



RAY EDWARDS

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

The 7 Pillars of Maximum Competitive Advantage Episode #190

Sean: Welcome to the Ray Edwards Show, this is Sean Edwards. We have a good show for you today.

Ray: And who doesn't want that?

Sean: No, I don't know.

Ray: I mean it's friendly competition. It's co-opetition.

Sean: Everybody wins. Everyone gets a trophy.

Ray: Yes and a bunny and a unicorn.

Sean: Yeah.

Ray: And a rainbow.

Sean: We'll also be talking about why we should always be thankful, no matter what and it's not why you think. And, how to get immediate money immediately.

Ray: I love that.

Sean: Yes, it's an immediate sandwich right there.

Spiritual Foundations

Ray: How could I possibly suggest that we be thankful no matter what? You might be thinking the reason you're saying that Ray is that God is sovereign and everything that happens He is in control of, and we may not understand it but therefore we should be thankful about it, because He knows what He's doing. I want to be clear, God is sovereign. We should be thankful for everything He does. But not everything that happens in our lives is the will of God.

This is what freaks people out sometimes when they hear this idea, but it's not just an idea, I believe it's right out of the Bible and we have to think about what the word sovereign means. What does it mean if you look it up in the dictionary? In the dictionary it means independent, self-sufficient, sovereign, as in a sovereign nation. But in the church we have redefined sovereign to mean in control.

The United States is a sovereign nation on the earth, but she is not in control of everything that happens within her borders. She has given her citizens guidelines and laws and rules to follow and they sometimes choose not to do so. So sovereign does not mean in control,

responsible for everything that happens. God is sovereign, but not everything that happens is his will. This is a thorny problem for people who believe or have been taught everything happens for a purpose. Well everything does happen for a purpose, it's just that sometimes it's a bad purpose, it's not God's purpose.

If you're having trouble with this then think of it this way. In the Bible God says He's not willing that any should perish and yet we know that people are perishing every day. So He's not willing that it should happen but it does happen. Clearly, not everything that happens is God's will. There's a larger, a meta question about why does He allow it to be that way and that's a question I will leave for another day and another person to answer, because I don't have an opinion on that, because I don't know the answer.

But I do know this, that in everything we should give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. That's from I Thessalonians 5:18.

Some people, most people in the church have interpreted that verse to mean just what I just told you is not true. They think that verse means, be thankful for everything because everything that happens is God's will. No, that's not what it says. It says in everything give thanks for this. What is the, this, that we're referring to? Giving thanks. Giving thanks is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. See, we can have lots of great stuff happening in our life and we have one negative thing and it may be large or small. We can have a hundred great things happen and that one negative thing happens and what we focus on is the negative thing.

Even out of the negative thing we could find something to be thankful for. I want to be crystal clear, not being thankful for the pain, but we can be thankful through the pain. God does not inflict evil on his children. He just doesn't work that way. You may or may not know and you may or may not care, that a few years ago I was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease and I don't think God gave me that. I don't think that's his will, and so I don't thank him for the disease. I hear people say, well, my cancer was a gift. No, who gives a gift like that? Cancer is a horrifying disease, how can you look at that and credit God with that?

So, I'm not thanking him for this affliction, but I'm thanking him through it, because He can redeem any situation. Here's something to think about, the Greek word for thank, in this verse, is caris. It's the same Greek word used for grace, unmerited favor. Even when bad things happen we get to make the choice. The choice we can make is to have a spirit of Thanksgiving, because God is faithful and He's able to make everything work for our good. Romans 8:28.

We tend to focus on what we don't have, instead of on what we do have. We need to understand that when we thank God for what we do have, even if it's only five loaves of bread and two fish, what we have will be multiplied. That's what happened when He fed the 5000. That's what happened when He fed the 4000. Remember what Jesus did before He used the five loaves and two fish to feed more than 5000 people? He gave thanks to the Father for what little He had. Look it up it's in Matthew 14:17-21.

What I'm suggesting is that we develop a discipline of Thanksgiving and graciousness and we keep it flowing. And the discipline of it means, we are thankful even when we don't feel like being thankful. We speak the words out, thank you God for... and you thank him for all the things in your life, no matter how small they are.

I determined a long time ago that I was never going to walk by a penny on the ground and just ignore it just because it was only a penny. I used to do that. I used to just walk past it and now I stop and pick it up. I look at that dirty penny from the ground and I say thank you God for putting wealth in my path, because I know that if I'm thankful for the little I have, He will multiply it for me.

So when it comes to your health, thank God for the parts of your body that do work. Thank God for whatever amount of money you actually have in your bank account. Don't focus on what you don't have. Don't focus on what God's not doing for you, focus on what He is doing for you. Be aware of those gifts that He gives you every day. Thank him for his presence and grace. You'll be happier and you'll have more joy. You'll also experience his blessings and his increase.

So how do you put this to work in your real life? It all sounds great on a podcast, but Ray, how does it work in real life? It's quite simple. Here's a way to start practicing this today. Every day at the end of the day, write down three things that you are thankful for and, in fact, I challenge you to do this for the next 30 days in a row. Maybe in a little notebook or on your smart phone in the notes app or however you'd like to do this, just write down three things you're thankful for and it can be anything... small, big or medium sized. Be thankful for three things consciously every day for the next 30 days and see what a miraculous change this makes in your life.

Tip of the Week

Are you struggling to get your business going or to keep your business going? Are you struggling for cash flow, money coming in the door? You want to get out of that hole you say. Is that your problem, buddy? Maybe it's a case of sales being slow or money being low. Maybe sales and money are non-existent. You can turn all of that around with a little thing called a **seed launch**.

We just finished doing a product launch that you may be aware of because you may have gotten an email or a few about it, of our Copywriting Training Program. It's closed now, you can't buy it but during the launch you could and we made a very large profit from that launch. I'm not saying that to be impressive, but I am saying it to impress upon you the fact that the principles of the Product Launch Formula (PLF), which was invented by my friend, Jeff Walker. I think it's one of the primary marketing innovations of the last century.

We used that system to do our launch and we did the same amount of revenue we do for a year, previously, in a couple weeks. So this works, and you might say to me, Ray, the Product Launch Formula isn't available and it won't be open again for another year and I would say to you that's right, but you can get Jeff's book and in the book called *Launch*, he actually gives you the mechanics of how to do a seed launch. That's the launch you do if you're starting from zero or you're starting over and you have no money coming in and have no customers. Maybe you don't have a business or a product, but if you follow the steps in the book to the letter you can make money doing a seed launch. It's all in the book. You need nothing other than that to get started.

I heard someone at Jeff's live event that he holds once a year called PLF Live. I just got back from there a few days ago. One young lady was telling a story there about how she was so broke that she couldn't afford to get PLF while it was available, but she did get the book. She said she followed the instructions for a seed launch that's in the book and from it she made \$6000, which gave her the money so when PLF became available again she bought it and made \$60k. That then led to her third launch, which was over a million dollars.

So you can take this from small to large very quickly and all you need to get started is Jeff's book, *Launch*, and you'll find a link in the show notes to my Amazon affiliate link to the book. Whether you use my affiliate link or not, just go to Amazon and buy the book. Follow its instructions on doing a seed launch and you can turn your entire business, your life around, if you just follow the instructions. Don't question it. Don't think you already know it or that it won't work for you, because it will, you just need to follow the instructions.

I'm pretty passionate, as you can tell, about you following the instructions. I'll have a blog post going up over the next few days about some of the things that I learned at PLF Live, so be on the lookout for that. Go to Amazon now, get the book and then come back because I have more great stuff ahead just for you.

Feature Presentation

Our feature segment this week is called **The 7 Pillars of Maximum Competitive Advantage**. You know, in the olden days, and I don't know when those were but let's assume we all know when the olden days were, you lived in a village or a town and everybody knew who you were and what you did, what you contributed to the community. You were a blacksmith, a farmer, a miller, whatever your function that you fulfilled, people in that village knew what you did and that's how you made your trade, your economic survival. You got your food and shelter by plying your trade.

Today there is no village, the world is the village. You're competing with everybody in the world all the time, and that's fun but it's also a little scary because you're not just competing with others who are at your level of business. If you offer consulting services and you're a one man/woman show then you're also competing with Anderson Consultants, because it's all available globally and your competition flattens out the marketplace, which is good. But if you run a mom and pop hamburger stand in your hometown you're competing against McDonald's also.

So what do you do? How do you get maximum competitive advantage? We joked about co-opetition earlier in the show and I'm not suggesting that I think everything is a dog fight, I think there isn't a limited economic pie for us to eat from and that if I eat a lot you have to go hungry. However, I do believe in competition, in the competitive spirit which is trying to be better. There's nothing wrong with that, our nation was built on competition. It needs checks and balances, but competition is a good thing because it creates better products for you and me as consumers.

I'll start by sharing J Abrahams very famous analogy of the right way to build a business and that is what he called **The Parthenon Strategy**. J says that most businesses are built like a diving board, they have one pillar that holds them up and if that pillar gets knocked out from under the diving board the whole thing crashes into the water. That's my rendition of his brilliant teaching and I've probably ruined it but you get the idea.

His suggestion is that you build a Parthenon-like structure. Imagine the diving board with pillars all around the outside edges holding it up. It's virtually unknock-downable, if you have a Parthenon. So I'm going to suggest that the 7 pillars of maximum competitive advantage are your Parthenon strategy. You can build a profit Parthenon with these 7 pillars.

1. People

Your business needs to have the pillar, the foundational support of people both internally and externally. So even if you're a one person business than you're the internal people support, but that shouldn't last for long, you shouldn't be the only one in your business for very long, even if it's just a virtual assistant who works a few hours a week for you in the beginning or maybe an accountant, a banker or an attorney. These are professionals you'll need sooner rather than later, and we haven't even started talking about staff and team members yet.

People inside your business are part of this pillar, as well as those who are outside your business. Those are your most loyal fans, your customers, your raving fans, the people who love everything you do, who buy everything you offer and who support you and defend you when other people are cutting you down. I have people like that in my community, in my tribe and I love you for that. I notice and pay attention.

Lots of people say that they are trustworthy and faithful, but a loyal person is hard to find, so I notice them both inside and outside my business.

2. Problems

That's right the pillar of problems, because if there were no problems there would be no need for your solution. Think about it. You as a businessperson offer a solution to the problems that people experience, therefore, thank God they have some problems you can solve. By the way, problems are also a resource for you.

Dan Sullivan has said that the problems we feel prevent us from achieving our goals are actually the raw materials for achieving them. The very things that we think stand in the way of us getting what we want are actually the building blocks, the fuel of achieving those goals. He's not saying to have a positive attitude and everything will work out okay, he's saying that those things you call problems, they're the actual rungs on the ladder that get you where you want to go, both internally and externally.

When you have a problem arise, I love the way Michael Hyatt deals with this question of, what do I do with this problem? Instead of asking why does this always happen to us? Why does it always turn out like this? Why do I always miss having the deal? Why does my customer always turn out to be a jerk? Michael has this great question that he asks, which is, what does this problem make possible? That's a powerful question that illustrates the power that lies within problems.

It makes possible for me to exhibit the quality of grace when dealing with somebody who's a jerk.

It makes possible for me to demonstrate forgiveness.

It makes possible for me to experience the act of forgiving and the freedom that that gives me.

It makes possible that I can understand why my customers might be frustrated about something and fix that point of frustration.

It makes so many things possible.

3. Promises

Again, this is an internal and external pillar in your Parthenon. Internally, if you make and keep promises to yourself your level of self-esteem and integrity will grow. If the people around you, inside your company, see you making and keeping promises to them their respect for you and esteem of you will also grow.

If you keep promises to your customers they will become your most ardent advocates in the marketplace. They will defend you when others attack. They will rally to your side when there are problems in your company. That's the power of promise.

4. Strategy of preeminence

Again, this is something that I'm borrowing from J Abraham, who has a product possibly, I'm not sure, but if you can get your hands on the Strategy of Preeminence, I highly recommend it. The summarized version isn't perfectly summarized, so J if you're listening I apologize for doing a bad job of this. The Strategy of Preeminence is simply you're taking your level of service, your level of care for your clients, your level of excellence, your standards of over delivering to a level so far beyond what anyone else in your market, business or industry is even considering that you are clearly preeminent as the leading provider in that market space.

We do simple things to demonstrate preeminence. Like when someone orders a product from our company we call them. We sell primarily digital products that are downloadable online and hardly anyone in this business actually picks up the phone and calls their customers, but we call. We ask, did you get access to your product? Did you have any problems? Do you have any questions? Is there anything we can do to help you? It's a simple thing, but that human touch means so much to people and it helps establish one credit in our preeminence account.

What can you do that isn't done by others in your marketplace, that others might say that's an expense you shouldn't take on? That it's an extravagance that isn't necessary. I suppose that depends on what you consider necessary. I consider it to be preeminent. Do you?

5. Proof

You need to develop a preponderance of proof that your solutions, your systems, your software, your techniques and your services work for your clients. The best proof of all is having your clients tell those stories to other people, independent of you, spontaneously. Having your customers be your best salespeople is remarkable. Look at how Apple has accomplished this. Meet any ardent fan of Apple and if you're using an Android phone or Windows PC, that fan of Apple who isn't on their payroll or have the stock, o'contrar they pay Apple thousands of dollars every year, that person will sell you an iPhone, iPad or Macbook Pro, because that's how much they love that company. That's proof.

Apple doesn't stop there they use videos of the outcomes their customers have achieved using their hardware and software. Notice, Apple does provide the specs and you can go to the website and find out how much storage space, resolution for the screen of the device and find out all that information because that's stuff some people want to know. But, what really sells an iPad is watching the neat things people can do with them in those commercials, those short films that Apple shows on their website. What they're doing is displaying the outcome, the transformation that has happened in that person's life as a result of owning an Apple product.

6. Proposition

You should have a clearly defined proposition that is always obvious to your customer or prospect. They should always know exactly what you want them to do next. If you go to my website at RayEdwards.com, on the front page you know exactly what I want you to do next. I want you to click the button and get your free downloads.

Why am I giving away the things I'm giving away behind that free button? They're high quality, better than items of other competitors of mine ask you to pay money for. Why? Because I want to be preeminent. I want to demonstrate value and results for you in advance before you pay any money to me, before I make the proposition. I guess the initial proposition is download this stuff. Give me your email and I'll give you this free stuff, but eventually I'm going to lead to another proposition which is, invest in this training program, invest in this live workshop, invest in this mentoring program, etc. You must have multiple propositions in your business, but you're only presenting one at a time.

7. Prose

Words, writing... this should come as no surprise. If you've been hanging around here very long you know I'm a copywriter and I believe that we strategically influence our tribe through the art, skill and science of writing, powerfully and persuasively. So your prose needs to be on point, on target and written in such a way that moves people to action. When you can achieve that, when you can write that kind of copy that motivates action from people, you've truly put in place the final pillar in your profit Parthenon.

Now, for reviews sake let me recap once more. The 7 pillars in your profit Parthenon, the 7 pillars of maximum competitive advantage are...

1. People
2. Problems
3. Promises- to your company, yourself and employees and team members and outside your company, to your customers and prospects and vendors
4. Strategy of preeminence – in the marketplace, the way you deal with your customers and, but in the way you deal with your employees and team members
5. Proof – for your customers and prospects that your solutions work and you might consider sharing that proof with your employees. They need to know they have something they can represent proudly and believe in
6. Proposition – you should always be clear on every page, email or encounter with your customer, what is the proposition you are making? Is it to open an email, click on a link in an email, to buy a product or set up a consultation call?
7. Prose – powerful copy that motivates people to action

Anybody can start today and build your own profit Parthenon. You may not have all these things in place, but if you don't than pick the one you feel will have the most effect for you immediately and put that in a place now and move to the next one. There are seven, start with the one you can get done most quickly that you think will have the most leverage for you. My call to action or proposition for you is, do this. Get started today.

Sean: All right, you can find the show notes for this episode, including a transcription by going to RayEdwards.com/190.

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Ray: And I would leave you with these words of wisdom from Aristotle. *"We are what we repeatedly do; excellence therefore, is not an action it is a habit."*

Sean: Truth bomb.

Ray: Truth bomb. #RayOfTruth...

Till the next time, may God continue to bless you and do more for you than you can ask or possibly imagine.

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