



RAY EDWARDS

LIVE WITH JOY. LEAD WITH PASSION. PROSPER WITH PURPOSE.

How Cliff Ravenscraft, the Podcast Answer Man, Transformed His Life Episode 161

It's another episode of how to help you start, run and grow a business that changes the world. That's what we're in the business of doing and I love you for being part of this. Thank you so much for everyone who has subscribed to the podcast in iTunes or on Stitcher. When you do that it helps us, it helps spread the word and create more momentum for the movement, which is what we are.

Today's show is especially dear to me, because one of my dear friends is my guest, but here's the real reason why I'm so excited for you and so intrigued by what we're about to do. We often hear success stories of people who go from rags to riches, especially on the Internet, this is a popular story line. I was broke and busted. I was at the bottom and I overcame it and became totally successful. We usually hear about the struggles they had when they started but what is uncommon is to hear about the struggles they still endure and how they're overcoming them in the present moment.

That is real. That is what real life looks like, so I'm excited about today's show, which is mostly a recording of a conversation between me and my friend, Cliff Ravenscraft, who you probably know as the Podcast Answer Man. He's taught thousands of people how to podcast. He's taught famous people how to start their world famous podcasts, people like Dan Miller, Michael Hyatt and others, Mike Stelzner of Social Media Examiner and so forth.

During this totally unscripted off the cuff interview, which was not supposed to be unscripted, you'll find out how the TV show *Lost* helped Cliff become a leading voice in the world of podcasting. How investing in one specific training program changed the entire vector of his life and career for good. Why success on the outside may not indicate success on the inside and Cliff opens up and tells of his most recent struggle and the incredible way he's gaining victory over that.

You'll also hear the story of a prayer that brought a miraculous answer in the most unexpected place and time, and it literally transformed Cliff's life in a moment. Plus, how selfies can actually be selfless. And Cliff will share two books you absolutely must read if you want to change your physical health once and for all. Chances are you've never heard of either of these books. Plus, there's much more wisdom from the man who helps so many make their lives better and take their lives and businesses to the next level. Hang on, we'll talk to Cliff in just a moment.

Tip of the Week

My tip of the week is an app called **periscope** and you probably already know about this. It's made by the folks at Twitter. It's a competitor to a similar app named **meerkat** and both of them turn your mobile phone into a TV broadcast studio in your pocket. You can use your iPhone or Android phone, fire it up, click a button and start broadcasting live to the people who follow you through video.

Both apps tie into your Twitter followers, so you have an instant audience available to you if you have people following you on Twitter. It's hard to explain until you've experienced it, so I encourage you to go to the app store and download one or both of them and see how you like them. Meerkat was first, and Periscope came out while we were at Social Media Marketing World, so it will be interesting to see who prevails in this battle between these two similar apps.

I think this is an exciting and revolutionary technology. You literally have a TV broadcast studio in your pocket and you can broadcast to the world. I think we've only begun to see the ramifications this carries for the future, so now is the time, jump in early, play the game. It's a lot of fun and I think it's going to change things. You will be among the first to be part of it if you decide to jump in now, which I encourage you to do.

Spiritual Foundations

I talk a lot about living a prosperous life and you may think that I am totally prosperous in every way and that I have no problems or challenges, but that's not true I do have challenges and troubles, just like everyone does, just like Jesus promised us we would. He said, *'in this world you will have trouble, but fear not for I have overcome the world.'*

In this 23rd Psalm it says the Lord is my shepherd I lack nothing. So currently, I'm continuing to learn the deep lesson that if we believe God's word is true. If we really believe what we say we believe is really real, the 23rd Psalm literally means we lack nothing in this present moment. That is sometimes hard to accept, especially if you happen to be sick, if you're in pain or experiencing a broken relationship or home. If you have lost your job or any of the other myriad of hurtful challenges we all deal with in our day-to-day lives.

It usually doesn't feel like we're lacking nothing, yet God's word says we lack nothing. How can this be? First, we have to remember that God sees things from a different perspective than we do. We see the whole picture from beginning to end. What may look like lack to us, He knows to be a temporary situation. He knows exactly how it's all going to come together. God knows that He will ultimately tip the scales of justice in our favor and that anything we lack or feel we have lost will be restored to us and to him He's outside of time so in his perspective it's already done.

God is good all the time, no matter what our circumstances may be trying to tell us. Ground your faith in the bedrock of that confession, God is good. He is not against you He is for you. God is your friend, He's not punishing you. Believe it or not, the fact that God is your friend and that He's good even in all circumstances that is the message of the entire book of Job. I'm going to spend more time talking about Job in a future episode, but if you want to find out for yourself then read the last part of Job where God answers Job and all his friends. You'll see where basically, God is saying all this stuff that you have said to try to explain why these terrible things have happened to Job you're wrong. You don't understand what's happening. I'm your friend and you can count on me, that's what he's saying, in my opinion.

So how do we practice this idea that we lack nothing, especially when our circumstances tell us that we may lack everything? I believe the key is gratitude and you may say wait Ray, I can't pay the bills with gratitude or, can you? Now, let me be clear and tell you that I don't set myself up as the picture of perfection. Jesus is the picture of perfection. He is, as Bill Johnson says, perfect theology. Any theology you have that runs counter to what you see demonstrated in Jesus, you need to re-examine that theology because it's wrong. Jesus is perfect theology. He's the perfect reflection of the Father.

Look at this. When Jesus fed the 5000 men, not counting women and children, so it was probably 10k or more, and he fed those people with just a little bread and a few fish and He prayed. Read the account for yourself in the Gospels. He didn't ask and beg for a miracle and plead with his Father in Heave, oh Father please feed these people. We ask that you would just feed these people. Please Father. Scripture tells us that Jesus gave thanks and then He had the disciples distribute the bread to the thousands of people present and there was enough for everybody with plenty left over.

I don't think it's an accident that we're told He gave thanks. I think we should study what the Lord did and emulate it in our own lives if we want to get the same kind of results that He got. You see, He expressed gratitude for what He had and He stepped into a realm of the kingdom reality that allowed miraculous provision to flow from a seemingly insufficient supply. That's how the kingdom works.

I really believe that your level of prosperity in all things, health, wealth, peace of mind, your family or business, will equal exactly the level of your gratitude. So give thanks for what you do have and give no attention to what you feel might be lacking in this moment, because God has spoken and He has said unequivocally, you lack nothing.

Feature Presentation

It's time now for my interview with Cliff Ravenscraft and the funny this is that I actually did have a page full of questions. I told Cliff I just wanted to have a conversation with him and talk about how he thinks, approaches things in life, what makes him curious, what makes him furious, etc. I said we're just going to have a conversation. I did have a page of questions to ask him to make sure we had plenty to talk about. I asked the first question and from that point on the interview took on a life of it's own and I'm so glad it did. You are going to enjoy and be blessed just like I was, by Cliff's story.

Ray: You've got all this enormous success. You just spoke at Social Media Marketing World, not for the first time, and you're off to another huge podcasting event to speak again. I think this summer you're speaking in the UK.

Cliff: Yes, going to Manchester in the UK for New Media Europe, doing an opening keynote there.

Ray: That's astonishing. You've been on national television. You've been in big print publications, so my first real question to you is this. Do you ever at moments just think man, I have arrived? I am it. I am the man. I'm the boss. Do you ever feel like that?

Cliff: I don't know that those words have actually ever crossed my mind. I do recall myself feeling sometimes that I am incredibly blessed. I seem to have received some sort of favor from the hand of God that has blessed my path and journey and I will say there are several things you've mentioned that I clearly set out, I mean those things didn't just happen accidentally. So many of them happened as a result of some crazy wild dream that I had no business dreaming, at least I didn't think I had any business dreaming.

Then it became a reality. I'll never forget back in December 2011 when I was working on my 2012 goals and up to that point my public speaking was mediocre at best. Basically I compensated with passion, which I had lots of and I had a good story so people enjoyed it, but the reality is that my technical skill of public speaking was pretty lousy. On a scale of 1 to 10 I would have rated myself a solid two.

Ray: It wasn't that bad. I saw you speak before the transformation and I would have given you better than a two for sure. I hear what you're saying, because I remember thinking, well he's not the most polished speaker but his heart captivates me. You really got people.

Cliff: That's it. Like I said I compensated with passion. My heart is what connected with people and it helped them be blind to my lack of technical speaking skill. I had this crazy dream and said in 2012, I want to become known as a keynote speaker. I want the word keynote next to my name and also, I want 2012 to be the year that I start getting paid to speak. I never once had a single professionals training or coaching in public speaking, and I'd only spoken for free at a bunch of free conferences.

I put that dream out there. I told the whole world about it and two weeks later, Father Roderick Von Hogan from the SQPN.com Sarquest Production Network, reached out to me and said Cliff we're doing another Catholic new media conference and it will be in Dallas, we'd love to have you as our opening keynote. What is your speaking fee?

Ray: What's incredible is that I was witness to all that. I was listening to you back then and heard you talk about that goal. I heard about it coming to fruition and it was really a fun way of going along on this journey with you, because you just shared your excitement. I know some people maybe are put off that they feel you have an ego, but I didn't feel that way. I felt like you were sharing openly that this is what you want to do. That you weren't sure how you were going to do it, but you would be doing it and then it happened. I was happy for you.

Cliff: Yeah and it happened and I was freaked out, first because they were paying me and second because I'm this opening keynote. When I said I want to be that guy who sets the tone for the entire conference, and then suddenly I get this gig and I'm like oh my gosh, now what do I do? So I was frantically looking for professional materials and coaching to help me and I signed up for some conferences, but all the conferences I could sign up for happening after the keynote.

So I went into this keynote after just reading some books and asking friends. I practiced but I gave the keynote and I will tell you, on a scale of 1 to 10 I would say my opening keynote for that conference, I'd rate it about 4 on technical skills. As far as passion I would say that was right at the top. It was the first time I'd ever gotten the opportunity to speak on the topic of faith and technology rather than the technology of technology, so I loved that. Also, it was cool to be the opening keynote speaker of a Catholic conference and the fact that I wasn't Catholic.

Ray: I thought that was amazing too.

Cliff: For me it was even more unique because I went to a Catholic school for seven years in elementary school and I was one of three non-Catholic kids in the school and was always picked on from other Catholics for not being a part of the team.

Ray: What was the next step in your journey as a public speaker?

Cliff: That event went well. It was well received and gave me a little confidence boost. I'm grateful too for our mutual friend, Mark Mason, who happens to be in our mastermind group. He lives in Dallas and was at that event. I was as nervous could be and he said Cliff, let me tell you, if you did no preparation at all and got on that stage you'll be better

than most speakers that I've ever heard of, because you just know what you're talking about. You know Mark, he's that guy.

Ray: Yes, he really is. He's like, if you're a Bible person and you know who Barnabus is, he's an encourager and that's Mark. He's an encourager with an edge. He's like, if you're doing something you don't need to be encouraged in he will tell you, but he'll tell you in a nice way.

Cliff: It went very well thanks to him and the support of some other people. Then after that I got another speaking gig, which was Michael Hyatt's Platform Conference. This was another paid speaking gig and this is Michael Hyatt and I know most of your audience knows who he is, so this was a big deal for me. It was still before I had the opportunity to go through professional training.

I got up there and that speaking gig went extremely well, but to tell you how horrible my technical skill in communication was I did the most ridiculous thing. I'm actually embarrassed about it, even today. I used to always have this issue that when I'd get up on stage I'd be really nervous for the first 5-10 minutes and would stumble over my words and then suddenly something shifted and I was in full on passion mode and by the end of that talk I'd be wishing I could talk for the rest of the day and do it every day for the next 10 days.

So I figured I wanted to get up on stage and get my nervousness out in the first 90 seconds, so I got up on the stage and made a fool of myself on purpose by singing in front of the crowd. By the way, I can't carry a tune in a bucket. I got up there and made this Art Garfunkel joke as it relates to Malcolm Gladwell because they had the same hairstyle and same Sound of Silence with 100 people in the room standing up singing with me.

Ray: I remember.

Cliff: I got that out of the way and it had nothing to do with my talk and it was all about me and looking back, Michael must have been thinking, what was I thinking getting him here. He says that's not what he was thinking.

Ray: From the perspective of, and I didn't have Michael's perspective because I was a paid attendee to be there and I wasn't a speaker. I was right up front and was really excited to meet you. You were one of the reasons I was going, because Cliff Ravenscraft, the Podcast Answer Man was going to be there, I was going to get a chance to meet him, that's how I felt. When you did that I saw it as what some people call **pattern interrupt**. People expect certain things to happen when a speaker takes the stage. They don't expect them to do what you did.

It broke their pattern and I could see it. I thought it was brilliant. Everyone relaxed and was with you on your side and you had them from that moment on.

Cliff: And I was relaxed too, so it accomplished what I had hoped. It got me out of myself, and by the way, I felt like an idiot on the stage but it got it out of the way in the first 90 seconds, so I was not paralyzed for the next 5-10 minutes. Right after getting done with that I was like okay, if anyone is going to make fun of me they've already got it out of the way so let's move on.

Ray: You had me at 'hello darkness my old friend'...

Cliff: After that Michael and Ken Davis, both have another conference where, believe it or not, for some strange reason they said Cliff would you like to come to our SCORE conference.

Ray: What's that about Cliff?

Cliff: The SCORE conference is a professional coaching conference on taking your technical skill in public speaking to the next level. They offered for me to participate in that conference and it was just a few months later. I went to Orlando and I can tell you now, out of all the conferences I've attended in my life and I've attended some wonderful quality and high value conferences, nothing comes close to the value I received from that conference.

Ray: Yes, I've been to it and I would agree it's probably the most valuable conference I've been to. It's indescribable and if you haven't been there you can't understand what happens to you, because it's not just a sit and receive thing it's a participate and be changed thing.

Cliff: And it's an all day thing. You start at 8:00 in the morning and you're not done until 10:00 in the evening. It's all day. Don't go to this conference thinking you're going to work from your hotel room in the morning or the afternoon because that's not going to happen.

Ray: That's right it's long. It's like a Tony Robbins event except without all the cursing.

Cliff: So I went there and learned some skills. It was the first time I was actually taught skills related to public speaking and I soaked up everything I could. Even then I knew I wasn't getting everything they were saying, but I got a lot. I came away from that and a few months later I did another Platform Conference for Michael and Ken and it was night and day difference. For the first time in my life I got up on stage and I wasn't nervous those first few minutes.

By the way, don't get me wrong I still get nerves and anxiety in preparing and leading up to a talk. I've heard people say if you're not nervous it means you don't care and I believe that in some ways. It's like man this is a big deal that I have this opportunity, so I get that and I still get anxiety leading up to going on stage.

Ray: I feel like it's excitement. You could describe it as a little anxious, but for me I think of it as being excited. It's nervous energy, not like nervous I want to go puke in a bucket.

Cliff: Mine is more nervous energy, but there is still a little bit of I want to puke in a bucket too. I don't know what it is, but the reality is that the SCORE conference helped me and there are a couple things I learned there that radically changed my world.

First, the whole method of preparing a talk with what they call the ugly sentence.

Second, knowing that every talk that you give can only be one of two, either persuasive or enabling.

Once you decided which talk you're going to give you then decide what topic you're going to talk about and you only have one purpose for the entire talk. Once you decide what that one purpose is then you have rationale for either, things people can do to be enabled to do what you want them to do or things you have ideas that will support why they should believe what you are saying on the stage.

So much of just understanding that every talk only has a single purpose and having this formula, I thought I'm just going to go to learn how to stand on stage without looking like an idiot.

Ray: Yes, like how to hold your hands.

Cliff: Right. I thought I would be learning all that stuff and I thought, I don't want to be bound up by some formula. I will tell you, there is freedom in the formula because the formula is very strict, very formulaic and fill in the blanks. But the reality is that once you have that you then have this freedom to expand and what I learned... I'll never forget when I did the first Platform conference, I was so upset because they only gave me 40 minutes to talk and I was like I know I need an hour, but it was set.

So I thought, how could I ever say what I want to say from the stage in 40 minutes? I believe with all my heart, from this moment forward, I can give any talk you could ever ask me to give in 5-10 minutes and no more. I don't need 40 minutes ever again in my life and when I have 40 minutes can I deliver some extra value. But whatever I can say in 40 minutes or an hour, I could say it in 5-10 minutes and be just as effective in enabling or persuading people to do whatever the purpose of that talk is.

Ray: Yes, and I saw the transformation because I saw it from one Platform conference to the next and I loved your talk at the first one, but the second one blew me out of the water. It was such a huge difference.

Cliff: Another thing that I learned wasn't just the formula and how much freedom I found in it for putting a talk together and how that makes it so easy for me to prepare instead of spending weeks of putting it off, one afternoon on a whiteboard and it's there. This also wasn't a part of my official training it came from my personal coach. By the way, our conversation has just led here serendipitously, we're not promoting any kind of conference.

Ray: No for sure, I was totally headed in a different direction but I love this. We get no kind of reward for talking about this conference, but we've both been changed by it so go on.

Cliff: The conference gives you a personal coach with you and a small group of people that you meet with during each night of the conference and you have to deliver a talk. I had Candy, who is Ken Davis' sister and she was my coach. One of the things she helped me with is when you get on the stage where most people say thank you for inviting me I'm glad to be here, etc. She said never do those things. You want to walk up to the stage and if you want, give a dramatic pause and don't say a single word.

Look at people in the eye and then start with a powerful word or story and forget about that other stuff. Knock them upside the head with something powerful right out of the gate. I loved that.

Ray: I got the same advice and every time I speak, whether it's at a conference or church I start the same way. I walk onto the platform/stage being silent and I take a moment to look everyone in the eye and drink in the people, realizing that I'm not here for me to be a big deal, I'm here to give something to these people and I need to recognize them as such. That's what's going on in my head. It's powerful because it rivets people's attention and you feel like you need to talk.

Cliff: I love it and it cured the one thing I had the hardest time with which is, what's the first thing to say when I'm on the stage? I love it. It's like every time I get on the stage I know already what my first word or sentence will be. By the way, the second through fifth sentences that I speak are not pre-scripted and I have no idea what those will be.

Ray: I'm curious now, so you have this formula that you use as framework for giving a talk. What happens if you have a big dramatic moment planned in your talk and something goes horribly wrong?

Cliff: Were you there for that or did you just hear about it?

Ray: I watched it on the video.

Cliff: It's not a big deal anymore. Let me setup what happened. I was doing the closing keynote for the podcast movement, about 650 people there. I was speaking to the entire crowd, the largest I had spoken to, to date.

Ray: It's an important thing for the event because you are the crescendo for the whole thing. People are going to walk away with whatever impression you leave them with.

Cliff: Exactly and going into this I probably put about 80 hours, worth of preparation into this talk and leading up to the event, going to the last day I actually interviewed my friend, Anna Sophia Rhinehart, who is a member of my community and made a decision to not commit suicide as a result of our podcasting efforts. Later she sought recovery for anorexia, who then later created her own podcast after taking my course, called Fighting Anorexia, who has now helped save the lives of countless other people around the world.

I wanted to share this story, so I interviewed her and asked if I could share her story and what personal details I could provide. I had a video testimonial of her and literally 3 ½ minutes of my talk at the very end, was going to be a minute and a half testimonial followed by an audio voice feedback that she sent me in 2006. I promised everyone there, you will be in tears by the end of my talk. I worked desperately hard to make that happen and right before going up on stage they had a problem with my Mac not sending the signal out to the thing.

They rebooted the Mac and opened it up and what happened is the presentation was opened and not until I got to that point in the presentation did I find out that the video and audio from Anna Sophia had been deleted completely.

Ray: This is where most people would have collapsed.

Cliff: I would have normally, because before so much of my focus of my talk was on the materials that I prepared to share, be it slides or the actual audio or video resources I wanted to give. If anything went wrong that would mess me up, but now it's like wait, it's okay. If every slide in my deck was gone I still know what my one single purpose is. If I've practiced enough I could recite what my four/five rationale are. If I can't then at least I still know what my single purpose is and I wouldn't have been invited to the stage to talk about it if I didn't have something of value to share on the topic, so I could probably speak extemporaneously.

Ray: Off the cuff.

Cliff: It doesn't matter, so I said I'm going to play this for you while I take a drink of water and I clicked the button and went to drink and it went to my closing slide. I went back and said you're not going to believe this, the most important part of my presentation is missing and 600 people gasped. I said but don't worry because I know the story, so I told her story from my own perspective and it probably ended up being more impactful on the audience than if I'd played the two slides. It was the first time I'd ever had a standing ovation and it rocked my world.

Ray: What I love about this story, the lesson I think it provides is the value that good quality training... you invested in yourself by going to the SCORE conference and we could be talking about any good quality training, but you made the investment in yourself and it literally transformed your life, to where your life went on a different vector from that point forward.

Cliff: Absolutely. Not only that but I actually went to the SCORE conference a second time, because I got so much value from it. I knew there was so much I didn't soak up the first time, so I've been back a second time. There is one more thing to share and I would then love to go in whatever other direction you want to go for this conversation.

Something else I pulled from the SCORE conference and it's the reason why the nervousness is no longer there when I get on stage. It's not because I'm prepared or because I know the first sentence, but it's that the whole talk is not about me. You alluded to this earlier, something you had just said, but something I just realized is that it doesn't matter if the people in the audience think I'm fat. It doesn't matter if my zipper is unzipped and people are sitting there constantly looking throughout the talk. It doesn't matter if people out there think my hair or clothes look funny. It doesn't matter if anyone in the room likes me.

The purpose of me being on the stage isn't to promote Cliff and make people like him, it is to deliver the message for which I've been hired to give. That's all that matters. Whether they like me, how I look or feel about myself, none of that matters. The only thing that matters is, will they walk away with the intended message that I wanted them to have. So if I'm going to persuade them to create a podcast within 90 days, did I accomplish that goal? Or, if I want to show them how to change the world with their podcast, can they walk out the door and within the next 30 days, change the world? That's all that matters.

Ray: Yes. That is so dead on point. Before I give a talk I have these affirmations I've written out and I first started doing it after hearing Tony Robbins talk about it. Then I heard Michael Hyatt talk about how he does this same sort of thing, so I've written up these affirmations that are about who I'm speaking to. It's about the fact that I'm not here for me, I'm here for a purpose. I was guided to be here. God has a purpose in my being here and I'm going to serve these people in the way God intended me to serve them so their lives are changed.

It focuses me on that outline because you're right, that's what we're there for and some people would say, not only about speaking but podcasting and being on the Internet with the kind of business we have. Some would say, if you didn't want to be famous you wouldn't be doing this kind of thing anyhow. I don't think that's correct. My experience of you is not about you being famous and being the most well-known podcasting guy on the planet. You really have this heart. You're wired to do this. Do you think that's right?

Cliff: Absolutely! This all started as a hobby for fun and when I realized that what I was doing for fun was having a positive impact on people's lives, I started getting emails from people

saying listen, I listen to you and your wife talk about this TV show Lost and I have a sneaking suspicion that you and your wife are Christians. Am I right? I wrote back and say yes we are. Then this person would write me a 5-page letter, that if you printed it out, was pouring out his heart about his experience in the Christian church and how he's struggling to hold onto his faith in God and want to know if I had any advice for him.

I said I was thinking about creating another podcast, do you mind if I read your email, leaving your name out, and can I answer your questions in a podcast episode and speak those things? He said yes, so I launched this other podcast and this whole other world of sharing my life and experiences and knowing that it's having a powerful positive impact on the lives of people around the world, that's why I do what I do.

Ray: Podcasting is the most revolutionary vehicle ever available to human beings up to this point in history.

Cliff: I would say so. I mean, a lot of people say what about video and all those other things? I believe there is something about the power of the human voice and the fact that this content is being consumed right now from people who are sitting on a plane with no access to the Internet. There are people who are listening to our voices right now who are driving in their cars where they shouldn't be looking at video. There are some that do drive to work and watch their video podcasts. There people who are doing the dishes.

This is convenient and not to mention, Ray, I look much better in audio.

Ray: We all do, Cliff. You're looking much better physically these days, let's talk about that for a moment. You've been going through a physical transformation that's amazing. What inspired that to happen?

Cliff: For me it started in January of 2009 when I almost died. That's the initial precipice of this. Throughout 2008, the first year I did my business full-time and I had no idea what I was doing, trying to eke my way and barely making it financially. I worked 12-14 hours a day 7 days a week literally for the first 9 months and the final three months I took Sunday's off and increased the number of hours for the other 6 days of the week.

In January 2009, after a whole year of that schedule I was in the hospital for massive gallstones and I had a stone stuffed in my cystic duct and they told me if I didn't have surgery to remove it if it fell down after my gallbladder was removed it would guarantee death. They also said there was a 50/50 chance I'd make it through surgery to remove the stone. I said well, after much thought, let's get the stone out because it's guaranteed death if it falls afterwards, so I'll go with the 50/50 and that night the nurse came in to have me sign the authorization forms and she says you're scheduled to have your gallbladder removed in the morning.

I said what? She said that's right. I said no, I'm supposed to have this upper thing to remove a stone from my cystic duct. She said no that's not what they've scheduled here. She said just sign this and we'll get it taken care of. I said no, you have the doctors come in and talk to me, show me that the forms have been changed and then we'll do it. Basically, I spent two weeks in the hospital, almost died and I now have a wife and three kids. I'm the sole income earner for our family and that woke me up to the fact that I needed to make some changes.

It took me a few months to recover and in April/May 2009, I started on a journey in working towards walking 10k steps a day. When I first started I barely got in 2000 steps a

day before I was in writhing pain in my hips. I eventually got to the point where I was walking around 5 miles a day every day 4/5 days a week and I did that for 18 months and lost 60 pounds. What happened though is that my original motivation, and I've heard this is called your **activation energy**, that's the term given, came from the medical side and thinking how I needed to take care of myself physically?

Over the course of 18 months, the memory of being in the hospital and having that experience had slowly faded away and I started focusing more on the vanity side of what I was doing. I wanted to get to a certain weight. It was all about the number on the scale. I got to a place where I went from 268 to 210, which is huge and I could not, no matter what, get below 210. I was stuck there. I wanted to get below that and things started happening in business and I started to lose focus on it. I got sick and came down with bronchitis, which turned into pneumonia and had some other issues.

Long story short, I got out of the routine of working out, then after feeling guilty about that and feeling like I'm failing at this and not feeling well, and I don't know about you but when I'm sick I lose self-confidence. My mind does funny stuff when I'm sick. That was happening with me. I started dealing with depression and emotionally I turned to the old style foods that I had gotten away from and the next thing you know I'm eating two double cheeseburgers and a large fry with two apple pies for \$1 at the local golden arches.

I'm eating those consistently every day and over time I gained all the weight back. That was in 2012 and I've had a couple false starts where I would get on an exercise routine and commit and it would work as long as six weeks and as short as a week and something would get me off track. I will say that every time I started getting back at it, it was always about the vanity thing. Oftentimes, it was right after I came back from a speaking gig. I had just been on stage in front of an entire audience of people with this big whopping gut hanging out and in my mind all I'm thinking of is, Cliff might have it all together when it comes to business but the guy's out of control in his life.

People weren't saying those things to me, and the reality is that in my own head I know there's something not right in my life. I'll never forget in September 2014, last year, I went to pursuing a balanced life, my audience, a podcast I've been doing since 2006 and I just recorded my 604th episode today. This is my audio journal and I went to my audience and said I'm going to tell you something and I beg of you not to give me any advice. I don't want phone calls or a single email sent related to this topic. I want to tell you something, I know I need to do something with my physical activity.

I know I need to do something about the foods that I eat. Here's the deal, I've done this before so I know what I need to do and what it takes to do it. I know all about just getting out the door and how I'm going to feel if I make the decision as well as how I'll feel 15-20 minutes into it. I know all those things, but for whatever reason I'm going to say, I just don't want to. I'm struggling. I don't want to work out. I don't want to care. But I know I need to and the only thing I'm telling you is that I want you to begin to pray for me, that God will do something about the desire of my heart to take care of myself physically.

Ray: Right.

Cliff: I said I mean it, if you send me an email encouraging me to start exercising or eating better, I will be ticked off and offended that you emailed, because that's how I feel right now. I'm defensive about it. I don't need you to tell me how fat I am. I don't need you to tell me how much I need to start moving. I said I don't need that stuff because I know it all and

I guarantee you, no matter how harsh you could be to me I'm more harsh on myself. Just pray for me that's all I'm asking. If you pray, please pray for me.

I asked them for two months to pray and in Colorado November 2014, we were at another Platform conference and I got on the stage and it was a great response from the audience. It was wonderful and I convinced a lot of people to starting podcasts. Once again there I was on a stage at 268 pounds and it didn't seem to be a hindrance to anyone in the audience, they all sent praise but internally I'm eaten up inside by the fact that I just stood in front of all those people, exposing myself for all the areas and wrong decisions I've made in my life. I don't speak those words out loud but that's what's in my heart.

You started this off, Cliff isn't it great to be on television? No, it's not great to be on TV when you're 268 pounds and feel the way that I do. No, it's not great to have the article that's been in the Cincinnati Magazine say, Cliff has this cherubic smile. It's like cherubic this is a big fat angel, come on. It's like man! It's tough to be out there in front of those people and know that while I'm adding value to their lives I'm exposing all the areas of weakness.

By the way Ray, I completely agree that I have achieved some amazing things to be thankful for and I am thankful for them. For the friends I have that have the influence they do and how much they talk about me, my brand and how my brand has grown and my business. The financial success I've received is beyond anything I ever dreamed imaginable and I'm extremely thankful for that. The place where I am in life is just out of this world and I don't diminish any of it. The problem is that I want to help other people achieve those things, that's my desire. I also don't want anybody to achieve them by doing what I did to achieve them, which is to completely neglect my own physical fitness and personal health.

Ray: Right, because you could have gotten all those things without making that sacrifice.

Cliff: Yes.

Ray: You knew that something was out of balance. I know where this story is headed. So these people prayed for you for two months. You show up in Colorado to Platform and what happened?

Cliff: One thing happened, I begged my audience to not email me. Guess what? Someone emailed me.

Ray: What?!

Cliff: Yes. This guy emailed me and said Cliff, let me tell you something. I am this, a certified nutritionist, a certified personal trainer. I've helped all these people, blah, blah, blah. I'm getting ready to start this online business and I want to offer something to you and I'm not asking for anything in return. You don't have to talk about me to anyone. You never have to mention my name, but I've been following your journey and listening to you and how you asked for prayer. I just felt led in my heart to offer you. I will be your personal nutritionist. I will be your personal fitness coach. I will be your motivator and personal work with you in a way I've never worked with another person, if you're interested.

I never heard of this guy so I looked him up. I prayed and said God, is this the guy, the answer to my prayer? I wrote back and said listen, I'm not getting this feeling in my heart that I need to say yes that this is the answer to my prayer right now. I'm going to tell you now that my initial response is to tell you no, but I'm going to continue to pray and as I pray, if I feel like I should be working with you then you will hear from me again. That's what it was. I prayed and Ray it never once clicked that this was the guy.

So we're at the Platform conference and we have a speaker dinner and Ken Davis requests to sit down with me and Stephanie. I don't know if you know Ken's story, but he has lost a ton of weight as well.

Ray: Yes, I read his book *Fully Alive*.

Cliff: Exactly. If anyone has ever read his book then you know the story. He comes to me and says I've been following you since the first Platform conference and I love your message. I believe you have something of so much value to give to this world and I really want to see you be around for a long time to do it. He says I'm going to say something to you and if it makes you hate me I hope it doesn't, feel free to tell me no and to bug off. I'm going to make an offer to you that I've never made to anyone else. I would love to offer to personally mentor you one-on-one in becoming physically fit and healthy.

Ray: Wow!

Cliff: By the way, Ken has no idea about pursuing a balanced life and what I've been talking about. Really, the only interaction we've had was through the Platform conference and being in attendance together, him watching my speaking grow. He said, God's just laid it on my heart that he wants me to offer this to you. He says if you do this I'm going to tell you there are a couple commitments that I would require that you make for me to keep this commitment to you.

I asked him what those commitments were. He said, I want you to do a triathlon with me. It's nothing crazy it's a spring where you do 200 yards of swimming, 9 miles bike ride and 2 miles of running, and it's this May 2015.

Ray: What was going through your mind at that moment?

Cliff: The first thing is that Ken is the answer to my prayer. It was as clear to me as anything has ever been. Ken's offer was the offer that I had been praying for. Interestingly enough, you and I had just talked recently about changes you were making and you were working out with your son. You said that what really clicked for you is you finally had somebody that was a partner in your accountability for working out and it was finally somebody you didn't want to let down. That phrase went through my mind as Ken was making that offer.

I had already had so much appreciation for Ken as a result of all the value he and Michael have brought to my personal and professional life as a result of being part of their conferences, and most of what I learned is from Ken's SCORE conference, this is someone who I held at very high esteem. I was thinking, this is a guy I wouldn't want to let down. Your phrase stuck in my head, so I was thinking, could I do a triathlon? I'm like yeah I guess I could, even if I walked and it took me forever. I need to and I've been wanting to change so this is the time. This is the person. This is the place. This is the answer God has been laying on my heart.

I said go ahead and tell me the other commitments. He says the next commitment is I want you to read my book *Fully Alive*, so you know my story and where I'm coming from. The third thing I want you to commit to is to read another book called *Younger Next Year*. He says I know your faith background and I have similar faith background. You won't like some of the things that the doctor says in this and you'll know what to throw out and what to not, but there is lots of valuable information in it that changed my life and I think it'll change yours as well.

He says read this book and when you read that book it'll give you the other commitments I want you to make. One is to work out six days a week, every week for the rest of your life. Four of those days will be high intensity, cardio aerobic exercise, two days a week intense tearing your muscle apart strength training exercises. He says, you take as much time as you want to think about it and right there I said let me pray about it. I said okay I've prayed about it, I'm in, right on the spot. I came back from Colorado. It was November 14, 2014. I have worked out 6 days a week every week without fail since that time.

Ray: Wow! The result?

Cliff: I have lost 35 ½ pounds so far. I've gained muscle mass like crazy and I am loving myself and my life more than I ever dreamed possible.

Ray: The external stuff isn't what impresses me the most. It is impressive to see the transformation in your body, but what I see when I talk to you and like now during this interview and we're looking at one another on video, I see an animation and light in your eyes. There's energy and joy that wasn't there before or maybe it was submerged or subdued and it's like the best part of you has been freed and released. That's how it looks to me from the outside.

Cliff: What it is Ray, is before I had a lot of success that people admired a great deal that I was very proud of, don't get me wrong. I was proud of the success in my business, financially, all that stuff, but what I will say is that I had a ton of success outwardly. Those are what I would consider outward successes. I had some inward success, the relationship and friendship I've gained with you and so many other valuable people in my life, that's inward success as well. What I had was a lot of inward failure as well. It over shadowed so much of any inward success I had.

I also had a lot of emotional immaturity, just emotionally I was not a mature person. Intellectually I had achieved a lot of maturity and in so many areas of my life I had achieved maturity, but emotionally I was a wreck inside, a train wreck and something switched in November. I made the decision and here's the thing, the commitment that got me started was, can I do a triathlon? I can tell you right now I could care less about this triathlon, it means nothing to me. As far as I'm concerned I'll do it it's not a big deal. What has kept me going every day is the fact that this commitment isn't I'm going to do a triathlon in May. My commitment is, I'm going to work out six days a week every week and here's the kicker, for the rest of my life.

Ray: Yes.

Cliff: What I love about this... I hear about and follow stories of people who set these goals of doing a triathlon or a marathon or this or that and they achieve that, the Iron Man's and all the other stuff, and then two or three years later they're back to where they were before

they started training. They built so much up, achieved it and then boom, once the achievement is done then it's like okay now what?

Ray: That's it, because they achieved their goal. Your goal is for the rest of your life.

Cliff: That's it. My goal is two-fold. It is for the rest of my life, the ongoing goal. And, my goal is every day six days a week. Here's what I do. I get on the elliptical and there's no way I would ever want anybody to be in the same room with me or to see me on video because I put my headphones on, I'm in the music with this 132 beat per minute music playlist and I look like a total idiot on this thing. After 45 minutes every piece of clothing I have is soaking wet and sweat is dripping off my clothes when I'm done.

After every single time, every day I get off the equipment and get finished with the strength training appointment where I can barely walk out of the gym or if it's been an upper body day, every day after I can barely lift my arm with the phone in it to tweet, I'm walking across the finish line.

Ray: That is beautiful.

Cliff: Maybe this is a little narcissistic but it's really not my motivation at all, but every day I take a picture, a selfie of me walking across the finish line and I post it to Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and I say I just finished crossing the finish line. Every day I am celebrating this success so for me every day is a race, every day is a marathon, every day is a goal.

Ray: I know you don't do that because you're egotistical. I see the result of you doing that. You inspire people. You lift them up and edify them. You make them believe, I can do this. The most admirable thing you're doing, you talked earlier about how you had emotional breakage inside that was causing this external thing to happen and that was the most important part was getting the emotional maturity that allowed you to do what you've done. You've been very transparent in letting people in to that journey, just like you are with everything else you do.

I just love and feel that far from being narcissistic what you're doing is wide open serving others and saying to them, look I can do this and you can do it too.

Cliff: That's one of the things I love. I know it's not narcissistic, because to be honest I was so self-conscious of how fat my cheeks were and my four double chins which weren't something I wanted to be sharing, but I knew I would be on a journey and I wanted to bring people on the journey with me. I wanted to share it and inspire them to take action also. Every day I post a selfie and always get someone to say I'm inspiring them, that I made them decide to get off the couch and go out and walk, to go the gym.

There was a woman just yesterday that I'd never heard of before, she says Cliff every day I see your sweaty selfies and they make me mad, but today they've inspired me to go to the gym and I'm on the way there now thanks to your most recent selfie. Yesterday, a guy on Facebook says Cliff, how do you do this? I said I go into the work out room and get on the elliptical and I know what my heart rate zones are, you want to research that. I go in and do a 45 minute heart rate focused exercise, for zone three and four for the entire 45 minutes of my work out and I walk out completely drenched in sweat. That's how I do it.

He says man, I wish I could do that but because of my work I've just not been able to make it happen. I wrote back and said listen, we all have 24 hours in a day. We all have 7

days a week, none of that is different for anyone. What you have is a priority issue not a work issue. I have these opportunities to help people through their mindset of the excuses they have and I only do this for people who reach out and say help me or can you answer this for me. I'm never out there trying to push others into making these decisions.

When they bite and leave a comment asking how I'm doing this. I love helping them.

Ray: Yes, and I think you have a real gift for doing that, which is why I think people are open to share their struggles and challenges with you and I love that you're very straightforward, because it is a matter of tradeoffs. It was for me. I came to a point after reading Ken's book. I didn't realize we had that touch point in common. I read that book and realized that all the excuses I come up with not to go to the gym and work out, I'm just making a trade. I'm trading my health, longevity, vitality and the stewardship of the temple of my body that God gave me as a gift, I'm trading that for whatever the other thing is I'm doing at the time. That's not a good trade.

Cliff: Have you ever read the book *Younger Next Year*?

Ray: No, but I wrote it down as you talked about it, because the very next thing I'm going to do when we get off here is to get that.

Cliff: I can't wait until you read that and the conversations you and I will have afterwards as a result of what you're reading. I will tell you, that book is what transitioned the focus on the goal being the triathlon to the goal being the daily workouts. It's also the thing that broke me free from the vanity scale thing. Trust me, for all disclosure, I weigh myself every single day and yes I care what the scale says.

But I'll tell you this, there have been times when I've plateaued and I stay the same for an entire week on the scale. I continue working out every day and not once do I think man, I really crushed it six days a week for the last week and I'm still the same. That doesn't even cross my mind because of what I read about the biology of decay and growth and repair. It's all about our blood circulation and what our heart is pumping through our body's and how the chemical makeup of our blood going through our body's is different when it's sedentary versus when our body is in a high aerobic exercise.

Actually, talking about high aerobic intense exercise can create these things called **C10s** that course through our body that actually promotes healing and growth. It can heal you from diseases and other stuff, it's insane. This book radically changed my mind, so it's not like now I'm working out to lose weight and burn fat, I'm working out so I'm building health in my body. I'm actually improving my immune system. My immune system is through the roof. I don't care what the scale says, the fact is that what I'm doing is better than any antibiotics I could ever pump into my system.

Ray: Yes and it's amazing how God has created our bodies in a way that if we cooperate with the way He designed them they can do miraculous things. It's like the scripture says we're fearfully and wonderfully made. It's absolutely true and the science you're talking about proves that. That's what's driving you not the number on the scale, even though you care about the number, you look at it and it's a way of keeping score but that's not what's driving you.

Cliff: Exactly. I do like how I look now much better. I look in the mirror and I say, who's that skinnier guy?

Ray: That's okay.

Cliff: It's fun. I actually enjoy more of my selfies than I did before. I'm becoming a little more narcissistic now than I was in the beginning.

Ray: You're less selfie conscious.

Cliff: Yes, I love it.

Ray: I have one more question. How does Cliff Ravenscraft just play? Do you play?

Cliff: I do actually. I would say for me, just sitting back and unplugging from everything, not working. For me play, I would call it being lazy. That's how I would describe it. For me, playing is sleeping in until 10 in the morning occasionally. For me, playing is having a stressful morning trying to get things done that have a deadline and then going upstairs, vegging out on the couch, watching two or three episodes of a TV show and falling asleep for the rest of the afternoon. For me, playing is playing a video game with my son or going out and playing basketball or racquetball. For me, playing is going on a date with my wife and having a conversation that has nothing to do with our kids or the business. For me, playing is going on vacation and not thinking about work or responsibilities or money, but just enjoying the environment that God has created on this earth.

It's basically the opposite of work and the opposite of responsibility. It's just saying, I've worked a lot so I'm ready to unplug and not have to be responsible for anything at this moment in time.

Ray: You're just enjoying the gift of life and the gift of the people in your life. I'm delighted with your answer, because you had multiple answers. You'd be surprised how many people I ask that question and their response is I don't know. I don't really know that I do play. That is tragic.

Cliff: It certainly is and I will tell you if you would have asked me a year ago I would have told you that my work is my play. I enjoy what I'm doing so much that even right now Ray, I'm playing. But the reality is that I'm halfway playing now because part of playing would be if you and I were just having this conversation and it wasn't being recorded. That would be play. Because it's recorded it's not play and I don't enjoy it any less, but it's work because I know what I'm doing here is having some kind of benefit towards my business, people who haven't known me before maybe at this level might now pay more attention to who I am and what I offer.

There is all that stuff so for me play can have financial rewards and be work, but I'm trying to define it as being separated from the work I do, because for too long I've only allowed myself to experience play through the work that I've done.

Ray: I used to give the same answer and say my work is my play. It's not true, it's a lie that we tell ourselves because play, I believe, there's a reason why there's a word called recreation and if you break it down it's re-creation. You're creating yourself anew. It's a gift that God has given us to be able to delight in him, which we do by delighting in the things he's created for us, the environments, places and activities or people. I think that's what Heaven is going to be like. It's going to be where we'll get to explore, play and do all these wonderful things.

I know this, it won't be about punching a time clock to make a certain amount of money.

Cliff: Yeah. I will say that play is one of the most difficult things for me to do, because I feel good when I first start doing it, because I need this mentally, spiritually and physically. I need to unplug and unwind, but there are times when it's scheduled for me to have two weeks of play for vacation or whatever, and by the end of a week I feel so guilty about not working. It's like no this is play and even in the early part, it's being lazy. I'm not being lazy it's I'm sleeping in because I chose to. I struggle with play and equate it to not being productive. I equate not being productive and doing something to being lazy.

Also, since I'm flooding out with authenticity, I often feel when I'm not being productive and I'm not working that I reduce the amount of value of my own individual being. I feel less valuable as a person and to people when I'm not working, when I'm playing or experiencing recreation. I'm learning that about me and realizing that my value isn't changing from day to day, God sees it the same every day whether I'm doing what He wants or the opposite of what He would desire. My value certainly has nothing to do with how many hours I put in each week.

Ray: You're not the only person who struggles with that same challenge. You and billions of others. I've been through that and still work at it today, because I think we're in a culture that teaches us the puritan work ethic which is, if you're not working you must not be ethical. That's the implication. There's a great preacher named, Bob Jones, who's passed away that one time made a comment about this very subject about us always feeling like we have to be working to win God's approval.

He said whether you're raising the dead or taking a nap, the pay is the same in the kingdom.

Cliff: I like that.

Ray: Me too. I had that on my fridge for a long time to remind myself. Cliff, this has gone in a completely unexpected direction, which is what I hoped for, that we would go wherever the conversation led us. You've shared some incredibly open, transparent stuff that a lot of people would not share and I think it will benefit and help many people.

I know you didn't do this conversation for this reason, but I want to let people know if they're interested in learning how to podcast or are considering or thinking about being part of podcasting in some way, you are the one guy I refer folks to. What's the best place for people to get introduced to you and become familiar with your material on podcasting?

Cliff: The best place to get started if you haven't found my site is LearnHowToPodcast.com. It's a free tutorial I give to people, the foundation principles. If you're going to do this as a hobby that's all you need. If you want to do this professionally as part of your business then I have a four week training course called Podcasting A to Z and all those details are at PodcastingA2Z.com.

Ray: Let me give an endorsement for the free training you offer. I have taken other podcasting courses before meeting you, one which was \$1000 and I can tell you the course you teach is better than the course I paid \$1000 for.

Cliff: Thank you for that. It's definitely a course.

Ray: It's good and I highly recommend it. Cliff, thank you for investing the time to be here. I know it will bless people. You are a dear friend and blessing in my life. Thank you for that too.

Cliff: Thank you Ray, I feel the same and what an honor to spend time with you today. Thank you.

What to Do Now

My question for you is this... Have you ever experienced a miraculous answer to prayer like Cliff did when he had that dinner?

I hope you will share that story with us. You can leave a comment at RayEdwards.com/161

Until next week's episode I pray that God continues to bless you and that He does more for you than you can ask or even possibly imagine, and that He gives you a revelation of his grace that is as grace as the revelation that St. Paul himself received.

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