



# RAY EDWARDS

LIVE WITH JOY. LEAD WITH PASSION. PROSPER WITH PURPOSE. 5

## Reasons Cussing Is Costing You Cash Episode 162

Let me just be clear from the outset, today's episode is not about whether or not it's okay for you to cuss. Words are just words, right, and we're each entitled to speak as we wish. Those of us who live in the free democracies of the world value our freedom of speech and those who don't value freedom of speech even more, I think, but what I'm going to talk about today is very specific, it's very business related.

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On March 27, my friend [Michael Hyatt](#) started a firestorm with a blog post entitled, [How Much Business Is Your Profanity Costing You?](#) One of the most heated debates I've witnessed online ensued. Many people offered the rationale that their profanity, especially those who were speakers who speak from stage, was either a way of bonding with their audience (speaking the common language) or of using an NLP technique which is called a "pattern interrupt". The purpose, they say, of using that is to get immediate attention to break people's pattern and thus make communication even more powerful and effective.

We could argue and debate about those two explanations or rationales, but I think the most interesting thing about the whole firestorm of discussion was that most people missed Michael's biggest, most important point. I linked to it in my post for this episode, so go to [RayEdwards.com/162](http://RayEdwards.com/162) for episode 162 and click the link. I urge you to read Michael's original post about this subject.

I'm amazed that everybody seemed to miss the biggest point. There's a big business-based argument that Michael put on the table and it just got completely overlooked, in my opinion. So in today's show, I will play the role of Captain Obvious and I will show you what you may have missed. Plus, I'll give you 5 more reasons why your cussing is not making you cool, instead it's costing you cash.

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### **Tip of the Week**

If you're a writer type, and you probably are if you listen to this show, I want to tell you about a new service I just signed up for called Grammarly. Many of you know that I probably could benefit from using a proofreader or an editor; in fact, I've been doing so for some time now trying to catch my most egregious mistakes because I'm a copy reader not a copy speller. Grammarly makes you a better writer by finding and correcting up to 10x more mistakes than your word processor. You heard that right, 10x more mistakes than Microsoft Word is going to catch for you.

I was a little skeptical about it, but when I tried it out I was surprised to find it's incredibly effective. It's very fast, very unobtrusive, I love the way the interface works, so I would encourage you to try it out. They have a free version you could try and then I believe, if you're like me, once you've tried the free version you will come to value Grammarly's input into your writing so much that you will go ahead and pop for the premium version, which is what I did, and I have not been sorry for a moment.

The only thing I'm a little bit less than pleased about is that they don't have a version that works with Microsoft Word or Pages for the Mac. As you know, I use Word only begrudgingly because I have to, but if you write on your browser or just take your text and paste it into Grammarly it will still do the work for you. It's well worth it, it's a great tool. I highly recommend it, so check it out at [Grammarly.com](https://www.grammarly.com).

Speaking of writing, since we're on this topic, I think it's worth bringing up that our long-awaited, much anticipated, sometimes impatiently anticipated, Copywriting Course will be released in a very short time. I'm finally happy with the quality of what we've produced and we're in the post-production phase or mid-production phase right now still producing the material for the course. We'll have it all done by the time we open the doors.

In fact, you'll have access to some great freebies from the course itself in just a couple of weeks from the time this podcast is released. To get on the Early Bird Notification list so you get those cool freebies first, go to the show notes and click on the link. That will let you put your name and email address into a form and we'll let you know as soon as that's available.

You definitely want to get the freebies. Even if you have no intention of taking my Copywriting Course and learning how to write more persuasively and sell more of your products and services, even if you don't want to do any of that, even if you don't want to learn how to write copy and sell more without being salesy, even if you don't want to do that, you definitely should get the freebies because they will be helpful in and of themselves. So check that out, go to [RayEdwards.com/162](https://RayEdwards.com/162) for this episode's show notes and you'll find the link where you can get on the Early Bird Notification list to get those freebies.

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## **Spiritual Foundations**

As I discuss the whole profanity thing in today's episode, I will limit my comments in the Featured Presentation segment to the pragmatic reasons why your cussing is costing you cash. I won't get into moralizing about it, but in Spiritual Foundations I want to speak to you specifically about spiritual reasons that I think it's a good idea not to use profanity.

Listen, I believe that we have freedom in Christ. If we're followers of Christ, if we belong to Him we have freedom, we're forgiven for all of our sins past, present and future, so I don't think that cussing is going to put you in the doghouse with the Lord. However, I do think it's interesting to take a look at what Scripture says about cussing and the first thing I'd like to do is dispel a myth.

Most people when they think "Well, what does the Bible say about cussing and profanity" will quote the verse that says "Don't take the Lord's name in vain." That's one of the Commandments and I believe, pretty strongly in fact, that that verse is not talking about cussing. If you read it in context and put away what you think you know about it already, you will look at it and see it afresh and realize that it's saying don't take on the name of the Lord. Don't say you're His, that you belong to Him, that you're a Christian or a follower of Christ. Don't take that on in vain. Don't say it if it's not true, in other words.

I don't think it's talking about profanity. Now, of course, it could be applied because that could be evidence that you have taken the Lord's name in vain, but I don't think that's specifically about cussing. That does not mean, however, that the Bible has nothing to say on this subject. I want to preface this by saying I'm not offering this as a way to condemn you or get you feeling guilty if you actually use some salty, earthy language in your day-to-day life. In my past, I was a big time professional cusser. I occasionally still let one slip and I don't feel guilty about it. It's just that I've

become more mature in my walk with the Lord I've felt led to speak things that are representative of the reality that He brings and the reality that He brings is edifying, clean and pure.

I want to again underline I'm not trying to make you feel condemned and I'm certainly not trying to come off as sounding superior. When I say I've improved in my maturity with the Lord it kind of sounds arrogant like I think well, I'm more mature. Immature person, let me explain it to you. No, that's not where I'm coming from at all, so I apologize if I made you feel that way. I just believe that a closer walk with Jesus, more awareness of His presence, brings less of a desire to speak about these kinds of things, the kinds of things that profanity represents. So when we look in Philippians 4:8 it says this:

“Whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.” Elsewhere in Scripture it says: “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to you.”

So I believe that the words of your mouth spring from the meditations of your heart, what is inside of you, what you're thinking about. Jesus said “Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.” So if we're thinking about and meditating on things that are true, noble, just, pure, lovely, good report, praiseworthy things, I don't think profanity represents any of those things. I don't think it is representative of that reality, do you?

Then there's this instruction from the Apostle Paul who's writing to the Ephesians. Ephesians 5:4 says: “Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving.”

So, again, I don't want to be legalistic and say there's a rule that says here's a list of 7 words you cannot say. I don't think it works that way, but filthiness, foolish talk and crude joking seem to me to encompass and include profanity. I believe the Apostle Paul is saying here don't say these kinds of things, but say things that are giving thanksgiving praise to the Lord.

I think this verse, this final thought that I'll leave you with, is particularly instructive on this subject. In Ephesians 4:29 he writes: “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.” So we're not going to let corrupt words come out of our mouth, but we're only going to say things that bring grace to those who hear what we say.

Do you believe that using profanity brings grace to anybody? I'm not talking about is it against the rules, I'm just saying does it bring grace. When you hear somebody let loose with a string of cursing, do you feel grace washing over you? I certainly don't and it's not what I'm feeling if those words come out of my mouth. I believe as we experience more of the reality of God's love, His forgiveness and the presence of Christ, the use of profanity becomes more and more incompatible with what's in our spirit. So not only think on these things, but speak on these things as well. I think that perspective will possibly change the way you think about what it means for a believer, a follower of Christ, to use profanity.

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**Feature Presentation: 5 Reasons Cussing Is Costing You Cash**

Okay, so that's the spiritual view on profanity. That's all the moralizing I'm going to do, I'm going to stick purely to the pragmatic now. So just to refresh you, in our previous episodes here's what's happened in the story so far.

Michael Hyatt started this firestorm with the blog post he wrote called, [How Much Business Is Your Profanity Costing You?](#) It started a huge debate online. Many people offered rationale about why they thought it was okay or even a good idea to use profanity in their professional speaking career, podcasting career, writing career, and I think most of the discussion missed Michael's most important point.

First of all, let me give you the three explicit reasons he gave to cut out the cussing in his article. Again, I urge you to go to his blog and read this post yourself because it's very well written. Michael is one of those frustratingly good writers, everything he writes I end up reading and thinking wow, I wish I had written that. So here are 3 points:

1. Profanity alienates people. Not everybody, but it alienates a lot of people and, in fact, you could argue most people.
2. Profanity hurts your brand.
3. Profanity doesn't work. He's saying that it's just not as effective as you might think it is. Certainly not as effective as it once was because it's more commonplace.

So those are the 3 explicit reasons he gives, but there's another reason he spelled out that he didn't include in his numbered list, which I think is the most important and powerful reason. I'm going to quote the sentence he wrote. He says, "I don't always feel comfortable directing my audience to do the same." The context here is he is able to learn from people who teach or speak who have something to offer that make it worth his having to wade through the profanity in order to get to the payoff of their teaching. He's willing to do that and not be offended and he feels that he's able to do it.

I would say I feel much the same. There are speakers and teachers whose wisdom I value enough that I'm willing to put up with their foul mouth in order to get their payoff. Michael says, "I don't always feel comfortable directing my audience to do the same. It's just not worth offending them." In other words, your profanity might prevent Michael from recommending you to his 525,057 readers. Is it worth it to you having the freedom to drop the F-boom to give up 525,057 potential customers.

That's just one influencer who feels this way, how many others feel this way, as well? I have no idea, but do you think Dave Ramsey might be comfortable recommending your teaching to somebody if you're constantly dropping the F-bomb. Ramsey has millions of followers, so what is the cost of that, maybe, potentially, never getting an endorsement or a guest spot on his show or a mention. I'm not saying I'm speaking for him because clearly I'm not. I'm just asking you to ponder a question.

Another friend of mine, Joel Comm, was mentioned in Michael's article and Joel wrote a splendid article on this same subject a few years ago. You can find that article in the show notes for this episode, go to [RayEdwards.com/162](#) and find the link to Joel's article. He wrote about professional speakers cursing from the stage and Joel said, "If you are disrespectful of your audience, the impact of your message is going to be diminished."

Now, I was so pleased that Michael started this public discourse on what I feel is an important subject and I've felt quite strongly about this for quite some time because there are teachers

whose material I really value. I really respect them as teachers, thinkers, carriers of wisdom, yet I often get so frustrated because they use such language. I know there are many people I won't feel comfortable recommending them to because I don't want to give the disclaimer. Yes, go to this guy's seminar, but you've got to be prepared. He's going to say the F-word about every 10 minutes or more. I just don't feel comfortable, so I don't recommend that person's material.

It's more than one person. I'm not talking about just one individual. I'm talking about many people today. This is the popular thing to do. I'm going to use the F-bomb from stage. It will make me cool. It will make me relatable. No, it doesn't. It makes me, and I think many other people, unwilling to share your material with their friends and followers. So I was inspired to create today's show and share my own thoughts on this and I have my own 5 different reasons from Michael's.

I agree with everything Michael said in his article, but I have 5 reasons cussing is costing you cash and none of these, I will repeat one more time, are moralizing. I covered that already in the Spiritual Foundation segment. This is all pragmatic, practical. This is just about you and your profits, this is a business podcast. Yes, we talk about supernatural success. This is about the spiritual dimensions of business, but this stuff is pragmatic and practical. Reason one that cussing is costing you cash.

1. Cussing costs you promotional opportunities from major influencers.

I've already talked to you about that in the form of what Michael said, that he's uncomfortable recommending certain people's material to his audience because it's not worth offending his followers. I feel the same way, there are people whose teachings I don't promote on my blog. I don't link to their stuff because I know that most of my audience will be offended by it and it's not worth the cost to me being offensive to my readers or listeners to promote that material. So that's the number one reason that cussing is costing you cash.

Number two, if you're a person who believes that cussing is somehow bonding you to your audience or it's some kind of sophisticated pattern interrupt or whatever the rationalization is you give yourself. By the way, what does it mean to rationalize? Those are rational lies that we tell ourselves. So, reason number two:

2. Cussing costs you personal recommendations from many more individuals.

Now, everyday people may not be major influencers with big audiences like Michael Hyatt, John Maxwell, Dave Ramsey, or Joel Comm, that's true, but if each person in your following or your audience influences a circle of 250 people, which is, on average, probably about right for most people, and if you have thousands in your audience, what is the cost of those thousands of people not recommending you to the 250 people they know. What is the long-term lost opportunity of you slinging some profanity around? Is it worth it? My submission to you is no, it's not. Reason number three that cussing is costing you cash.

3. Constant, dramatic, over-the-top cussing erodes trust with most people.

It's a pretty simple equation for most individuals. If I'm listening to you and you're saying a lot of vile things from the stage, in your podcast or in your professional life, if you do that publically and professionally, what are you like on a personal basis. How far are you willing to push the boundaries on a personal level, on a private level, when the spotlight is not on you? What are you saying and doing when you're not being watched if you're willing to go this far when you're in the spotlight on the public stage? This is a big question that's very important for you to consider. Is it

worth it for you to make this sacrifice just so you can have the enjoyment, fun or significance you feel if you use this kind of language?

4. Cussing distracts people from the value of what you bring to the world.

What I mean by this is that instead of considering the purchase of your book, going to your seminar, workshop or retreat, buying your training materials for themselves or for their company training, both in terms of what people are thinking about on their own and what they're discussing with their peers, friends or co-workers, the discussion becomes one about why you use the F-word so much.

Think about that. Is that the conversation you really want people to be having about you and your work? Don't you really want them to talk about the benefits? Don't you really want them to be saying, I went to this person's seminar and she was fantastic. She taught me the following things. She helped me change my life in the following ways. I read this guys book and it was powerful. It really impacted my productivity. I went to this retreat and it was so helpful to our relationship as a married couple. It really helped us grow in that relationship and be deeper bonded to one another.

Don't you want to be having those kinds of discussions, or would you rather have them talking about why that person has to cuss so much. Is it right? Is it wrong? Whether you think it's right or wrong is that the discussion you want people having about your material. Is that really the kind of pattern interrupt you want to perform? Do you want to interrupt the pattern of them thinking about buying from you and instead have them into a pattern of talking about whether it's okay to use your material or recommend it? I think the answer is pretty obvious.

5. Cussing will cause some people to actively oppose the purchase or use of your books, live events, and materials.

Think about this. Do you really want to give anybody a reason to be an active anti-you agent? It will happen. There are people whose teachings I value, whose trainings, books, seminars and workshops have meant a great deal to me personally and professionally. It helped me grow, be more effective, wiser, healthier. There are those people who also use a lot of profanity in their work.

Now, I don't actively promote these people for the reasons we've already discussed, but I'm not an oppositional person to those individuals. I don't go around saying don't listen to Mr. X or Mrs. Y because they curse a lot, but I know people who do. I know people who actively discourage others from using or benefiting from the materials of people who use lots of profanity from the stage or in their work. Do you really want people opposed to you, actively saying boycott this person because of the foul language they use. I don't think that's smart business.

The problem with all these reasons I supplied that cussing is costing you cash is you may never know how deep this particular iceberg goes under the surface of the water. You may hear the comments that come occasionally from people who say boy, I wish you wouldn't use so much profanity or you may see the discussions online and you may tell yourself I'm attracting a particular audience.

This is one of the most popular arguments-- I'm attracting a particular audience by using this language. They know I'm part of their tribe, I speak their language. Maybe, I'll grant you that's possible, but most people who listen to this show, read Michael's blog, for instance, listen to his podcast and who are followers or proponents of the materials of Dave Ramsey, John Maxwell, influencers of that level, John Gordon is another one who comes to mind, Ken Blanchard, people



who have an affinity for that kind of material are not impressed by your use of profanity. They are not bonded to you by it. They don't feel you're speaking their vernacular. In fact, you're pushing them away.

The problem is not the people who complain about it online, write blog posts about it or do a podcast about not using so much profanity. That's not the problem for you. Those things are just the tip of the iceberg. That's what you see above the water. The problem is below the waterline. It's the enormous number of people who will never do business with you because, for some strange reason, you felt you needed to use profanity in your work.

I would sum up my argument for you that cussing is costing you cash, if none of the 5 reasons I've given you have been persuasive enough so far. If you're still determined that your use of profanity is somehow "strategic", "therapeutic" or "effective" for your audience, I would like you to seriously consider this question. If you stopped using profanity would anybody complain? Do you honestly think you'd start getting emails or posts on your social media accounts saying my goodness, I wish you were using the F-word again, I really miss that? Really? Do you think that would happen? I think you already know the answer to that question.

Here's my question for you for this week's show and I would love to get your feedback. I'd love you to discuss it. If you feel differently, if you have a different opinion, then please respond. Go to [RayEdwards.com/162](http://RayEdwards.com/162) for episode 162 and answer this question for me. Do you think profanity adds anything positive to your message? The only thing I'm going to ask you to do is don't use profanity in your response.

That was one thing that really surprised me about Michael's post. He doesn't have comments on his blog anymore, but he has a big social media presence and people on his Facebook wall and tweeting at him were using all kinds of profanity. As if to say, let me just throw this back in your face. I don't think that proves that you have freedom and that you're a powerful person. I think it proves you're the kind of person that likes to go in somebody else's living room with muddy shoes just to prove you can.

So I'm looking for a real intelligent discourse here. Do you really think that profanity adds something positive to your message? If you do, I would love to hear your reasons for thinking that. Maybe you'll convince me. I doubt it, but I would love to hear your rationale for it.

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### **What to Do Now**

If you'd love to help out the show and spread the word about this program, what would be super value and I would really be appreciative of is if you would subscribe to the show either in iTunes or on [Stitcher.com](https://www.stitcher.com) and give us a rating and a review. Subscribing, rating and reviewing the show is the best way to help us spread the word and get the message out to more people, so I really appreciate it if you do that. By the way, if you don't already have this, sign up for my email newsletter and get a free video called 3 Keys to Change the World and Make Your Business Grow, I think you'll really benefit from this video if you haven't seen it yet.

Until next week, I pray that you will be blessed by the Lord in ways that you cannot even think or imagine because this His nature. That's how He is. God bless you, I will talk to you a week from today.

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