



# RAY EDWARDS

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

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## The Master Skill of Business Success

Hey everyone, this is Bryan Holmes from [BryanHolmes.com](http://BryanHolmes.com) and the strategic living podcast and you're listening to thought leader, faith builder, business innovator and overall great guy, my friend Ray Edwards.

Is it really possible that there is one master skill that trumps all others when it comes to business success? I believe it's not only possible, but that it's absolutely the truth, that there actually is such a skill. In today's episode I'll reveal what that master skill is. It's probably not what you're thinking, and how you can acquire it, master it and use it yourself.

That's coming up in today's episode of the Ray Edwards Show. By the way, I welcome your comments on the show and your questions. Also in the near future we'll be doing a listener question show, so the thing to do is get your questions submitted and you can do that by coming to the page for this post at [RayEdwards.com/140](http://RayEdwards.com/140). If you scroll to the bottom of the post you'll see an orange button that says send a voice message to Ray Edwards. You can actually record a voice message in high quality and that can then be played back on the show.

I would so appreciate you adding your voice to the show for this upcoming show, the Ask Me Anything Show. Take care of that now.

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### **Tip of the Week**

In administering a blog where you do a lot of postings on a regular schedule like we are, you may have noticed lately that our schedule is significant blog post on Monday, podcast on Wednesday with another significant blog post on Friday as the pillars of our publishing schedule and occasionally we publish extra items on Tuesdays and Thursdays as needed. When you're putting out that level of content it helps to have tools that help you organize to get that done.

That's why I love this new tool I've been using called Co-Schedule. It helps you administer the content on your blog and keep it organized, especially if you're working with other people who are helping you do that, if you have contributors, guest posters or a multi-author blog you should check this out. Co-Schedule makes it less work and easier to get done and organized with a drag and drop calendar that combines your blogging and social media, so you don't have to have your workflow spread across different browser tabs, windows and logins.

It's intuitive and easy to use, especially if trying to integrate your social media with your blog and podcast. You can schedule your social media messages while you're writing your blog post and once you hit publish everything is automatically set into motion. I love this app. It plugs into your WordPress blog check it out. I think you'll love it.

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## Spiritual Foundations

Have you ever been in that place where you felt like you had to work up faith? You had to muster up your belief for whatever you've been praying for or whatever you need from God, especially if you're looking for a specific answer to prayer, whether it be for financial needs, a business, a relationship that needs healing, whatever the case may be. When we're trying to muster up our faith to believe for something, you hear people use that language a lot... I'm believing for this or for that... when you're trying hard to believe for some miracle from God, I think the work we're doing to increase our own faith could actually be standing in the way of our getting the answer.

Why? If you're focused on your faith then you're really focused on yourself. You're saying to God I can do this I just have to get my faith strong enough and then you'll do what I want you to. It sounds ridiculous like that because none of us would probably express it that way, but it's what it amounts to that we're doing. I believe the key for us is to not trust in our own faith, but trust in the faith of Jesus because his faith is always perfect.

The Bible says he's the author and the finisher of our faith. So, if He's the author that means He created it, we had nothing to do with the creation of our faith and He's the finisher of it, so whatever is lacking in it that you might perceive now, He's already taken care of that.

Galatians 2:20 says *'I have been crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.'* So Paul's faith was not in his own faith it was in Jesus and it may sound like I'm splitting hairs that there's no difference, but there is a world of difference.

When you're focused on Jesus you'll be open to receive his goodness and his grace and you won't be focused on your own performance, even in the area of faith. The answer to all your prayers is to rest in Christ, depend on his faith, do that and I predict you'll get the breakthrough you need.

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## Feature Presentation

What is this master skill for business success that I speak of? The skill that, when you acquire it, can actually trump and erase many if not all of your shortcomings, areas where you might not be such a master. I believe the master skill is that of what I would call strategic communication. Most communication in business and in life is done at the tactical level. The most powerful communication is guided by strategy.

Again, this may sound like I'm splitting hairs but you must understand the difference between strategic and tactical communication. The point I want to underline that I believe is paramount is this... **your level of success in your business and in your life is largely dependent upon your level of skill at communications.** Think about it, every disappointment or unmet expectation, every misinterpreted event or action or happening grows out of imperfect communication or powerless communication.

Nothing is more abhorrent to most of us than passive/aggressive communication, that kind that communicates to others that I am a victim of your power and I blame you for what just happened to me. Passive/aggressive communication sounds like, oh well, I guess you're just always going to be late for the meeting. That's what I have to put up with, that's what I get from you. It's passive in that you're saying I don't have any power in this relationship and it's aggressive in that you're attacking the person for not living up to your unspoken, unclarified expectations.

So, here are five keys to more powerful strategic communication. These are not the only keys but they will certainly help move you along the spectrum so that you can communicate more powerfully, more strategically and achieve more of the outcomes and much more clear, healthy, loving and transparent relationships and ultimately in life you will be happier with those kinds of relationship and that kind of communication.

## **1. Know the difference between strategy and tactics in communication**

Strategy is your overall approach. My strategy in communication is to be clear, transparent, honoring and powerful. When I say powerful, I don't mean I'm wielding power over other people, that I'm somehow manipulating or controlling them. What I mean by that is that I'm recognizing my ownership of the parts of the relationship that I actually own. I own anything related to my own actions, keeping my word, fulfilling my commitments, following through, making my requests, my needs and my desires known clearly, not forcing others to guess at what my desires are, what my rules of engagement are and then punishing them if they don't follow my unspoken rules. That's not powerful communication that's the communication of the powerless.

Tactical communication is what we focus on most of the time. How can I say what I need to say? Exactly what words or phrase can I use that will convey what I want? It sounds like this in real life... I don't know how to say this, give me the magic words to say to that person to make them do what I want them to do... you may remember that Dr. Robert Cialdini and his book on influence did a study about using the word 'because' when making a request.

What the study found basically is that using the word because got more people to comply with your request, so you wouldn't even have to give a reason. I believe one of the experiments involve people waiting in line to use a copier and asking to move to the front of the line. They had one group of subjects ask, can I move in front of you, without explanation, whereas the second group asked an innocuous but more detailed question of, can I move in front of you because I'm in a hurry?

There wasn't any real reason given other than they're in a hurry, which was clearly implied by the first person, but using the word because resulted in more people saying sure go ahead. That then became a tactic that many people began using in their communication. That's not a strategy it's a tactic and if you're just using tactics it means that perhaps your strategy is I'm just going to use tactical tricks to get people to do what I want them to do without regard to the overall affect it has on the relationship.

So, if your strategy is to be honoring, clear and transparent and loving and powerful in your communications, you still use tactics but you're using them from a different strategic position. You have a different strategic outcome for the communication and the relationship that grows from it. The strategic outcome for your relationships and your communication that grow out of them is one of honoring the other person and entering into win-win agreements with one another so that we both feel good about our interactions together. That's not a bad strategy to adopt.

## **2. Clearly define the strategic objective of your communications**

That is what we just mentioned. Take a step back or if you like this metaphor better, move from ground level with your communications and rise up to a different altitude, look down on the situation and analyze what's happening. When you rise above just the, in the moment communications and you look at what's really happening, you begin to say I want to know how this communication affects the relationship that I'm having. My strategic objective is possibly developing deeper, more meaningful relationships with other people.

If that's your strategic objective than you will employ different tactics in different ways.

### **3. Understand and use the principle of focused attention**

This is overlooked and undervalued by many, but have you noticed how hard it is to get a person's full attention when you're having a conversation with them these days? How many conversations have you had in the last week, where the person you're speaking with, without even asking your pardon, reach into their pocket and pulled out their smart phone and began texting, receiving a text or doing something mysterious with that device? Perhaps you paused to wait for them to finish what they were doing so they would return their attention to you. How did that make you feel?

Here's a hint on how to use the power of focused attention in your communications. Turn off your smart phone and resist the temptation to take it out and look at it when you're meeting with another person. Make it clear to them that you're giving them your full attention. In fact, I don't think it's wrong of you at the beginning of the conversation to take out your smart phone and turn it off and say to them what you're doing so that you can give them your full attention. That may sound cheesy but it will make an impression on them, because that's not the experience they're having with other people.

It's not just when you're meeting in person either. How many times have you been on the phone in the last week or two with someone and you knew, without hearing the clacking of the keyboard or the clicking of the mouse, that they were on the Internet while talking with you. There's a sound in their voice that you just know that this person went absent on me. They're doing something else, they're probably on the Internet. Trust me, when you do it to others they know it as well. I used to do this and I got called on it a couple times, which was enough to cause me to adopt the discipline of, when I'm having a phone conversation I do not get on the Internet, unless I'm specifically looking up information they've asked me to look up, because it's germane to our conversation. Otherwise, I turn my screen off and put my focus on the person I'm speaking with.

They will know and it will make a difference in the power, clarity and level of communication you have with other people.

### **4. Develop a framework for all your communications**

This may feel artificial and weird to some, but it's a valuable device to use in your communications and I believe it's respectful. I have a framework for phone calls that varies, depending on the nature of the call and who I'm talking with, but the basic framework is the same for every communication on the phone and that is, at the beginning of the conversation I establish what the outcome is of this conversation that we're expecting.

- What are we trying to accomplish on the phone call?
- How will we know we've accomplished it?
- How long is this phone call going to last?

I will typically start a conversation by saying... hey, so that we get the most from our 20 minutes together, let me ask you what the most important thing is that has to happen on this call. It feels weird asking that type of question, but people appreciate it and usually the response is a pause and some variant of, I've never been asked that before let me think, that's a good question. Here's what I'd like to accomplish and suddenly you have a fence around the conversation so it doesn't go on forever with that awkward moment at the end where you both want to end the call after talking for 45 minutes and it's an embarrassing mess to say goodbye.

But, when you put a fence around it and say we'll talk for 20 minutes, you reach minute 18 and say we have just two minutes left, what else do we need to resolve before hanging up? It's clear and feels good and clean to everyone involved. People will appreciate your clarity and will come to expect it. I now have people that I speak with who've heard this question from me enough that when we get on the phone will say this to me before I say it to them and give me their expectations from the call.

## 5. Practice relentlessly

- Define your results,
- Recap what happened, and
- Refine your approach

Know what your results were from the communication. Recap what happened, what could have gone well, what could have gone better, what went wrong, what would you fix next time, if you find yourself having said something you regret saying, think through how you would say it better the next time? It might not be too much to capture a note about how you respond to a certain question or situation and write down the verbiage you want to use and pop that into your Evernote or wherever you keep notes. Put in keywords for this particular situation.

Like if someone unexpectedly invited you to an ad hoc lunch meeting and you want a graceful way to get out of that, it's not too much or overkill for you to prepare a way to answer that without offending people, stumbling around or lying and embarrassing yourself. So think through how you want to respond next time and capture that.

So the master skill in business is that of powerful strategic communication. Why? Because everything in business depends on it... your sales, the effectiveness of your team, the communication of your mission to your team and the world, the effectiveness of the message you're carrying forward to everyone else you come in contact with. All the critical points of contact that your business has with other human beings is dependent upon the power, clarity and focus of your communication.

Use these five keys and you will develop a more powerful, effective way of communicating with people that will pay off at multiple levels in your business and your life.

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## **What to Do Now**

I'd love to hear how you're going to be using strategic communication in your business and how you'll improve your level of communication. Leave your comments at [RayEdwards.com/140](https://RayEdwards.com/140).

Coming up next week our episode topic will be .... Why You Must Master The Skill of Copywriting.

Until next time, may God continue to bless you and may He do more for you than you can ask or even possibly imagine!

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