



RAY EDWARDS

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

Quick Ways to Jumpstart Dead Blog Posts Episode 163

Yes, indeed, welcome to the Ray Edwards Show. We have all this happen, I think, to us at least once or twice if we write and publish blog posts. Have you ever written a blog post, one you thought was going to be brilliant, only to read it afterward and realize it falls kind of flat? Have you ever gone back through your library of posts and occasionally wondered, “How did I write something this boring that nobody ever responded to?”

If so, don't despair. All of us who write experience this phenomenon from time to time. The good news is you can resurrect “dead” blog posts. In this episode, I will describe 5 quick ways you can jumpstart a dead blog post almost instantly. Stick with me.

Tip of the Week

So this tip of the week, I don't know if it's going to make life cheaper. It may make life more costly for you because you'll end up spending money, but I want to tell you about a site I love that I just recently discovered called The Grommet. They say on their site, “Grommets are products with purpose invented by people with stories.” That's good copywriting right there, by the way. Find something thoughtful, inspiring, innovative or useful.

I've included a graphic from the front page of the site. They have all these cool little devices, gismo's, gadgets and works of art, just neat stuff. I think “Grommet” is a perfect word for it, so check it out. TheGrommet.com is the link.

One other thing I wanted to mention to you as a Tip of the Week is that next week we will start releasing free material as we get ready to open up our brand new, much anticipated, much talked about, finally here Copywriting Course. You can get free stuff, even if you decide not to enroll in the Copywriting Course. You should enroll in the Copywriting Course, let me just tell you. Even if you decide not to, you want to get the free stuff we're going to be giving away.

To get on the Early Bird Notification list, you can click the link at RayEdwards.com/163 or you can simply go to RayEdwards.com/copy. That will get you signed up and notified, that way you won't miss a single of the fantastic, cool, free things that we're going to be giving away starting next week.

Spiritual Foundations

This week on Foundations, I want to talk to you about the reckless, dangerous and rebellious prosperity Gospel. I'm always a little amused when I hear a criticism leveled at those of us who believe that God intended man to prosper and be in good health, especially when it sounds something like this. “Oh, so you believe in the prosperity gospel?” The term itself “prosperity gospel” is usually used with derision these days.

Another form of this questions sounds like this. “Don't tell me you're one of those health and wealth gospel guys.” I always want to answer by saying, “Well, would you prefer a sickness and

poverty gospel? Do you think Jesus came not to give us life and life more abundantly, but rather sickness and death more quickly?”

Of course, I don't reply this way because I do understand that most people who say these things are speaking out of true conviction. They believe that their criticism of the so-called "prosperity gospel" is valid and that the "prosperity gospel" distorts the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That's what they believe. So I'm not angry with these people and I don't want you to be angry with them either. Don't feel superior to them either, that's just arrogant and prideful.

I do agree, by the way, that the gospel of prosperity and health is reckless, dangerous and even rebellious. I'm just giving a moment of dramatic pause for the gasp that many of you just took because you're shocked to hear me say that. Let me explain.

The prosperity gospel represents the reckless love of God for us as humans, His children. It is dangerous to the spirit of religion, the same spirit that led Jewish leaders of Christ's day to nail Him to a cross. It is rebellious in the same way that the Romans felt that the Jews, especially this rabble-rouser Jesus, were rebellious.

The gospel of prosperity of health, wealth and peace for all mankind is dangerous and rebellious to the system of the world and that is exactly why we must embrace it. That is why I believe the Apostle John wrote, "I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in good health, just as your soul prospers." (3 John 1:1)

One of the most damning criticisms of the prosperity gospel is: What are we to make of people who live in Third World countries, abject poverty or under some kind of tyranny or oppression who have no real chance of prosperity like we have here in America? It's easy for us in the USA, the UK or Australia to talk about the prosperity gospel because we are, by enlarge, the richest people in the world. But if God really wants everyone to prosper, how could He allow terrible poverty and hunger and these conditions to exist? I suspect that His response would be something like, "How can you allow it to exist? I left you in charge. I've given you great wealth, what are you doing with it?"

I believe, ultimately, when the full Kingdom is consummated here on the earth, every injustice will be set right, every person who has lost anything will be repaid seven times what they lost and all of us will be made whole, well, and will lack nothing. That Kingdom reality is already here, but not fully here. That's the meaning of the phrase we sometimes hear, "Kingdom now, but not yet." Our current assignment, I believe, is to bring more and more of that Kingdom reality to all those around us and to every place we go. It doesn't matter that it makes us uncomfortable, it is still our assignment.

Jesus modeled for us the behavior of a person in full relationship with the Father and with the Holy Spirit. He healed every person who came to him for healing. Jesus paid his bills, for the first part of his life, by working at a trade and having a business. In the years of his ministry, He paid his taxes in unconventional ways, like the time he paid his taxes by finding money in the mouth of a fish. If I suggested that you pay your taxes that similar way because you have faith in God, I would be branded as some sort of heretical "prosperity preacher". So be it.

Here's what I know. Scripture says that we are to be in good health and to prosper in all things, even as our soul prospers. I believe it all starts with "soul prosperity"; with our mind, will and emotions being in perfect alignment with those of the Lord. This is only possible, by the way, through the indwelling life of the Holy Spirit. It's not something we can work on and get better at. The more we can experience that reality, the more we experience the reality of the spirit, we will

also experience the manifestation of the reality of material wealth and physical health and those things will be ours.

So I would just give you this word of comfort, don't be discouraged by criticisms about the "prosperity gospel" and don't be discouraged by the fact that you don't see everything you want to see in this regard, that you don't have all the prosperity and health you want, at least you don't have it yet. Know that God's promises are true, He never lies, He is never late and He never fails to deliver.

You are blessed immeasurably by the Creator of the Universe. You are promised there will come a day when you will live in your perfected body the way it was intended to be originally, that you will suffer no illness, that you will not weep any longer, and there will be no lack of money, food, love, safety, or anything else you need. If that isn't true health and wealth, and I don't know what is.

Feature Presentation: 5 Ways to Jumpstart You Dead Blog Posts

Let's just pretend that you have written a blog post and it feels to you as though it has fallen flat or, perhaps, you're looking through your back catalog of old blog posts. I did this recently, that's what led me to making this episode of this podcast, actually, looking through my back catalogue and found some old posts that really did fall flat. They got no engagement, no comments. As I read them I just thought, "Yuck, that's kind of boring. No wonder it didn't get any engagement, didn't get any shares." Is there an easy and simple way to jumpstart these "dead" blog posts, to shock them with the paddles, so to speak, and get their heart beating again? The answer I have for you is absolutely!

Here are 5 quick ways you can jumpstart a dead blog post.

1. The Headline

If you're thinking in terms of advertising, when we have a headline in an advertisement or a sales page the headline is the ad for the rest of the ad. For your blog post it's the ad for the blog post. It's what catches people's attention, stops them in their tracks and makes them say to themselves, "Wait. I may want to read this." So you need to exchange that old, plain-Jane, boring headline for one that invokes an emotional response, uses power words, is maybe controversial, cutting, inflammatory, or it may create great hope by making a big promise of some sort.

My suggestion is go crazy and brainstorm a lot of different headlines for your old, tired and worn out dead blog post. Sometimes all a post needs to bring it back to life is for someone to actually read it. Maybe all you need to do is fix the headline. Maybe that in itself will revive the post.

2. The Lead

Just like a good novel or movie, a blog post needs to start in the middle of the action in some way that captivates the reader so they feel like they're immediately caught up in something. It needs to get their attention right away and pull them into the rest of what you have to say. If you've written a piece that just doesn't seem to have life in it, after you've readjusted the headline, consider rewriting the "lead".

Technically, you may ask, “Well, what is the lead, Ray?” Well, it’s the first few sentences or paragraphs. It’s the very beginning of the post that sets the tone for the rest of the story. Instead of relating dry facts (maybe that’s what you’re doing in your lead right now) or a boring thesis statement, perhaps you could tell a story. It could be a true story that happened to you or somebody else or it could be a case study from one of your clients. It could even be a story you read in a book, just make sure you give proper accreditation. So you could tell a story as the lead of your post or you could share a personal experience, this is often very powerful. You can share a personal experience, something that happened to you that relates to the rest of the blog post. Perhaps, you could ask some penetrating and thought-provoking questions.

As you’re thinking about rewriting your lead just think about this and ask yourself this question. “How can I make the beginning of this post more outrageous, more imaginative, more inspiring, or even into something that would evoke more skepticism?” People will read it if you challenge their beliefs about something. You might evoke a lot of skepticism right up front just to pull them in because they feel, “Well, that’s absolutely wrong. I don’t believe that at all! What has this idiot got to say about this?” That will get them reading, many times.

3. Subheads or Subheadings

Often, long blog posts die a quick death because people simply cannot wade through the wall of text that confronts them. A friend of mine and colleague, Michael Fortin, who is a great copywriter, says there are three things people never do at first. They never read anything at first, they never believe anything at first and they never do anything at first. What he’s saying is, at first, they won’t read your copy or your blog post. When we look at copy or blog posts on the Web, we skim, scan and scroll. We’re looking to see is there enough here to hold my interest that I would be willing to continue reading it or start reading it to begin with.

Remember, the first response people are going to have to your post is they’re going to skim, scan and scroll it. At first, they’re not going to read it, secondly, they’re not going to believe anything you say and, thirdly, they’re not going to do anything. If you can get them to read that’s the key to getting the other two things to happen. This applies not only to writing sales copy, but it also applies to writing blog posts.

This is why, for instance, we break up our sales copy or any of our writing online into shorter paragraphs. People are skimming, scanning and scrolling, shorter sentences, shorter paragraphs and lots of white space makes it easier for people to scan and it looks as though it will be easier to read. If you’re faced with a page of wall-to-wall text with no line breaks and no paragraph breaks, what’s your response to how hard that is going to be to read? Don’t you just think, “Oh, this just looks opaque to me?” Of course, everybody does, even more so today than ever before.

One of my favorite devices for keeping people reading a post is to use mini-headlines or “subheads” to string the main part of the story together throughout the text. So as people are scanning they see the headline and it catches their interest. They scan down the column of text and if I’ve got subheads, little headlines throughout the body of the text, so they’re in a larger typeface, maybe darker or some other color that sets them apart, people can read the subheads all the way through to the bottom of the blog post or story and that lets them know if they really want to read all of it.

One good test as to whether you’ve written good subheads or not is if you read the headline and the subheads out loud, it should form a basic outline of the story so you can get the gist of what the actual post or story is about. If that’s true and that’s the way it works, then you’ve done a good job of writing your subheads.

Another friend and colleague of mine, David Garfinkel, another fantastic copywriter, calls the subheads in your text the “Bucket Brigade” of your copy. It’s like when people are passing a bucket of water from one to the next during a fire they were called the Bucket Brigade. They would perhaps stand down by the lake or the river and form a line of people up to the building that was on fire in the village. They would scoop up a bucket of water and pass it along until it got to the fire. They’d dump the water on the fire, somebody would run the bucket back to the other end of the line and they’d start again. That was the Bucket Brigade.

Well, your subheads act as the Bucket Brigade of your copy, keeping people moving through the copy or blog post. So good subheads can do a lot to revive your dead blog post, get people interested and get them to read it.

4. Images

I’m not talking about descriptions I’m talking about pictures here. People are much more visual than ever before in the content they consume. I think we’ve always been hyper-visual creatures, but in our consumption of content, more than ever, we demand interesting pictures, eye candy that keeps us reading or absorbing the text in front of us. So if you can find a photo that perfectly illustrates the point you’re trying to make, or one that is representative of the idea you’re trying to convey, then by all means use it.

You’ll notice on my blog I use a photo, a picture, an image, a graphic of some kind with every post I make. Why? Because it grabs the interest more readily than if it was just pure text. Make sure you use a photo that you have the rights to use. You don’t want to get into trouble by using somebody’s photo, so don’t go to Google Images, do a search, find a picture you like and just copy it and use it on your blog. That will get you into trouble because it is trackable.

Most photos that come from stock photo images, even lots of amateur photographers these days, have encoded within the photo itself the ID of the picture. There are services that will scan the inter webs to find out if your picture is being used without your authorization and then you can write to the people using it and demand that they pay you money. Lots of times people that I know have gotten Cease and Desist messages from big image rights selling corporations saying, “You now owe us \$3,000 because you used this picture without authorization.” That’s a real thing that happens a lot, so you want to make sure you have the right to use the photo.

I don’t want to scare you, you can use a stock photo service and be totally in the clear or you can use a photo that you’ve otherwise obtained a clear license for. If you go on Google Images, you can search for photos that have creative common rights set up so that you have the right to use it, just make sure you have a license for it or use a photo you took yourself. Certainly, you have the rights to use your own photos anyway you want to.

When it comes to pictures, do be careful not to use cliché photos. If you’re writing a post on how to negotiate, for instance, for heaven’s sake please don’t use a photo of two men in business suits shaking hands! We have seen that image enough. Be more inventive, more creative than that. One great source of unusual but artistic-looking photos for this purpose is a stock photo website called [Unsplash.com](https://unsplash.com).

There are links in the show notes to all these resources I’m mentioning, so you can go to [RayEdwards.com/163](https://rayedwards.com/163) and find the links, but Unsplash has some great photos and I want to give a shout out and thanks to my friend, Mike Kim, who pointed this resource out to me. I love this, Mike, thank you very much. You can find Mike’s excellent blog at [MikeKim.com](https://mikekim.com).

5. Enhanced Content

These days, it is often not enough just to write a good piece. You might write a 2,000 word blog post that is absolutely 2,000 words of the most brilliant pros you've ever constructed and it still may not be enough. Offering an enhanced version of the content in your blog post can really help bring new life to that content. This might mean creating an audio file to accompany it which, I suppose, technically would turn it into a podcast. You could make a short tutorial video to go along with the blog post or create a checklist, infographic or a cheat sheet of some kind that can be downloaded.

In the case of this podcast, we offer transcripts of every episode for people who like to get a word-for-word transcript. That's enhanced content. It takes a little more work, but it definitely increases the engaging power of your blog post. This is something that Amy Porterfield at AnyPorterfield.com does a great job of. If you'd like to see a model of how to do this the right way, go to AmyPorterfield.com. Not only is this something that is fairly easy for you to do, it can definitely increase the size of your email list. You just use the same approach that Amy uses on her blog, ask people for an email in exchange for the download. It's that simple.

If you do this, by the way, there's one mistake that I see a lot of people make when they're using this tactic and you should make sure you don't make the same mistake. That is, if I've already opted into your list and you have me click the link to download the content and fill-in my email address to get the new content on this week's post, don't have it set up so it goes to an error page that says, "You're already subscribed." That's a dead end.

All the major email autoresponder services, InfusionSoft, AWeber, Mail Chimp, whoever you may use, offer a way for you to set up a different page for people to go to who are already on the list. That page will not be a dead end for them, but lead them back to the blog post they were reading, the rest of your site, or whatever. Just be careful about the experience people are having if they're already signed up for your list. That's all I'm trying to say.

Once again, here are the five ways to jumpstart a dead blog post.

- Write more powerful headlines
- Rewrite the lead
- Create captivating subheads
- Use powerful pictures and images
- Offer enhanced content

This is certainly a list of five things you could do as you create new content to make it more engaging, more powerful and more interesting and I encourage you to do so. But, if you have a blog that maybe you've enjoyed very little traffic or moderate success, maybe you have a great deal of success now, but you've got dozens or even hundreds of posts in your back catalogue that haven't really been done justice. They haven't been seen by most of your audience, which is probably most everybody listening to this podcast.

I know it's true even for mine. I have 878 posts or something like that on my blog and many of the early ones have barely seen the light of day. So this is something we're going to be working on with my blog, bringing those old posts back to life and giving them more attention and we're going to do it by doing the very things that I've just described here. Adding enhanced content, rewriting the lead, using better images, using better subheads throughout the post itself, writing a new headline, just refreshing it and bringing it back to life.

This means that you don't necessarily have to create a bunch of new content to bring the blog post back to life and, even more importantly, maybe bring your blog back to life, maybe resurrect your entire site. Using any one of these five jumpstart tactics should infuse your blog post with new life. Using all of them is almost guaranteed to resurrect the dead.

So here's your assignment, should you choose to accept it. Put one or more of these tactics to work and apply them on your blog today. This is something you could do right now at least on one post that's already on your blog. You don't even have to write a new post, you could use one of these tactics on one post that's already on your blog and you could begin to see results immediately. The question is, will you? We'll see.

Here's my request. In the comments on this blog post, go to RayEdwards.com/163 for episode 163, that's where you'll find the show notes for this podcast, answer this question. Which of these five jumpstart tactics will you put to work on your blog today and, better yet, post a link to where you used it? I'm asking you to promote your blog on my blog. I'm welcoming you to do it, so just go to RayEdwards.com/163 and post a link where you show that you've used one of these techniques. Can you do that? Of course you can. Will you do it? Of course you will. You're a doer, a person who gets things done, a taker of action.

What to Do Now

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May God continue to bless you and do more for you than you could ask or even possibly imagine. That's what He wants to do because that's how He is. He is a God who wants you to prosper and be in good health even as your soul prospers.

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