself as a test vehicle. This is years of research on yourself. Just a quick side question, were there any side effects from all the tests you were running on yourself?

Tim: Heh, well, I tested everything on myself, and some of the experiments that ended up producing safe, replicable results were the ones that I included and recommended. There were certainly things that DIDN'T work out so well. For instance, nothing--no crazy permanent stuff, but. I did try, at one point, to experiment with something called Resveratrol, which is very...is best known for extending lifespan in certain types of lab animals, and can do so pretty dramatically.

What I was very interested in was a set of studies that had been done to produce what they called Super Rat, and Super Rat had twice the endurance of the control rat. They achieved that by using high dose Resveratrol. So, I decided to consume, I think it was 60 days of the bottle recommended dosage, so 60 days of Resveratrol in about...two hours.

Pat: Ooookay, heh.

Tim: I did my research...everything should've been fine. What was not fine is...not on the label itself, but I found out later, the product I consumed was cut with something called imoden, and imoden is a laxative.

Pat: Ooooh...nice. Not so nice, actually.

Tim: [inaudible, maybe "60 days"] of Resveratrol plus 60 days of laxative, and that was...not a fun afternoon.



Pat: So for 60 days you had, uh, increased bowel movements? Nah, I'm kidding...

Tim: 60 days WORTH.

Pat: I know, I'm just kidding.

Tim: Yeah, it was not recommended! But the point being, I do a lot of this crazy gimmicky stuff so that other people don't have to, and then I take what I can replicate, what other people are able to duplicate safely, and I share it. I mean, it's been awesome to look at the results in *The 4-Hour Body*. And every time I have a book come out--I've sure you've seen this, there are people like "Ahhh! That's a con! That guy is a scam!"

Pat: Yeah.

Tim: And I'm like "Wait, be patient. First of all, you don't have any evidence to even remotely have that accusation, but secondly, be patient, and I will let my readers prove you wrong." So now it's like I can point to dozens of people who have lost 170 pounds, gotten off of insulin, people who've run ultra-marathons after eight-12 weeks of training. People who are trickling--I actually found out last week that a guy started powerlifting after *The 4-Hour Body*. So this was, it cannot be longer than two years ago. Recently became a world champion in powerlifting!

Pat: Wow, that's sick!

Tim: After reading *The 4-Hour Body*. So I like letting my readers prove the critics wrong, which is the most gratifying, fun way to do it.

Pat: Yeah, I was going to ask you later in the interview, what excites you about what you do? And I have a feeling that that's what it is. Just being able to see the results from everything that you learned and put into paper.

Tim: That's it, that's it. And what gets me excited is spending a lot of blood, sweat and tears figuring something out and then teaching people to be better than I am at it. Does that makes sense?

Pat: Yeah, no, absolutely. I love that.

Tim: I think I can learn things quickly, and I can because of the method that I use, which is what is the focus of *The 4-Hour Chef*, but whatever I learn I can teach someone else to be better at. That's what gets me super excited and is the only reason I keep doing this book stuff--because let's face it, books are a pain in the ass to write.



They are really, really--I find them very, very hard. Particularly because I've picked these enormous Choose Your Own Adventure--[sound cuts out for a minute.]

But the only reason I do it is because of the feedback. So you telling me how you read the book and it effected your business. Meeting a guy named Sergio two weeks ago who let me try on his old jacket with him. In other words, he was in his jacket and then he said "Okay, now put your arms inside it" and then he was able to button it in front of us because he'd lost 130, 150 pounds on the diet.

Pat: That's awesome.

Tim: That's the ONLY reason I keep doing this stuff.

Pat: That's awesome. One last question, this is actually from Ryan on the Smart Passive Income blog about *The 4-Hour Body*. And pretty much all of your other books, actually. He says "I would love to hear Tim give advice on eating well, staying in shape, and meeting income goals when you have a family, kids, a mortgage and other major responsibilities that will absorb time and money."

I think this is most of my audience, actually, that feels that way. So basically, how do you maximize potential in fitness, finance and nutrition when you have limited time to yourself and just limited resources?

Tim: The first thing I would say is don't focus on all three at once. Do not try to adopt multiple habits at once. Set one new habit. And a helpful tool for doing that is actually an app called [Lift](#) on iOS, on Apple, that I actually invested in. It was incubated by Ev and Biz of Twitter, and then Ev contacted me and I think I was the first outside investor in Lift. But its' a very simple way that people have been able to, for instance, keep track and stay on track with the Slow Carb Diet. I'm going to have some really awesome data to share in the next week or so about that.

But the second thing I would point out is that there are thousands of models out there to emulate. I don't have kids, that's true. I fully plan on having kids. But you don't have to wait for me to have kids to show you how to do it, right? I mean--Pat, you have kids, right?

Pat: Yeah, two kids.

Tim: Okay. Well, bam, okay. Look at what Patrick's done for the income side of things. Fitness? There are plenty of people. Kelly Starrett, for instance, in San Francisco. Tracy, who is in *The 4-Hour Body*, who lost 120 pounds, and is just jacked. She's amazing! She has two kids and she's 40-something. And has a mortgage I'm sure. So I would



look at those people and I think that it is valuable not only to show you what they do, but quite frankly just to remove those as excuses for inactivity and not taking action.

Pat: Yeah, absolutely.

Tim: For every limitation that you could possibly bring up as a reason for never trying, there is someone who has beaten it. You know what I mean? Whether that's--oh, well, you know, I can't climb Mt. Kilimanjaro because I have an old knee injury. I'm like "Really? I know a guy with no arms and no legs--this is a real story--who climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro military crawl."

Pat: Geez.

Tim: No, I don't buy it, your bum knee.

Pat: That's a great way to look at it, I've never thought about it that way.

Tim: That's what I tend to do. Whenever I'm getting pessimistic, and it happens to everyone. But whenever I'm like "Ahhh, I wish I could do this but I can't because of fill-in-the-blank" I ask myself "All right, who has done this with far more handicaps than me? With far more problems than I?" And there are ALWAYS examples. But surely like--family, mortgage, handling all of that, there are a lot of very accomplished people. Certainly more accomplished and more effective than I am, to emulate. So I would just say, look for models. Look for models.

Pat: Yeah, I would say that's very important, and that's a great response. Thank you! So, now let's get into *The 4-Hour Chef: The Simple Path to Cooking Like a Pro, Learning Anything and Living the Good Life*. I want to hear from you, Tim. Give us your pitch. We're in the elevator together, I say "Hey, what are you working on?" "Oh, The 4-Hour Chef." What's that about? Kind of give us a--why are we interested in it?

Tim: The 4-Hour Chef is the cookbook for people who don't buy cookbooks. Much like *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, which is not really about motorcycles, this book is a guide to all things related to accelerated learning, disguised as a cookbook for food. The stories are told through my adventures and misadventures in the world of food.

I chose cooking because it was a skill that I had failed multiple times before. I had quit many times before. I wanted to show my readers, from start to finish, how I tackle a complex skill. I also wanted to share with them that process, which is meta learning, and illustrate with 1,000+ photographs and diagrams and everything that it's the same exact process I applied to learning foreign languages, the same process I applied to go



from nothing to world championships in tango in 5 1/2 months, the same process I applied to Japanese horseback archery. It's all the same.

There is the grandest recipe of all, which is this process of meta learning. And I think that of all the things you can do in your life, the highest leverage thing is to increase your learning ability. That's true for you, it's true for your family.

What I've said to people is, #1, if I had the resources and access to people that I do now. . .if I'd had had it in 2007, I would've written *The 4-Hour Chef* first, before *The 4-Hour Work Week*, before *The 4-Hour Body*. Secondly, that it completes this trilogy in a sense. And that is all the principles in *The 4-Hour Chef* people have seen in the other two books. Like the 80/20 principle, for instance.

But I'm a huge Ben Franklin fan, and I've always aspired to master his trinity, which was healthy, wealthy and wise. So for me, healthy was 4-Hour Body, wealthy was 4-Hour Work Week, and wise was The 4-Hour Chef. So I think the three go together really well, but in many ways I think this is my most important book, and thankfully even some of my most cynical friends think it's my best book, so I'm happy about that because it was a pain in the ass to put together!

Pat: Nice! Well, congratulations on getting it out. Again, it's another one of those choose your own adventure type books, super-colorful photos and you know, I'm definitely looking forward to getting my copy very soon.

Now, there was a quote that you had, actually, in *The 4-Hour Work Week* that says "It is far more lucrative and fun to leverage your strengths instead of attempting to fix all the chinks in your armor." I love that quote. The 80/20 rule. But then here you are cooking, and you failed at it many times.

Why cooking? Is it because of the health benefits and things like that? Or is it because, you know, we all need to eat? And how does it differ from...is it not even considered a chink in your armor? It's just something that you should have skill for?

Tim: Well, I wanted to figure out why I'd failed at it. I think that that helps everyone figure out why they failed at other things, whether that's trying to learn the guitar, whether that's trying to learn a foreign language, whether that's trying to lose weight. I wanted to figure out why I'd failed at cooking. And there are some really clear reasons. I mean, I was trying to adopt 4 or 5 habits at once, i.e. grocery shopping, prepping, cooking, clean-up. As opposed to one at a time.



See, when most people try to learn how to cook, they've never done all of those things to start with. And now they're trying to incorporate four or five at a time. It's like, how can you eliminate clean-up? How can you eliminate grocery shopping? There are some pretty interesting ways to do that. Very non-obvious ways.

And then you can just focus on the cooking. And, viola, boom! Problem solved, and now in two weeks you're making stuff that could be served at a restaurant. Which is pretty wild, it took me a long time to figure that out.

The second thing is, even if you hate cooking and never make a single dish in the book, what this book will do is it will take your sensory experience of food from black and white to HD in a million colors. That will change your life, I guarantee every single person listening to this.

My experience with food now, it's literally like tiny black and white TV to IMAX. I mean, every meal that I have, because my ability to pull out smells and flavors and sensations and whatnot, it's so much higher, it's kind of like Spidey-sense compared to what I had before. And you're going to eat extensively, unless you have some superpower, people are going to eat until the day they die, probably three times a day. So you might as well spend a week playing around with things so you can improve your experience with that dramatically.

And there are all sorts of other reasons. Like, if you want a mating advantage, whether it's keeping your life partner happy, [inaudible] happier, or actually catching and keeping The One, or if you're just looking to have more fun. Cooking is the mating advantage. There are so many reasons why even if you hate cooking it's worth taking a look at.

And I had--before I started this book, I'm not kidding, I had the video that was, for a while, most popular related to me and cooking was me microwaving liquid egg whites in plastic containers. And [inaudible] was like mustard and white wine in the fridge, and olive oil in the freezer. I mean, it was insane.

Pat: Uh-huh. I watched that video.

Tim: Yeah. I was really starting from ground zero. We'll see, we'll see. But it's been fun to watch the feedback on Twitter and Facebook where people are making, on their first try, the best dish they've ever made in their lives. Which...



Pat: Yeah, I was following your Facebook for a while, and some people were saying "I've had the best scrambled eggs I've ever had in my life thanks to you!" and things like that. And I was thinking "Man, well, who's not going to pick up the book after reading something like that?"

Tim: Yeah. And it's so easy. I mean, when you get to the highest levels, when you're talking to the best chefs in the world, they don't try to complicate it for you. That's what I realized. When you're talking to a lot of people who are kind of good, or really want to prevent you from being part of their world because they want to be some like, weird high priest of the blogosphere or whatever? They don't, they complicate things.

But when you talk to, like, the Michael Jordans of cooking, like Grant Achatz, at Alinea in Chicago, where I spent two or three days, which is the #1 ranked restaurant in the US, while I was writing the book, or Marco Canora of Hearth in New York City, or you name it. I mean, Joshua Skenes of Saison in San Francisco. They are happy to give you simple techniques that will make you one of the best home cooks in the city. I mean, it does not have to be complicated at all.

Pat: Yeah. Again, like I said, I'm really looking forward to this book. I am actually the chef in my house, too, and I LOVE to cook. I love to cook. I want to master it as much as possible to kind of expand my arsenal at home. Keep the taste buds happy.

Tim: Yeah. I would also say one other thing, which is--I have actually started to look at cooking, because let's face it, if you make a decent income, you can eat out. And my feeling for the longest time was "Well, why the hell would I cook at home when I've worked this hard to get the money so I could just eat out? I can avoid it altogether. It's just inconvenient to cook."

And then I realized, and this is borrowed from a writer named Anne Lamott who wrote this book, [*Bird by Bird*](#), which is one of my favorites. It said sometimes you realize that it's not the caffeine and the tea that you needed, it's the tea ceremony yourself that you needed. And I find cooking, even if it's five minutes of prep, but you just are very present, staying aware, to be like a tea ceremony.

It's very meditative and slowing down for that five minutes of the day to take care of that just--it dramatically reduces anxiety and feeling and being overwhelmed and rushed so well, I think because it uses all five senses, that it's just become...that's become my meditation.



When I go to the gym, that's my moving meditation. When I cook in the kitchen, that is also when I take time out to meditate, basically.

Pat: Mmhmm. There's actually a question from Marjorie here on the blog. She's actually a food critic. She is a writer, and she was getting kind of skewed on the combination of efficiency and food. It didn't quite fit for her. And so hearing what you say, like, she's worried about incorporating efficiency so much that you lose the joy in cooking. but it still sounds like you are enjoying what you do and enjoying the food, using it as a meditative quality in your life, but you're just making it less wasteful for your time or....

Tim: Yeah. In the beginning, here's the thing, I have nothing against long meals. I actually...if you're looking to ensure your marriage succeeds, for instance, or if you want to have the highest self-reported wellbeing, which is a fancy way of saying happiness, the best predictor of that is long meals with family and friends two or three times a week. I love having long meals.

If you are trying to teach someone to learn a new skill that they find intimidating, like cooking, however, you have to start with very easy, very convenient solutions that kind of blow their minds and give them positive feedback and early wins.

I have nothing wrong, at all, with spending a lot of time on food and having dinners and what not, if that's what gives you the most joy. Absolutely, go for it! It's not like I speed read poetry, you know what I mean? They're [inaudible] places to maximize efficiency, and there are places to really relish the experience and one of the biggest issues, I think, in the United States and elsewhere, is people are so focused on achievement that they have no appreciation for what they already have.

And a big part of learning to cook, honestly, was slowing down. Really slowing down to speed up, if that makes sense, to get better results in my life everywhere. To slow down in a few places, and one of those places was food. But in the very beginning, when you're teaching people to overcome fear of the kitchen, the fear of ingredients, the fear of all that stuff? You have to keep it simple, and you have to keep it super convenient.

Pat: Right. So this is a cook book but really, it's about the efficiency of learning, so let's actually break this down a little bit. My wife for my birthday--my 30th birthday is coming up on December 6th - and my wife got me some free passes to go take archery lessons.



Tim: Great!

Pat: And since watching *Hunger Games* and all these zombie movies, you know, *The Walking Dead*, I'm totally into bows and arrows right now. But I've never touched one. So, if I'm applying meta learning, efficient learning to archery, like...tell me kind of, in a minute or two, what I need to do, how would I break this down, and so when I go take lessons on December 6th, I'm going to hit the bull's-eye or whatever.

Tim: Yeah, okay. I have a couple of suggestions. One of the approaches that I take often with different skills is something called no-stakes practice. Stakes like S-T-A-K-E-S. For instance, the worst time to learn knife skills is when you're under pressure to make a meal. So the best way to learn knife skills is to get something like a lettuce knife--which has the same shape as a chef's knife, but you can't cut yourself with--and to practice the proper technique on something like celery, for instance.

If you want to learn how to use a skillet and flip the food with that wrist motion? You don't want to practice when you're going to splatter scrambled eggs all over the place, so you get dried beans, you put them in the skillet, and then you kneel on, let's say, a carpet or something and you practice there.

I've applied that to marksmanship as well, where I've used let's say BB and pellet replicas where I can train in my house, where I can shoot a cardboard box with some towels stuffed inside it, and you can do the same thing with archery. So if you want to have the best technical ability and get in your technique without always having to go to the range, let's say, there's--I have two of them in my house right now. Look up archery tag. It's like the coolest thing ever.

Archery tag is like laser tag, but you're using bows and arrows. It's the coolest--

Pat: Whaaaaat!

Tim: It's the coolest thing ever!

Pat: Are you serious? Okay. I'm there.

Tim: [slightly inaudible] foam-tipped arrows, but they fly just like real arrows, and you're using a real bow. A real recurved bow. And you wear face gear, head gear like paint ball. It is the coolest thing I've ever seen. And using that, you could get a target, like an archery tag target, or some other type of target--could even be just a cardboard box with a hole cut in a center, and you have to get into the hole--and you could work on your technique for an hour at home, and really work on refining your technique, again, when there's no pressure of hitting the bull's-eye.



This is also something that is very well applied to basketball. So if you're shooting, let's say, basketball, you don't want to go to the gym and start training, immediately shooting basketball with a bunch of other people around the same hoop, when you're embarrassed to miss.

What you're most concerned with in basketball is making sure the ball travels in a straight line, okay? So you could just practice shooting at a line on the wall in the gym until you have that straight line shot, it's not deviating left and right, and THEN you go to [inaudible] and you'll make three times as much progress. That would be the first thing that comes to mind in terms of hacking archery.

Pat: That's no stakes, meaning no pressure. Just practicing with no regrets or no worries.

Tim: Yeah, exactly. And then another thing with archery specifically, as I would say-- for anything that really involves hand-eye coordination, don't move your head when you shoot. Keep your head still. You'll usually be knocking it with, let's say, three fingers and pulling it back to the corner of your mouth. Do not take the follow through very seriously, and remain still until like a second after the arrow hits its target.

But I'm excited for you, man. Archery is SO rad. It's one of the coolest things.

Pat: We'll have to do archery tag some day!

Tim: Yeah. It's the coolest.

Pat: Okay, so, I can see this sort of strategy, breaking things down, figuring--like you said, the 80/20 rule, figuring out what's going to maximize my effort, as opposed to learning everything about it right away. How would I, or somebody, apply this to, say, you know, marketing, for example? Something that doesn't have--it's not like language or fencing or tango dancing or anything like that. Can this be applied to something kind of, a little bit more abstract like that?

Tim: Yeah, there's no difference, actually. The problem with when people say "marketing," that's a lot like saying "I want to be happy." Or, no, even worse, "I want to be successful." Well, what the hell does that mean? We have to get very specific. So you can actually combine the DEAL of 4-Hour Work Week--Definition, Elimination, Automation, etc.? You can combine that with the meta learning.



So first we have to talk about--and this is the process of deconstruction, which is the first step in meta learning, is what exactly are we talking about? Let's break this down into specifics. So if we're talking about marketing, what do we mean?

So to me, marketing is knowing precisely who your 1000 ideal customers are, their behaviors, their age, their gender, their location, their hobbies, other media outlets that they might read, so specifically that you can then design an ideal product for them.

To me, that this marketing. Now, there are other types of paid acquisition, paid advertising, public relations, media, etc. But I would say once we get specific, then you can absolutely break it down. Many of the approaches to language, say, would apply. If you're talking about finding the anomalies--so a big part of meta learning is finding people who are uncommonly good at something and try to model them.

Michel Thomas for languages is an example. M-I-C-H-E-L Thomas, who was a holocaust survivor and then an intelligence officer. Another person would be Daniel Tammet, who learned Icelandic well enough in 7 days to be interviewed.

You have to ask yourself, like "All right, who out there is really good at marketing who seems to use the minimal effective dose?" It could be looking at someone like me, for instance. I post blog posts traditionally, like once every two to four weeks. Very, very infrequent, and I have a blog post called "[How to Build a High-Traffic Blog Without Killing Yourself](#)." It could be someone who's a copywriter, for instance, and has built a sort of domain that way. If we're talking about copywriting as a one to many tool for acquiring customers.

I think it absolutely can be applied, and the teachers don't have to be in person. I mean, if you talk to a lot of the best direct response marketers out there, they'll talk about Claude Hopkins, Scientific Advertising. Public domain, you can get it for free. They'll talk about Oval View on advertising, they'll talk about Caples for copywriting. You can absolutely take any skill that I've encountered and break it down using meta learning. No doubt whatsoever.

I talk about investing as another example in the book. I look at sort of what Warren Buffett has done, what I've done with start-ups, and I've applied a lot of it to investing. One thing that people miss is that in the start-up world, I've, right now, will probably make more this year from start-ups than all of my book royalties combined. And it's because I've applied this same methodology to investing. I haven't yet found something it doesn't apply to.



Pat: That's awesome. This is good stuff. Now, of course, I don't want to touch on this too much because I know you've talked about so much already and people can pretty much get the same information elsewhere about, you know, this book is available just through Amazon. You can't go to Barnes and Noble to get it, you can't go to independent bookstores to get it, and the reason is because those bookstores don't want to--you were actually the first big time publisher who signed on with Amazon and those bookstores don't want to have Amazon products in their stores.

Which, we could talk about this forever too, and just kind of really, is that the right strategy? And all that, so on and so forth. So my question for you is, we don't need to get into too much detail about that specifically, but where do you think the publishing industry is headed?

I'm starting to write books right now, I'm actually halfway through a Kindle book, and another book on another platform, and you know, I'm just so curious, since you're in this, and you're at the forefront of these new sort of strategies and you're right in the middle of it. What are your thoughts? Do you have any recommendations to those who are looking to publish books, or those who are already publishing books that you might have some, you know, future insight on?

Tim: It's a very fragmented business. The book is the first major book through Amazon publishing. There are independent bookstores that are carrying it, but it's really being boycotted by the vast majority, and like you said including all of Barnes and Noble.

There are a few bits of advice that I'll give, and I'll give a couple of resources first. First, I had a very long conversation with Ramit Sethi about self-publishing versus traditional publishing, and I think a lot of it still applies, so you can search both of our names and self-publishing and it'll pop up.

The second is understanding the general traditional book publishing process, I think, is a valuable investment of time. Just so you understand what has been done for several, probably several hundred years now. There's an author 101 series written by Rick Frishman, which is really worth looking at, and the bestselling book *Publicity and PR* I think is one of them in the series is also very worth checking out, just for the PR approach that he advocates, which I found very helpful in some respects.

I do think that, of course, things are turning toward digital, at least if we're talking about certain demographics in the US, and certainly at the coasts for the most part. But if you want, in short, if you want the credibility of being a New York Times bestselling author, then your odds are dramatically improved if you go through the traditional process and traditional distribution, because the New York Times rewards a variety of



reporting sources predominately at print retail. The boycott, for instance, this time around with Barnes & Noble could really hurt me there.

Pat: And you knew that was going to happen, right?

Tim: Yeah. If you want to make as much money as possible on the front end, which I don't necessarily advocate, but if that is your goal, then you could go through self-publishing, but it will be incumbent upon you to spread the word, do all the marketing, and acquire those customers, which can be very expensive.

I mean, think of it as selling a product. It is not necessarily inexpensive to do that. Your profits will get eaten pretty quickly. And that's, if you look at--I think her name is Amanda Hocking has sold several million books self-published and then signed with a traditional publisher precisely for that business--for that reason. She did not want to run a business.

I think we're headed to a time when the Internet is going to be like cable television in more ways than one, where we'll have, instead of one Oprah, 500 Oprahs and 500 verticals. And that opens up a lot of opportunity. What that also brings on, is a lot of noise. People, I think, talk about how great it is that anyone can self-publish on Amazon, and I do think that's a good thing, but the side effect of that is that you're competing now against anyone who can self-publish, and also anyone who can promote something that is self-published OR traditional published.

That just creates a lot of noise. So the importance of marketing, as I've defined it, promotion, micro serialization, i.e. getting your content excerpted in the right places, is going to become increasingly important.

And I think for fiction--fiction can rely more on the product itself for viral spread, and [inaudible] it has to. Non-fiction, you can use marketing to hit the best seller list potentially, for a week. You need really, really good content to stick around. And so it would be remiss for me not to say "your writing has to be good."

What that means is, you have a consistent voice--you don't need to be Shakespeare to write well. Consistent voice, and read some books of the craft, like [On Writing Well](#), is a great book. Bird by Bird for the psychological process on writing a book is fantastic.

Pat: Yeah, I have to reiterate that one. That one got me through a lot of writer's block.



Tim: [Inaudible]. And Stephen King's book [On Writing](#), excellent. Even if you're a non-fiction writer, I think it's [Letters to a Fiction Writer](#) are also very, very helpful for getting through those tough periods. And yeah, that's about all I have to say about that right now, but...

Pat: Thank you, Tim.

Tim: . . . A bit more clarity.

Pat: That really helps, and it helps me as a future publisher as well, because I've had that debate in my head, too, and I'm just curious...so thank you.

If possible, would you be able to answer this question--what's your next 4-Hour book going to be about, if you have one?

Tim: Heh, I don't think I'm going to have another 4-Hour book. I actually, I've view this as the trilogy, I view this as the final installment of the trilogy. I might change my mind about that, but for the time being I've been kind of the 4-Hour guy since 2007, and I'm ready for something new.

It doesn't mean I won't use all of the principles in the books. I'm sure I will. But I think the 4-Hour moniker has, for me, kind of run its course, and I'm very happy with it. Extremely proud of this last book. I think even more so potentially than the others. But eh...ready to disappear for a while, go off the grid for a bit. Time for a little [inaudible] and then come back and try something different.

Pat: Well I know I'm looking forward to whatever you have next, and you deserve your mini-retirement, like you say in [The 4-Hour Work Week](#). Thank you again for all of the work that you've done, I really look forward to diving into [The 4-Hour Chef](#) and I'll maybe send you some pictures of stuff that I've cooked up. Archery, or whatever.

And if you have any final words of advice to the Smart Passive Income audience to help us all achieve our goals in our business and in life, one piece of advice that you've learned in all of your experience in business, entrepreneurship, start-ups, anything. We would love to hear it!

Tim: I would just say, I have my copy of [Letters From a Stoic](#) next to me right now, which I've had for many years. Just...remember that life is short. Life can end very unexpectedly. And that's not a depressing thing! It's a very practical thing to keep in mind. I'm 35 now, I've had a number of very good friends pass away from disease or accidents. You are not guaranteed to plan in, let's say, a deferred lifespan type of



fashion and get what you want in the end. So really seize the day to take those things you've postponed, whether that's, you know, a trip with the family or learning the guitar and sharing that with your family, whatever, take these things that you've put on the shelf and dust them off and really tackle them.

I've talked about this before, but it's sometimes the most unrealistic things that are the easiest to obtain because no one's trying to do them, or very few people are ever aiming for them. The world's so busy aiming for base hits that it's oftentimes easier to really go for the homerun.

And be aggressive about it! There are tools that can help you, whether it's in my books or elsewhere. I would just say, remember that life is short and make the most of it.

Pat: Right. And to kind of play along that, I'm going to finish up with a quote from *4-Hour Work Week*. "What we fear doing most is usually what we most need to do."

Tim: Exactly right!

Pat: All right, thanks Tim! I appreciate it, and we'll talk again soon.

Tim: All right! Thanks, Patrick. Bye.

As I said before, there are so many more questions I would have loved to ask Tim, but we reached an hour pretty quickly and I didn't want to take too much of his time, he's obviously a busy man.

If you really want to see how much Tim is doing for the promotion of his book, I'll put a link to a post he published on his blog that shows exactly what blogs he's done interviews for, what shows he's been on and websites he's done articles for - it's crazy.

As one of my readers said, he basically carpet bombed the internet with his market strategy, so yes he's putting in more than 4 hours of work per week, but he's doing exactly what he needs to do to get the word out there, and it's working - we'll see where he ends up on the best-seller list, if at all, but you know it's all about putting in the work now so you can reap the benefits later, and that's exactly what he's doing.

I hope you enjoyed that interview, again get all the links and resources at smartpassiveincome.com/session51 - thank you all for sending in your questions, and congratulations to Ryan, Naomi, JP, Marjorie, Neel, Liz and Greg for winning copies of the 4-hour chef, if you haven't heard from me yet you'll get an email from me very soon - and some of the questions I asked I was going to ask anyway so yeah. There you go - thank you all for your support, I'll see you in session 52, stay safe, stay warm and stay productive.



Talk to you soon. Bye!

show notes at: <http://www.smartpassiveincome.com/session51>