



# RAY EDWARDS

LIVE WITH JOY LEAD WITH PASSION PROSPER WITH PURPOSE

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## Ten True Reasons Businesses Fail

Welcome to episode 120. Just for the record books, all the links and sites that are referenced in the notes of today's show you can find at [RayEdwards.com/120](http://RayEdwards.com/120), along with show notes, links and so forth, the handy dandy reference guide, plus the transcript of today's show shortly after we release the show.

By the way our transcripts are word for word transcripts of each podcast are being provided by Janette Mowry and our friends at [SuccessTranscripts.com](http://SuccessTranscripts.com). If you need sermons, audio programs, podcasts, speeches or whatever transcribed, you need to check in with Success Transcripts.

Most small businesses will fail according to [StatisticBrain.com](http://StatisticBrain.com), 25% of businesses will fail in year one and by year five that number jumps to 55% and by year 10 it's 71% that have failed. Why does this happen? There are many explanations offered, depending on who you listen to from industry changes to the economic environment, to government regulation, competition, etc. My strong belief is that most of these so-called reasons are excuses and when we get right down to it, the real reason most businesses fail as it turns out, the top 10 anyway, are all within your control.

In this episode I will...

- Explain what the 10 true reasons businesses fail are
- How to control them
- Increase your odds of success

I want to give a big thank you to our friends who left a review of this show in iTunes over the past week, including Phil Conrad, Chris Michelowski and Kent Julian. I'm so knocked out that these three outstanding individuals thought enough of the show to rate it in iTunes and write a review for it. Thank you guys so much. There are links to each of their websites in the show notes, check them out they're well worth watching.

Now, if you enjoy the podcast I would really appreciate it and consider it a great favor if you would subscribe to the show in iTunes and leave a review. Give us a star rating, 5 stars would be fantastic but you be honest about how you feel about the show. It would be fantastic too if you would write a review of the show and if you will do that I will mention your name if it's in the review, I'll mention it on the show and even link to your site if I can find the URL. So a good thing to do is to put your name and URL in the review.

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### Announcements

I'm speaking at the Platform Conference in November. I'm honored once again that Michael Hyatt and Ken Davis have asked me to speak at this event. I'm so excited. It's one of the premier

events of the year, I believe, for anyone who's building a platform style business, which is information marketers, speakers, coaches, consultants and the people who do the things that we do here and that we teach and talk about in this podcast. If you do this kind of stuff then you need to be at the Platform Conference, you're building a platform.

You can register using the link you'll find in the show notes and if you do that, when you check out and you're paying for your ticket, be sure to enter the promo code RAY and save \$100 on your ticket price. This will be so much fun. I spend lots of time with all my friends, which includes you if you're there, and if you do buy your ticket through my link, be sure and let me know by sending an email to [support@rayedwards.com](mailto:support@rayedwards.com). I'm going to keep a list of people who have done so and make a special time for us to get together while at the conference.

We'll talk about platform building. I'll answer your questions or maybe we'll simply enjoy a beverage, great company and the beautiful scenery in Colorado. Again, go to the show notes [RayEdwards.com/120](http://RayEdwards.com/120), look under announcements and click the link to sign up for the conference. Don't forget to use the promo code. You'll be happy you attended.

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### **Tip of the Week**

Did you ever go to the movies and sit squirming in your seat because you needed to go to the restroom during the movie, but didn't want to miss something? This past weekend I went to see 'The Edge of Tomorrow' with Tom Cruise and Emily Blunt, a fantastic movie I must say. It really exceeded my expectations. I thought I knew what the movie was going to be like and it turns out it wasn't like that at all. It was very good.

Anyway, have you ever been sitting in the movie theater and thought, I really need to go to the restroom but I'm not sure this is a good time to leave? I don't want to miss a crucial part of the movie, something touching, funny, dramatic or that the story hinges on? What do you do? Now there's an app to help you out called 'Run Pee', let's you call up the movie you're watching and the app will tell you when it's a good time to go to the restroom. It will even tell you how long you could be gone and what happened while you were out.

They look for scenes where it's okay for you to go to the restroom and miss two or three minutes of the film. It has all kinds of cool features. It has silent alarms that you can setup, letting you know when it's safe to go to the restroom so that way you don't have to pull out your phone and light up a screen in the middle of a dark theater and annoy the people around you. This app is cool and the best part is it's free, so if you see a lot of movies I think you'll like this a lot and you won't have to annoy your friends by leaning over and saying hey, what happened while I was gone? Check it out at [RunPee.com](http://RunPee.com).

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### **Spiritual Foundations**

I could not figure out a graceful way to move from one segment to the other, so we'll keep rolling here. If you are a follower of Jesus, it can be confusing these days. First of all, Jesus himself said some of the most puzzling things, but we won't go into that right now, maybe in some future episode of Spiritual Foundations. For now let's leave it at that. He said some things where you read them and say what?

Then, here we are 2000+ years later after He rose from the dead and there are many conflicting opinions about what He said or actually meant. We have all these different churches or ministries

teaching different and conflicting things and it can be a little overwhelming for a new follower of Christ or even someone who's been following Jesus all their life. It's overwhelming when you start looking at all the things that are around that are being said and taught that contradict one another. How do you know what's true? My goodness.

How on Earth do you know what's true and who to listen to? Well, I think there are five distinguishing characteristics that should be warning signals that you might be listening to a false teacher or false doctrine, something different than what Jesus and the New Testament actually say or teach. I'm not here to promote one particular church, ministry or viewpoint; I'm here to share with you some signals I think you can use to make these discernments yourself.

If you want to go further on this than go to the source. I won't be recommending any book or website to you, other than the book from which this stuff actually comes, and that is the Bible. Particularly, I would point you to I John, urge you to read it and do a little homework about how this book came to be written, why it was written. It was actually a letter to some churches and the purpose behind it was to help the people reading it figure out who was teaching the truth and who wasn't.

I won't go into a whole history of the background of the book I'm just going to tell you that. It was about false teachers and how to know who they are. We are told, as followers of Christ, that we should test the spirits. In fact, this is what the Apostle John wrote to the people who were in his care. He said, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the spirit of God. Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God."

That's one test you can apply right away. Anyone who teaches that Jesus didn't actually come in the flesh as the Son of God made to man is not from God. If they're teaching that He was just a spirit He wasn't really a man. If they're teaching that He was just some sort of ethereal ghostly being and not really a human, it says right in the scripture that that's not from God.

He goes on to say, "By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. Beloved, let us love one another for love is from God and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God because God is love. "

Keep that in mind that's a test. Does it come from love? Here are the five warning signals and we'll come back to the scripture in a moment. It's important I set this framework.

1. If it claims to be the one true way.

What I mean by this is a church or ministry that says, we have the absolute truth and everyone else is wrong. We have rediscovered the truth from long ago and everyone else is misguided, apostate or fallen away or false Christians. We alone, our little group, has the corner on the market of truth. That's a signal that you may be getting mixed up in something not from God.

2. Any ministry, church or group that promotes an, us against them kind of mindset.

You might say, but it says Ray, come out from the world. In the scripture it says be separate from the world. It says that we're in the world not of the world. Yes, but remember, it says we are in the world. The scripture calls us to be salt and light and that means to be spread throughout the world in all the places of the world, not to huddle up and hide from them in some hidden away place. Not an us against them mentality.

In fact, the Bible says that God loved the world so much that He sent His only Son to save it, John 3:16, a verse almost everyone can approximately quote. What they often don't quote is John 3:17, the next verse, which says He didn't come to condemn the world but to save it. It's not us against them it's us for them.

3. That they setup one person as the ultimate authority who must be blindly obeyed.

Any group, movement, ministry or church that teaches you that one person has the truth and you cannot question that person, that everything they say is perfect and infallible and you must follow them without question, that's a bad sign.

4. Any group or ministry that over emphasizes one doctrine or scripture in a weird way.

I know, some listening right now, Ray, come on now, our faith is weird because we believe that God became a man, lived in a human body, died as a sacrifice for all human beings, laid in the grave for three days and then rose against from the dead, and now lives inside of us. That's pretty weird that's true. It's true that it's weird and it's weird that it's true, but hear this. Any group, ministry or person who takes one scripture from the Bible and overemphasizes that at the expense and normative Christian doctrines in the rest of scripture, that's a signal to figure out, am I listening to the right spirit or not? Is this a false teacher, a false prophet?

Usually groups that do this will pick strange obscure passages of scripture that sound unusual, like I've never heard this before and just because you've never heard it before doesn't mean it's a false doctrine or teaching. Do your homework. Look things up in the scripture for yourself, but if they take one verse or passage out of context and overemphasize that and dismiss everything else, based on that one strange verse it's a signal to, at least, dig deeper and figure out whether you're hearing the truth or not.

The last signal is the one I want to focus on for just a moment because I think this is the most important.

5. Any group, ministry or teacher that uses fear and manipulation is not from God.

There are so many groups, ministers, ministries, books, DVD programs and podcasts that promote fear and manipulation to control people. They promote this idea that Armageddon is going to come and fire will rain down from Heaven and the earth is going to be destroyed and the anti-Christ is going to rule. There are all sorts of different ministries or teachings that fan the flames of fear. I can assure you those are not from God.

How can I assure you of that? Let's go back to I John for a moment and I'll read what it says. I John 4:9... "In this the love of God was made manifest among us. That God sent His only Son into the world so that we might live through Him." In this is love. Not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins (payment for our sins). "Beloved, if God so loved us we ought to love one another."

Then in verse 4:15 he says, "Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God abides in Him and he in God." So we have come to know and believe the love that God has for us. God is love and whoever abides in love abides in God and God abides in Him. By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the Day of Judgment, because as He is, so also are we in this world.

God is love... we just heard how He loves the world and how He sacrificed his own Son to save the world and whoever abides in love abides in God and God abides in them. This gives us confidence for the Day of Judgment, because as He is, He is love, so also are we in this world. The next verse goes on to say, "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear for fear has to do with punishment and whoever fears has not been perfected in love."

So anyone who is teaching you things that make you afraid that you're going to be judged, not from God.

I know this may sound weird to you and you may not have heard this before, do your home and read I John. It's two or three pages in most Bibles and I say that because the type size is different in different Bibles. Remember what Jesus himself said. He said, in the Gospel of John 13:35, "By this all people will know you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." Wow!

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### **Feature Presentation**

I just made myself happy going over that spiritual foundation segment. Isn't that good? Isn't that exciting news, we don't have to be afraid? We can know where the truth comes from. That makes me happy.

Let's move on and talk about our feature subject for this week, which is the 10 true reasons businesses fail. This is a subject that I get fired up about. The reason I get so fired up about it is that I hear so much misinformation about why businesses fail. I'm going to tell you right now, most businesses do not close because of competition, because of the economy, regulation or any of the other excuses that business owners use to explain their failure.

Most businesses that fail, do so because of preventable mistakes on the part of the business owner and I've seen this in my own experience so many times when there are a couple businesses, as I look at the office window right now I can see across the street where there used to be, okay, I can't really see across the street where this business used to be because now there's a building in the way, but there used to be a Mexican Restaurant I used to eat at pretty frequently and it went out of business.

The owners put a sign in the window that said, gone out of business due to the bad economy. The truth is that's not what caused them to go out of business. What caused them to go out of business was...

- a. They didn't market their business
- b. They were incredibly slow

I would go there for lunch and literally have to wait 20 to 30 minutes to even get my food. You might think that's not such a terribly long wait, but this was a type of fast food restaurant that a lot of business people on their lunch hour would frequent. I watched as people would come in, see the slow moving line and turn around and walk back out the door.

On top of that the service was sometimes not the greatest in the world. I'm not talking about the speed of the service, I'm talking about the pleasantness of the service and attitude of the servers, and how available they were even when there weren't a lot of people waiting in line. It was sometimes difficult to get the attention of folks behind the counter. The economy isn't the reason that place went out of business

There is another closed business not far from my office that was a sushi restaurant. It was dark, dingy and in a poor location. They had a terrible sign and never marketed their business and they too claim the economy ran them out of business, but it's just not true, and I could go on and on, but rather than do that let me give you what I believe are the 10 true reasons businesses fail.

### **1. A mediocre product and mediocre customer service.**

I don't even think the reason in most cases is a bad product or bad customer service those are the ones that stand out. Like the restaurant I just talked about, they didn't really have bad service and they actually had decent food. It wasn't outstanding, but it was okay and better than mediocre, but their customer service was definitely mediocre but it wasn't bad.

Hear me on this, we can all identify bad products and bad service, what I think slips under the radar so often, especially if its our own business is mediocre product or customer service, ho-hum customer service or products. You have to strive to make your product and service extraordinary. Make it stand out in some way and it doesn't take all that much to make this happen.

### **2. No employee training system.**

I'm shocked at the number of businesses that never bother to fully train their employees on all the aspects of how the company works and how the employee is expected to do their job. I did some consulting work for a company at one point, which had a fairly large number of employees, considering the kind of business it was and when they would bring on someone new it was always a mystery as to how to train that person in all the software applications, procedures and protocols they needed to know to be part of the team. It kind of happened randomly and the new employee would have to raise their hand and ask someone how do I do this, exactly?

Not great. In fact, most businesses have no employee training system in place at all.

### **3. No marketing system.**

I've talked about this many times before. Most businesses market on a purely episodic or whimsical basis. They don't have a systematic approach that consistently and reliably brings a large number of affordable customers and prospects to their door and then procedurally follows through with marketing to those prospects to turn them into customers. It must be systemized. You must be able to point to it and say, this is our system. We know exactly how it runs. We have predetermined exactly what sequence things will happen in every single month and week and day. If you don't have a system than you're marketing on an episode by episode basis.

Hey, we need some cash flow let's do a promotion. You have a promotion not a system.

### **4. No investment in the business or staff improvement.**

This is different than employee training. Employee training is a set of instructions that teaches each employee specifically how to use the tools and the resources available in order to complete their job in the way you want it completed. Business and staff improvement is an investment in training programs, seminars, consultancies, coaching, software, products that help improve either the business as a whole or the staff as individuals, because when you raise their level of personal performance you automatically raise the water line of the performance of the business itself.

So, do you send your staff or employees or, if it's just you in your business, do you send yourself to improvement seminars? Maybe it's a Tony Robbins seminar or a Product Launch Formula type

seminar, which is put on by Jeff Walker. I highly recommend this seminar it's great to attend and you can only go if you own Product Launch Formula. We put on our own seminars and we have one coming up in September. Will you be at that one or at the Platform Conference in November? If not, put one of these on your calendar right away. It doesn't have to be my seminar, although I would love it if you would come be part of what we're doing, but if it's not with me than pick somebody.

#### **5. No clear objectives.**

This mystifies me. Why are you in business? What is the purpose of your business? If you just look at our website it's pretty hard to miss what we're all about. Right under my name on the website it says live with joy, lead with passion and prosper with purpose. We do all this under the covering that we are servants of our Lord Jesus Christ and we're here to bring His love and kingdom to the world.

You may say that sounds pretty lofty, but your business can have the same purpose and then what are your objectives as a business? What is it you're aiming to do? Is it to create information and training products for a specific market or segment or group of people? Is it to create software or other products or services? Than spell that out clearly and set your objectives, your goals and milestones. How will you know when you've achieved success in your business this week, this month, this year or this decade?

#### **6. No testing or tracking.**

If you don't test your approach, your marketing, sales copy, website design, customer experience design or customer service procedures. If you don't test the results that you get and track them so you can look and objectively say when we use this approach to customer service we lowered our numbered of complaints and raised the satisfaction level of our customers. When we used the other approach we didn't have those scores so high so we're going to use the new approach, testing A against B.

You can do that in customer service, sales, marketing and emails, podcasting or webinars. You can test everything really, because of the power of the Internet. So, not testing and tracking, there's no excuse for that.

#### **7. Inefficiency.**

This shows up most often as, we do things a certain way because this is the way we've always done it and you would never probably say that because we all know that's a stupid thing to say, but it's how we do certain things in our business all the time. We simply fell into a habit and pattern of doing a certain procedure or task in a certain way and we never stop to question, is there a more efficient way to do this? So, look for the inefficiencies in your business, the things, the activities that waste time, money, energy and resources. Find a more efficient way to do things.

You can't improve efficiency to bring your company to greatness in most cases, but being efficient is part of improving and becoming great. Focusing only on efficiency at the expense of everything else won't get you very far, just like cutting expenses is good and you should do it, you should not have unnecessary expenses in your business, but you can't cut your way to greatness.

## **8. Laziness.**

When we get right down to it, some businesses and entrepreneurs just don't put a lot of energy into their enterprise. They don't put in a lot of time and effort. I've been doing this podcast now for 120 weeks in a row and haven't missed a week. Have there been weeks when I didn't feel like doing it? Oh yes indeed! But I do it every week because to not do it would just be lazy. I've had weeks when I've been deathly ill, really sick or facing some life crisis or problem and I've had my share of them, we all do.

There have been weeks when I've been overwhelmed to do and too tired really, to feel like doing the podcast, but I did it anyway. The same is true of writing copy, doing webinars, doing promotions, going to speaking engagements, sometimes I'd rather not just like you would rather not. That when, overcoming laziness isn't about never being tired, weary or feeling like doing something. Never being lazy means you do things that need to be done whether you feel like doing them or not.

Look, I want to be careful here because you may be suffering from some illness that causes you to have fatigue. You may be facing some terrible challenges that make you tired and weary. Maybe you have a loved one who's undergoing a health crisis like cancer or something like that. Maybe you have a new baby or new puppies in the house, like we have new puppies. That will make you tired. I understand those challenges and I'm not saying those don't exist or aren't real, but sometimes we need to evaluate that maybe the problem with the business is, I'm just not working hard enough. That is sometimes the problem.

## **9. No advisors.**

There's a famous saying that, "*He who has himself as an attorney, has a fool for a counselor,*" or words to that effect. We need good wise advice from advisors other than ourselves. The Bible says there's wisdom in having many counselors. They need to be wise counselors not just anybody, not just people who will agree with whatever you say or people who have opinions but no facts or logic to back them up. You need to pick wise advisors and listen to what they have to say.

If all you're getting back from your advisors is echoes of what you've already said, just confirmation that yes, you're right you're a genius Ray, everything you say is without question the wisest of possible things that could be said. That's probably a sign that you need some counselors that will challenge you on some areas. Think about Abraham Lincoln's team of rivals. People who have very different opinions not only from one another but from you, people who will say to you as the entrepreneur or owner of the business.

They'll come to you and say Ray, have you thought about this fact that what you're doing here might not be the best idea? In fact, Ray, have you thought about the fact that maybe what you're doing is stupid? I have people in my life who will say these things to me now and I didn't for a long time. It's good to be challenged. Yes, you are the owner of the business, the entrepreneur and yes you make the decisions, but it's good to have counselors who will challenge you and cause you to test your ideas, your policies, the actions that you're doing and make you think them through before you make those decisions.

## **10. Not enough money, no cash.**

This gets so often overlooked and there could be lots of reason why you have no cash. Maybe you didn't have enough to start the business. I personally believe that it's possible to bootstrap



from no cash to building a big cash flow and I believe it because I've done it. I know so many others who have done the same thing, so I don't think you have to have a big capital investment to start a business, depending on what type of business we're talking about.

If your business is an apartment complex then yes you need capital to make that happen. But, for most of us, the amount of capital we need is much lower and if you're in the information marketing, speaking, teaching, consulting, coaching, book writing, seminar giving, teaching online courses kind of business, you can start for virtually no cash outlay at all, but you do have to have some cash on hand to pay your Internet bill, hosting bill, your electricity, water, a place for you to live, clothes and have food to eat.

There's some level of cash flow that must be available, so the business must either, have that in advance and be able to survive in a run-up period while you're building up cash flow or it must cash flow from the beginning and keep on cash-flowing. Don't fall for the lies of the people who would like to loan you money at a high interest rate to "get your business started or give you an infusion of cash". Running low on cash information marketing person? Why not borrow \$30k from your friendly credit card company? Because that is not a good idea that's why.

The Bible says the borrower is servant to the lender, slave to the lender. So you need to have enough cash flow to keep your business rolling and growing. Sometimes you're faced with the reality that there may be things you want to buy and invest in for your business that would be a good idea for the business, but the business just doesn't have enough money to do that right now. Don't get yourself wrapped up in a bunch of payment contracts as a business owner, that cause your overhead to be extraordinarily high, so that you can't survive times of low cash flow.

Now I'm not saying there won't be times of low cash flow. Those are the times you should draw on your reserves, your cash that you've saved back to cover those times when the cash flow isn't rolling in. I have many friends in this Internet marketing online business arena, who in the spirit of optimism and enthusiasm rented huge facilities and hired massive staff of dozens or even hundreds of people, invested in all sorts of equipment, real estate and so forth for their businesses before the bubble burst in the economy.

And I'm not saying the economy was the reason, which is what I stated earlier, I have a number of friends who went out of business when the economy burst in 2008 and it took them maybe until 2009/2010 to admit their business was dead, but they hung it up. It wasn't because of the economy though, it's because they had massive overhead and no cash reserves. They didn't have enough money. If they'd just had the reserves they could have weathered the storm and come back, but they didn't have enough money to keep it going.

So, those are the 10 true reasons business fail...

1. A mediocre product and mediocre customer service.
2. No employee training system.
3. No marketing system.
4. No investment in the business or staff improvement.
5. No clear objectives.
6. No testing or tracking.
7. Inefficiency.
8. Laziness.
9. No advisors.
10. Not enough money, no cash.

Are you suffering from any of these mistakes right now? This would be a good time to review which of these business mistakes you might be making and what you might need to do about those mistakes right now.

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## **Questions**

Ray, this is Brad Miller from [BusinessTo ChangeTheWorld.com](http://BusinessToChangeTheWorld.com). I was listening to your interview with Jeff Walker and a couple things came out to me that I wanted to touch on. One is thinking big and how that's evolved in Jeff's life and I wanted to see how it's evolved with yours from wherever you started with to thinking big. More over I was struck by the way that his business evolved from what he described as in the area of connection and making a connection through marketing, which is where he is now, as opposed to where he started, with marketing through connection.

I take that in building relationships, so my question has to do with the genuineness or the forthrightness of those relationships and business relationships. How do we move from transactions, a pure business relationship to relationships that have depth and meaning? Where do we or do we have lines in those relationships? In that process, how do you move from that marketing to connection to connection through marketing?

I'd like you to speak a little bit to that transaction that we go through there and how that might lead to thinking big. That's what I'm after as I'm really thinking big about my business of connecting business leaders with faith based causes and had some big thoughts about that, but I'm interested in process now. I'm Brad Miller and look forward to hearing from you, Ray.

Thank you Brad, great question. Bravo for really listening closely to what Jeff said in that interview. Here is what I think about how we build relationships in business and then I'll get to how this results in thinking big. You talked about how do we draw the lines, so I'm going to start with boundaries and relationships.

Yes, we do have to have boundaries. I cannot have a deep meaningful relationship involving lots of time with a lot of different people. You know, for the first time in history we can be connected to tens of thousands of people, which I am through my blog, and I cannot have a relationship with 30k people of a lot of depth and/or personal time. I can have a relationship of some sort, because we've had 180k downloads for the podcast now and on some level I have a relationship with those people, because they've listened to the show and I've run into them at conferences and airports, and they say I feel like I know you because I've spent all these hours with you.

But, as far as personal interaction time, I have a limited number of hours just like you do. I have 168 hours in a week like you do. Jeff Walker and I, for instance, became friends over time. As we got to know one another better we decided to spend time together, we had meals together and worked on projects together and our friendship developed. The same can be said of other people I have friendships with, including well-known people like Michael Hyatt, Jeff Goins, Cliff Ravenscraft, David Hancock of Morgan James Publishing, Frank Viola, the great author and so many people who are my friends and are well-known.

Also, with people who are not so well-known who have become my friends, so those relationships have ended up getting more of my time, more access to me and more investment from me on a personal basis. The same will be true for you as well, so you're intentional about the friendships you develop.

Jim Rohn said, "We become the average of the five people we spend the most time with." I think it's the five people we intentionally spend the most time with. There are people we spend time

with that we do so because we must. Perhaps it's co-workers or perhaps it is family members in some cases.

Maybe you wouldn't have chosen to be friends with certain family members if you didn't know them as family, but they are your family so you love them and they're part of your life so you spend lots of time with them, but the people you intentionally seek out for friendship, nurturing, wisdom and advice and camaraderie, those intentional relationships are important and develop over time. They help you to think big if you choose people who also think big.

When I hang around Mike Hyatt, Dan Miller, Cliff Ravenscraft or Jeff Goins or Frank Viola or Armand Morin, Alex Mandossian, Joel Comm, people that I'm friends with, these people call me up to think bigger about my mission and how I show up in the world. That's how that happens.

Thanks Brad, that's a great question and that's an important topic to me. Who we intentionally spend time with and how we do it. It does affect how we think and how big we think.

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Hi Ray it's John from [UntanglingChristianity.com](http://UntanglingChristianity.com). I liked your recent episode about all the information you consume and was intrigued by a passing reference you made to reading a novel before breakfast. Is that a complete novel? I'm in your current Rapid Writing Method Class and I'm wondering if you have a rapid reading method as well that you can share with us. I know you read a ton of different books and materials and I'd like to do the same, so share with us what your trick is. Thanks for your podcast I listen every week. Bye-bye.

Thank you John. It turns out it was a complete novel in that particular case, it was a short novel. There are longer and shorter books. I'm currently reading a novel called *The Words of Radiance* by Brandon Sanderson. It's about 1100 pages or so. I promise you I did not read that before breakfast one day. On the other hand, there are novels of Robert B Parker, for instance, that are very short and can be read in a few hours and if I happen to have a morning where I have reading time scheduled and a light calendar that day then I might read an entire novel.

I wake up very early and I have more and more been intentionally putting more margin in my day to do things like that. So yes, I have some tricks to help me read faster. One is speed reading, although when I read novels I tend not to speed read. There are plenty of good books and courses on speed reading. I actually learned from a book called *The Evelyn Woods, 7 Day Speed Reading and Learning Program*. So I speed read and when it comes down to novels I tend to savor them and go word for word.

Another trick is that I listen to audiobooks when I get the chance, like at the gym on the treadmill, the stationary bike, taking a walk or driving in my car, I listen to audio books usually from [Audible.com](http://Audible.com). That's another trick you can use. Normally it would be lost time, you'd be doing other things driving, walking or exercising and maybe mindlessly watching what's on the TV at the gym or you could choose to listen to an audiobook and when I listen to audiobooks I actually double the speed, which you can do on Audible.

If you're listening to audiobooks on your iPhone you can do the same thing. I double the speed so it takes me half the time to get through the book and that's how I'm able to read so many books so rapidly.

John, great question. I appreciate it very much. The secret, by the way, to reading more is just to read more, to spend more time reading. I actually think these days it's more important to spend

more time reading and less time worrying about how fast you read, although I still employ those tactics. Thanks for a great question.

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Review the list of the 10 true reasons businesses fail and ask yourself, could I improve in any of these areas.

Do what it takes to correct any of those mistakes that you or your company might be making right now.

When it comes right down to it, the way we do anything is by doing it. So go do it. I'd love to hear your comments on today's show. I have one specific question I'd like you to answer, if you go to [RayEdwards.com/120](http://RayEdwards.com/120), scroll to comments and answer... what action will you take this week to strengthen your own business? I would love to hear your wisdom and what you have to say.

Thanks again and until we meet again next week, may God continue to bless you and may He do more for you than you can ask or even possibly imagine!