



# RAY EDWARDS

LIVE WITH JOY LEAD WITH PASSION PROSPER WITH PURPOSE

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## The 5 Fatal Flaws of Free Content

Welcome to the Ray Edwards Show, episode 126. I think about that and it freaks me out a little bit that I've done 126 of these now and haven't missed a week. Admittedly, some shows have been better than in other weeks. I'm big enough to admit that, but the value of doing something like this consistently can not be overestimated.

Now, about this week's show, if you give away free content as part of a content marketing strategy, which I think is a good idea, but if you do that it's important to know that you don't give away everything, because if you do or if you give away the wrong stuff than you won't make any money, but instead will shoot yourself in the foot and you'll turn into your very own sales prevention department.

So, in today's episode I'm going to provide you with a list of the five fatal flaws of free content and show you how to avoid these dangerous business killers.

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### Tip of the Week

So, there are a number of great password management utilities available. I've used most of them, including Robo Form and, for a long time Last Pass, but now I have switched to a new application called Dash Lane. It's much like Last Pass only I find Dash Lane a lot easier to use. It's always been my experience that Last Pass is a little clunky in its interface, non-intuitive to understand and Dash Lane cleans all that up and makes it a more humane interface.

It's powerful and encrypted, so it's very secure. You can share passwords if you work with virtual assistants like I do and you can also turn them on and off with one click. It's quite useful and I highly recommend you check it out. You can go to [DashLane.com](https://DashLane.com) or you can go to the show notes for this episode at [RayEdwards.com/126](https://RayEdwards.com/126) where you'll find all the links to the other cool stuff that I talk about in today's episode.

That's my tip of the week. Try it out. I think you will like it.

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### Spiritual Foundations

Here's a question that came up recently when someone heard a podcast or something I recorded or published, but they heard me say that I didn't believe the Holy Spirit convicts Christians of sin. What!?! Shock. Dismay. Heresy. Somebody get the rope and let's start building a fire.

What in the world could I be talking about saying the Holy Spirit doesn't convict us of sin, isn't that what we've all been taught? I was taught in Sunday school that once you're saved, when you do something wrong the Holy Spirit will convict you and make you feel guilty about it so you'll stop doing it. I have heard many teachers and pastors whom I respect, teach virtually the same thing

and I think this is a doctrine that's way off target, off base, non-scriptural and it messes up believers, because it leaves them constantly conscious of sin, when they should be conscious of righteousness.

The author of the Book of Hebrews, talks about God having given us a clear conscience so that we would not be conscious of sin. So I will use the scripture that is the most often abused on this topic. John 16:8... speaking of the Holy Spirit, Jesus told his followers that the Holy Spirit would be coming after He leaves. Jesus says, *"And when He comes, He will convict the world concerning sin, righteousness and judgment."* That's usually where they stop.

The point they're making is that you better stop sinning, you better be righteous or you're going to get judged and that's a horrible misrepresentation of the nature of God, in my opinion. I think that all you have to do to see that this is a constructed manmade idea is to realize that everyone who quotes what I just did and they stop with the word judgment is being disingenuous because they have left off the rest of the sentence. It comes in the next verse but it's part of the same sentence.

*"And when He comes, He will convict the world concerning sin, righteousness and judgment, concerning sin because they do not believe in me, concerning righteousness because I go to the Father and you will see me no longer and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged."*

What does this tell us? The Bible is usually its own best commentary and what this is telling us is exactly who's being convicted of what. In verse 9 He makes it clear that the Holy Spirit will convict those who do not believe in him of their sin, because He says they do not believe in me. So, if you're a follower of Christ and you believe in Jesus and his resurrection and you've accepted him as your Savior than you don't fit in that category, therefore, it's not true of you because you do believe.

In the next phrase He says of righteousness because I go to my Father and you will see me no longer. This is the Holy Spirit actually convicting you of your righteousness. Verse 10 tells us who's going to be convicted of their righteousness, believers and followers of Jesus. It goes on to say that He convicts of judgment because the ruler of this world is judged. Who was the ruler of the world at the time Jesus said these words? The enemy, Satan, because in the process of the fall mankind had handed over the keys of the kingdom to Satan and said God put us in charge but now we're putting you in charge.

We believe you more than we believe him and that's why we were cast out of the garden. Jesus came to the Earth to take those keys back and remove the rule of this world from Satan. Satan is the one who gets judged. So, let's see what scripture actually says.

The Holy Spirit will convict the world of sin because they don't believe in Jesus, so those are the non-believers who get convicted of sin. He convicts believers of righteousness because Jesus has gone to the Father and Satan gets judged because he has suffered the judgment. What usually comes up here is people, when they feel guilty about something they've done... believers feel guilty about a sin they've committed and they will say the Spirit did convict me because I felt horrible about that. I think that's a misinterpretation of what you're actually hearing from the Holy Spirit.

I think what He's communicating to you, and this is an idea that was pointed out to me by my good friend Frank Viola, He's illuminating an area of inconsistency in your life. The guilt is not coming from him. That condemnation is coming from the enemy, but the illumination, the making

visible the fact that this isn't consistent with your identity in Christ this thing that you're doing, that is illumination not condemnation and certainly not judgment, not conviction.

Conviction carries the connotation of judgment and of punishment but that's not what's happening. So my answer is no, the Holy Spirit does not convict believers of sin, He does illuminate areas in our life where we can become more like the Christ we follow and that is not a source of guilt but a source of never ending joy and pleasure and privilege, for you and for me.

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## **Feature Presentation**

That segment just made me happy and it should make you happy. When we realize what God's done for us we get happy, that's just how it goes.

If you're here for the business stuff and I suspect you are, let's get down to it.

Content marketing is a buzzword, a fad, a movement and fact of life, and it's a good idea. Content marketing simply means that you're providing free content as a way of attracting people who become those who know like and trust you and who ultimately will do business with you because of that. So free content is a way to build your credibility and your trust factor before you ever ask people to buy anything from you. I believe that content marketing is not only smart, but it's required if you're going to compete in today's marketplace, especially the marketplace of ideas.

Content marketing is a great tactic, as long as you don't give away the wrong content. Giving away the wrong content free will kill your hope of making any sales. This episode is about the five biggest fatal flaws I see people make with free content as their marketing strategy. Let's go.

### **1. Free content that fails to move the reader progressively towards a decision.**

This isn't about manipulation or controlling people, but it's about walking them along a path that leads them to a decision to either buy what you have to offer or not buy. So you're definitely not manipulating people if you're leaving them free to make a choice of yes or no. For some the good choice will be, no I don't need to buy this thing you're offering because I have this area covered or I have access to resources that solve it for me or whatever the case may be.

However, for many, especially if they've been drawn in by your properly constructed content, they will have reached a conclusion that they really could use help in this particular area. That is the proper use of free content, to move your reader, viewer or listener progressively towards a decision point. You should have that decision point in mind when you're creating the content. This is a strategic sequence of communication, not an accidental sequence.

### **2. Free content that assumes too much about what the new reader already knows.**

This is also what we refer to as the curse of knowledge. We assume that everybody knows what we know about our subject, that we all know the same lingo and buzzwords and so we talk about our topic in a way that excludes people who don't know the inside language of our little subculture. For marketers, especially Internet marketers, when we start talking about lead pages, lead magnets, conversion rates or squeeze pages, upsell pages, marketing funnel sequences and we start using terminology like this, many people have no idea what we're talking about.

They may have a vague idea, but that doesn't mean they have a deep enough knowledge to be able to dive into the deep end of the pool with us, when we're having a more advanced

discussion. Therefore, if you're going to give away free content that provides material that requires that I know something else before I'll understand the thing you're talking about, you have to supply the prerequisites in the material itself. If you don't than people will walk away from what you have to offer because they don't understand it.

Just because people don't know your inside lingo/terminology of your business doesn't mean they aren't intelligent it simply means they have not had the opportunity to be able to be educated yet, whereas, if you can educate them on some of these things, especially things that are freely available elsewhere but you provide the convenience of giving it to them in your free content so they don't have to go searching out what these different terms mean. That can be useful to building your, know like and trust factor with your readers, viewers or listeners.

So don't assume too much about what the new reader, viewer or listener already knows.

### **3. Content that gives away the thing that readers are most likely to pay for.**

You have to be conscious of what it is you offer that is the most likely thing people will buy from you. If you're a service provider it may be your actual service and this becomes less of a problem for you. If you're a copywriter or graphic designer or website developer, as long as you're not giving away free copy, graphics or website templates than you're in good shape. However, you have to determine in your own business what the thing is that readers, viewers or listeners are most likely to pay for and don't give that away.

This may sound obvious and yet I see people making this mistake constantly, giving away the wrong piece of information, wrong piece of software or app or templates, when in fact those are the very things people would pay for.

### **4. Content that gives away all of the how-to.**

Free content should focus on the what-to. In other words, I may tell you what to write about in your sales copy in order to make your case that people should buy your product. I will not give you all of the how-to to do that because that's something I get paid for is teaching people how to do it. I'll tell you what to do and some will be able to take the what-to information and run with it, and have enough knowledge or researchability or just pure gumption to go find out the how-to themselves.

Let me provide an example of what I'm talking about. I don't want this to be vague and abstract I want it to be concrete and real. If I'm writing an article on my blog about how to start a blog as a business, that's the topic, then I'm going to tell you what to do.

- Number one is to decide on what your topic area is.
- Number two is to decide on what your domain name is going to be.
- Number three is to install WordPress.
- Number four is to get a custom theme that makes your site look professional.
- Number five is to prepare a bank of content to launch your blog with that helps build the know like and trust factor in your business and moves people along that continuum towards making a buying decision.
- Number six is to build an email list.
- Number seven is use social media to promote.

So, that may be my list of seven things on what to do, but what people will pay for is the, how do I do that?

- How do I pick the right domain name? I may have a tool or matrix I use to teach people how to do it in a training course.
- How to install your custom theme, I may have tutorials that show you exactly how to install a custom theme and customize it.
- How to get an email list provider. I may show you inside the interface of different email list providers, talk about the one I recommend and demonstrate.

These will all be in my paid content. If I put this in my free content then there's nothing left that people will want to buy from me, so **it's a good policy to focus on teaching people in your free content what to do and teaching them in your paid content how to do it.** Very simple.

This leads to and connects closely with the next flaw.

### **5. Content that closes all of the open loops in the readers, viewers or listeners mind.**

We are creatures that love to close up the loops. We love closure. It's why TV shows that leave you hanging from one week to the next or season to season, that have a story that arc's over several episodes of the show so you have to keep coming back to see what happens in the next episode. That's why those shows are so popular. That's why books that come in a series and tell a story over time are so popular, because people have to know what happens next because they need to close that loop.

If you close all the loops that you open in your free content, in other words, if you prompt a bunch of questions in the minds of people, as with the list I provided moments ago, the questions that pop up are:

- Where do I host my WordPress site?
- How do I pick the right hosting company?
- What theme should I use?
- Do I need to customize it myself or pay someone else to do it?
- What kinds of articles should I publish to start my blog off?
- How often should I publish?

These are all open loop questions that are left open. I may even ask these questions in my free content and say, here are some questions to ask yourself, and list those questions and I've opened up a whole string of loops that want to be closed. This is a technique I've best heard described by a friend of mine, Jimmy D. Brown, who says this. Give people free content that's useful, but incomplete. Thank you Jimmy for a brilliant summary of how to do it right.

For some it will be useful enough that they'll figure out how to complete it, but the rest of the people will pay you to complete that information for them.

So, when you're giving away your free content, be enthusiastic about it. Be glad you have the opportunity to do it. Be assured that it's a good tactic and strategy to use in your business. I absolutely recommend you do this, but don't make these five fatal mistakes. Don't create free content that...

1. Fails to move the reader progressively towards a decision.
2. Assumes too much about what the new reader already knows.
3. Gives away the thing readers/viewers/listeners are most likely to pay for.
4. Gives away all the how-to; only give away the what-to.
5. Closes all the open loops in the readers/viewers/listeners mind.

If you'll just avoid these five minutes with your free content you'll go a long way in having a successful content marketing strategy.

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### **What to Do Now**

Don't forget, we'd love it if you would subscribe to the podcast in iTunes and give us a rating and review, which helps expose the show to more new people so we can help more people.

Be sure to leave your comments on this episode, what experience good or bad, have you had with giving away free content as a marketing strategy? Go to [RayEdwards.com/126](http://RayEdwards.com/126) and leave your comments there.

Check out and connect with Janette from [SuccessTranscripts.com](http://SuccessTranscripts.com), our preferred resource for each week's podcast transcripts.

Until next weeks episode, I pray that God will continue to bless you and that He will keep on doing more for you than you can ask or even possibly imagine!