

**Cliff Ravenscraft - Ambition
Episode #232**

Sean: This is the Ray Edwards Show.

Ray: I have two observations to make about our intro.

Sean: Yes.

Ray: For the first time I heard it differently

Sean: What?

Ray: He says start, run and grow your own internet-based business.

Sean: Yes.

Ray: I had a picture of somebody starting and then running away.

Sean: Ah!!

Ray: Run!

Sean: Run. Fly, you fools.

Ray: Good one. We could totally riff on what that meant.

Sean: Yeah, right.

Ray: Did Gandalf have a backup plan? Just saying...

Sean: Tune in next week to find out.

Ray: Here's the other thought. I know we have musicians listening to this show.

Sean: Right.

Ray: I would love to have different versions of the jingle, like a punk version, a folk version, a zydeco version, whatever.

Sean: Right.

Ray: So if you want to take a stab at that and send it to us.

Sean: We're not promising we'll use it.

Ray: Because it might suck.

Sean: Right.

Ray: They often do. But if you have a good one and you can do it well, we'd love to hear it.

Sean: Absolutely.

Ray: No offense meant to Emerson Drive, our current jingle singers.

Sean: They aren't actually our jingle singers, but we just like to joke that they sound like Emerson Drive.

Ray: Okay, so back to the topic, which we never actually got on to.

Sean: No, we didn't.

Ray: I did this interview with Cliff Ravenscraft. This was when you were out, again, so you're not on the interview.

Sean: Right, I'm not on the interview.

Ray: We're going to fix that in the future.

Sean: Okay.

Ray: Which means we need to coordinate our schedules.

Sean: Right and it's so hard.

Ray: I know. It's so tough!

Sean: Life is so tough when you...

Ray: Work for yourself, make your own schedule. Hardly working at home...

Sean: Hardly working at home.

Ray: So you met Cliff.

Sean: Oh yeah, Cliff is awesome.

Ray: How would you describe Cliff Ravenscraft?

Sean: I would describe him as like a fireball of energy.

Ray: He is that.

Sean: He is.

Ray: When he grabs onto something...

Sean: Oh, man, he goes for it.

Ray: He's like relentless in his pursuit of whatever he's interested in now.

Sean: Yeah. Like in his whole health craze, it's just inspiring. Six days a week for how long now?

Ray: It's like 18 months now.

Sean: Yeah.

Ray: Six days a week and never missed a single workout.

Sean: You interact with him and it's like, oh, I can see that. I can see that in you. You're like not just because you look great, but because there's just something about it. It's like, yeah, that makes sense. You would be the kind of person that would just decide to do that and then do it.

Ray: Yep, when he's into something he's all the way into it. This interview was so long it actually turned out to be two episodes.

Sean: Cool.

Ray: We had to split it up, so we're going to go ahead and jump into episode one. This one I've entitled Ambition, I think you'll see why. I should also point out that Cliff is running this same interview this week on his show PodcastAnswerMan.com. So I encourage you to go over to his site and check out everything he's doing, everything he's up to. It's well worth your time. Here's the interview with Cliff Ravenscraft.

Cliff Ravenscraft Interview

Ray: If it's okay, I want to attempt a description of how I perceive you and how I perceive where you're going. Is that all right?

Cliff: Dude, I would be honored by that because I believe, Ray, that there are people who see things in me that I'm not aware of myself. I believe that people see God-inspired work happening inside of my life that sometimes I'm not privy to and I love to hear these things, especially from somebody that I value their thoughts and wisdom as much as I do yours.

Ray: All right, we've got a tremendous mutual admiration society going on here.

Cliff: Yes, we do.

Ray: That's how it should be. We should all admire the best in one another.

Cliff: Michael O'Neal was on my podcast recently and we call it the 'Bromance'.

Ray: The bromance.

Cliff: The bromance. Okay, I'm ready.

Ray: So here's how I see you.

Cliff: Lay it on me.

Ray: Cliff is the king of empowering people to turn their message into a podcast and distribute it to the world using the miraculous technology that's never been available before in history.

I believe that the internet and, specifically, right now it's podcasting, it may be something different five years from now, but right now the sweet spot, the ubiquitously-available, easily-accessible technological innovation that's available to everybody is podcasting. I think it's more significant, or at least as significant, as Gutenberg's printing press and Cliff gives people access to using that channel in the most effective, most efficient and the easiest possible way. It is easy.

Furthermore, that's just a gateway drug. That's just a gateway that gets people in the door and Cliff ends up teaching people about and modeling for them excellence, integrity, taking every area of your life, whether it be mentally, spiritually, physically, emotionally, financially to the next level, whatever that level is for you. He doesn't set up artificial targets and say you have to get here to be successful, but if you want to go to the next level of potential for you I can help you get there.

That's how I see you right now.

Cliff: Wow! I love that. Yes, I accept that absolutely.

Ray: One of the things that I have been thinking about lately and it's grown out of some discussions with you and it's grown out of some of my own thoughts about where I'm headed with my business and the work that I do in my personal life, as well. This may surprise you, this term I'm going to use, typecasting.

The reason I say that is it's a known fact in the acting profession that actors generally don't want to be typecast. In fact, Leonard Nimoy, who passed away not long ago and was one of my favorite actors, was really a tremendous role model and a personal, spiritual,

intellectual influence in my life. I know that sounds silly to some people, but it's true.

If you don't know who Leonard Nimoy was, how is that possible? But just in case, he was the actor who portrayed and really created the persona of Mr. Spock on 'Star Trek'. Initially, he was horrified to be typecast as Spock. In fact, he wrote a book called *I Am Not Spock*. He worked through a process of coming to accept what it meant to be known as Spock.

He realized, I think, he was going to be known as Spock for the rest of his life, which was true, but he was known as many other things, as well, a photographer, an artist, a philanthropist, many other things. He wrote another book a few years later called *I Am Spock* and William Shatner, who portrayed Captain Kirk on that series, went through the same process.

You know 'Star Trek', most people don't realize, the first three years were all there was of the original series and it was cancelled. It was not successful. It was not a ratings success story it was a failure by network standards. There were only 77 episodes, which was not enough.

The target was to get at least 100 episodes to be successful. They didn't make it to the finish line and yet there was something about that show that I think stirred a desire in people for a better world, a better tomorrow, holding themselves in the world to a better standard.

I've kind of got off on a rabbit trail here, but I think it's important. There was something in it that brought life to people and so the people would not let the show die.

William Shatner, after the show was over, was living in a trailer that you pull behind your car, a tiny, little trailer because that's all he could afford. He was broke and he was trying desperately not to be Captain Kirk. He later began to accept that Captain Kirk, the persona, the fame, the love, the adoration that brought to him empowered him to do so many other things.

I believe that Shatner will go down in history as one of the great actors who understood that his acting was a business that spread into other areas of life. It allowed him to be a philanthropist, a contributor to society, an inspiration for millions and a model for how to take a career -- some would have said, well, he was a B-level actor, I don't buy that, but some would say that – and turn it into more success long term than most so-called A-level actors have been able to do.

It's one thing to be a flash in the pan and have a career arc that goes spike up and then spike down into the depths and you never hear from the person again and there's been many examples of that. William Shatner has been kind of on this gradual rise over time. The guy is 85 years old and more well-known, more famous and more wealthy now. Not that those things are the most important things to him.

I said all that to say this. So many of us are worried about being typecast. For a long time, I struggled against just being known as a copywriter. Notice how I said that, just as a copywriter. I think, Cliff, if it's okay if I open with this, you've been pretty open about it, that you have struggled recently through not wanting to be known as just The Podcast Answer Man.

Cliff: Absolutely.

Ray: But you've been through this entire evolution and so instead of me continuing to soliloquize about this, I want to just rewind a little bit and go back to what I believe externally to me seemed like the beginning of your journey recently, which was you discovered a musical.

Cliff: Oh, yes.

Ray: Tell us about that.

Cliff: The musical 'Hamilton'. I had been listening to a podcast called This Week in Tech and also another one called MacBreak Weekly. Both of them hosted by Leo Laporte and his wide array of panelists and for months I would hear them talk about this musical. It would just come up. Every single episode there would be a mention of

'Hamilton'. I think there's been a joke now that there's a drinking game associated with the mention of 'Hamilton' in their podcasts.

So I had heard about this musical and I'm like what is this, everybody is going goo-goo, ga-ga over this. I can't remember what it was; I think I heard somebody talk about it on TV. Yeah, I think I saw a couple things mentioned in late night TV shows and my daughter, Makenna, who is in fifth grade, is talking about this stuff at school. She's coming home saying, Dad, I want to listen to 'Hamilton' and I'm like what is this.

So I pull up Apple Music and I click play on 'Hamilton' and I'm like, ooh, that's kind of catchy. Actually, no, it was on YouTube. I looked it up on YouTube and Makenna was there with me and she was telling me the words. She was actually singing some of them and I'm like this is really catchy. I'm like you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to go for a bike ride later; I'm going to see if this is on Apple Music. I'm a subscriber there.

I fired up Apple Music on my phone, I go out for a bike ride and I listen to the entire soundtrack from the first song all the way to the very last song which, by the way...

Ray: That's no small feat.

Cliff: That's like over two hours.

Ray: Yeah.

Cliff: So I was on my bike for over two hours, extended my ride so that I could finish this musical for the very first time while I'm out on my ride and by the end of it I was mesmerized by what I had just heard. I didn't even fully comprehend what I had just heard, but I knew that I was in love with the musical and the music itself.

Ray, typically when I listen to music all I hear is the beat, the melody and many times the baseline and stuff like that and I get really excited about that stuff. I'm one of those guys who rarely hear lyrics, whatever they're saying I have no clue.

I don't know if you've ever done this where it's like man, I really want to hear what this song is about so I'm going to listen to the lyrics. I rewind it to the beginning and I start listening and halfway through the first line I'm back to the boom, boom-boom, boom-boom, boom and I was like wait, I was supposed to...and I hit rewind. I can't listen to an entire song and hear lyrics.

Now, the music is amazing in this thing, but I was sucked into the lyrics and it's hip-hop. It's the life of Alexander Hamilton, one of the founding fathers of our nation. It's his life story told as a hip-hop musical in rap form. Many of the songs are super fast and I am listening intently to every single word of every lyric in every song. It was just mind blowing.

Ray: I had the same experience and it was only because you had promoted this musical so heavily. I thought, well, if Cliff is really this into it there has to be something to it. I confess. I have not been the world's greatest fan of rap. I had the same experience and I was so enthralled by the lyrics, by the story, that I kept hitting the rewind on my iPhone because I had to hear what they said and then I had to look up the lyrics. It's an incredible musical.

My son, Sean, and I were discussing recently that we believe God really inspired the creators of this musical. I don't know if they acknowledge that or not, but we believe that. Think about it. It's an art form and I don't want to be stereotypical, but it's typically associated with African-American people and hip-hop music.

Now, that's not exclusive so, I know that. Please don't send me emails saying, Ray, you're so ignorant. I understand that, but please understand I come from a limited world view. I'm somewhat hobbled by my particular skew on life. I'm sure you're not, but I am so I admit it.

It was so unexpected and it's about one of the founding fathers of the United States. Not one of the more famous, more obvious choices and it has inspired millions of people to explore the values that Alexander Hamilton held, the flaws in his character, the reasons he did what he did. To be interested in American history, to me, that is astonishing. No textbook, novel or article in the Wall Street Journal could have accomplished what this musical accomplished.

Cliff: Ray, I don't say these words lightly, it's changed my life. What I mean by that is it has had a profound impact on my life and also my search for my own identity.

Ray: How so?

Cliff: Okay. First of all, I listened to that musical once and I would just like to say a couple things. Since then, by the way, this was what, two months ago maybe that I listened to it for the very first time?

Ray: Right.

Cliff: I would say that I listened to the complete soundtrack from beginning to end no less than six to eight times a week right now.

Ray: Wow!

Cliff: Six to eight times a week and when I'm not listening to it from beginning to end, you know, just random places, I'm listening to it here and there. It's incredible.

Like you said, you listen to it and just try to hear the lyrics. That's one thing. Man, when you sit down with the actual lyrics in front of you and it's actually telling you what characters are actually saying what lines that just blows your mind.

All of a sudden it's like, wow, I thought these lyrics were sung by these three characters in the play throughout the entire thing and I'm like, no, that's a cast of like eight different people. You've got John Laurens. I never knew who John Lawrence was, but I do now.

Ray: Nor did I.

Cliff: Aaron Burr, I really didn't know who he was.

Ray: I thought he was the guy who played Perry Mason.

Cliff: Yeah. I had never heard of Hercules Mulligan before. I've heard of Lafayette. I mean who hasn't heard of him, but I knew nothing about him. I think I probably would have guessed he was a Frenchman, but beyond that, eh. All of these other characters and we could go

on about the different ones, but when I sat down and read the lyrics as I was listening to it it was the most incredible eye-opening experience of the human condition.

By the way, after falling in love with the musical I started researching it on YouTube and found all kinds of White House appearances when Lin-Manuel Miranda was just thinking about this as a concept and he showed up for the Poet Night at the White House. Look up Hamilton White House Poet Night on YouTube and you'll find that video. It's an incredible rendition of the very first song as it was just being written. It's awesome.

Then I started looking at other interviews with Lin-Manuel Miranda and watched all these other videos and I learned that this was all inspired because Lin-Manuel Miranda was on vacation with his wife and in the airport he decides to pick up the biography of Alexander Hamilton by Ron Chernow.

This is over a 1,000 page biography and he said that as he was reading it on vacation it was a page-turner he couldn't down. As he was reading it he was like this has to be told as a musical and it has to be hip-hop. I can just imagine as he's reading it on vacation for the very first time, he's already envisioning what we actually get to enjoy today.

So I'm inspired by just that aspect of it, but that led me say, okay, I want to learn more about this biography. I've enjoyed a handful of biographies before, but now that I know the overview and I see the result of this biography's impression on Lin-Manuel Miranda I'd like to go to see the source material that inspired this and so I went and got the 1,000 plus page biography of Alexander Hamilton. I'm about 12% through it, but I am learning so much. There are so many details about Alexander Hamilton's life.

Why I say that it has had a profound impact on me personally as it relates to my identity is there's just so much about his story that I can relate to about Alexander Hamilton himself. When it comes to daddy issues, boy, are they there; when it comes to just adversity and things just not going right; when it comes to maybe not always being politically correct or maybe not doing things the logical way.

Ray, you know this about me, I'm one of those guys that when I get excited I'm ready to take action. I'm going to go tell the world. Whatever I'm feeling in my heart right now, whether it's right or wrong, I'm ready to go tell the entire world about it. When I make a decision that I'm going to do something, even if I haven't fully thought it through yet, Ray, you know this, I go out and immediately do what I said I'm going to do, even if I might regret it later.

I just want to do things. I'm a mover, I don't want to sit and there are times when that bites me in the butt and I've got great, wise, logical friends who warn me. Sometimes I feel like, man, I shouldn't be like that, but Alexander Hamilton was and you know what? It ended up getting him killed in the end.

He had a profound impact on our world that I think God inspired and I'm like you know what? If Alexander Hamilton can have his weaknesses allow him to achieve the greatness I believe God called him to have in the world, then why should I feel bad about some of my personality traits that "don't line up" with the average person's opinion of how we should behave in this world.

Ray: Well said. I just will say for the record that I've seen average and I don't want to be average and it's got nothing to do with how much money you have or how much recognition you have from other people. Well, I believe it was Emerson or Henry David Thoreau who said massive men lead lives of quiet desperation.

Cliff: Yeah

Ray: That's the average and it's true and I don't want to be there.

Cliff: I want to add a caveat to that, though, and you attribute this to Jim Rohn all the time. You're the average of the five people you do life with the most, right?

Ray: Right.

Cliff: So I am intentional about who I do life with the most. Let me just tell you, the average person that I'm referring to is way above average. I'm talking about the wisdom and the advice of very highly-

successful people that are just mind-blowingly awesome and have achieved greatness in their lives and the people I look up highly to.

When I'm thinking about this group of people, I'm thinking of about five to seven people who have so much more life experience than I do, who have a great deal more wisdom in many areas, who have a great deal more success in areas that I'm looking to achieve success. Yet, while I seek their advice and opinions there are often times when they give me advice and opinions that make logical sense, but I don't want to do it. I don't want to do it that way.

I realize that what I'm about ready to do you're saying it's a huge mistake and I shouldn't do it, but I don't think I could sleep tonight unless I do it anyway. If it's a mistake it's a mistake I'm going to make and then I'm going to say you're right and I'll go back and change. I believe to become the person I need to be in the future, this is a mistake I think I need to make to get there.

Ray: Interesting. Okay, I want to camp on this for a moment because there is a quotation from a book of very wise sayings that says there is wisdom in many counselors. The idea behind the quotation and the context is that an ignorant person doesn't listen to anybody else's advice, but a wise person will take the advice of many people and make a decision.

Let me just say this. We're going to talk about a lot of deep stuff and I'm going to make statements. I'm not saying I have all the answers. For me, this interview is more of a conversation where we're going to just explore some questions that I don't think, Cliff, either of us feel we have 100% the right answer to, but we're looking for that answer.

Cliff: Right.

Ray: Do you think that's correct?

Cliff: I would agree with that. Obviously, I know what you just quoted was a scripture, Ray. You're not sneaking that one by me.

Ray: You let the cat out of the bag.

Cliff: I know. Us Bible thumpers, I'll tell ya. But there is another one as well in Proverbs that says plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisors they succeed.

Ray: Well done, sir. So how do you reconcile that? We're in a mastermind group together and I've seen the example of when you get certain advice and you say, well, thanks guys, but I'm going to do the exact opposite of what you just advised me. How do you reconcile that?

Cliff: Okay. Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisors they succeed. It doesn't say plans fail for lack of counsel, but when you follow the advice of your many advisors every single time to the letter plans succeed. It doesn't say that. It just says that plans lack because you don't have any counsel. You haven't heard any other opinions.

I have a mastermind group, as you know, that I've operated since 2010 and I have some very wise people, some counselors and I seek their advice every six weeks. There are many times I'll go there and, yeah, the advice I'm getting from them it all seems logical and I'm glad I'm hearing it because, man, this is not something I would hear from people who just want to say yes to anything they think I'm excited about.

Ray: Who just want to flatter you and appeal to your vanity, this is not what this group is.

Cliff: Not only that, but I'm also a very passionate and persuasive person.

Ray: Yes, you can sway people very easily.

Cliff: I can go to the average person and say I'm really excited about this and they could think it's a terrible idea, but after a 45-minute conversation over lunch I can convince them why they should be excited about the fact that I'm about ready to do this.

Ray: I've seen it happen.

Cliff: Exactly. So that's where plans fail for lack of counsel and good counsel. The reality is that I do believe I need a mastermind or wise counselors or many advisors around me. I do need their wisdom and

I do need to hear from their experience, but I don't think that scripture is telling me that I have to do exactly what those people are saying. In fact, most times I can't.

If I ask six different people what I should do and three of them say yeah and three of them say no, then what do I do? Even if there are five that say you should not do that and one says you should, where do you go? You have to make a decision.

I think the wise person makes the decision based upon gathering the advice of those many counselors and then moves forward with their decision, given the weight of that advice prior to making the decision.

Ray: And the wise person is open to the idea that they may have made the wrong choice. This may not be true for everybody listening, but when you and I talk we'll often say things like I feel that God is leading me to do this. We've never talked about this, but I make it a policy, I try to anyway, to never say God inspired me to do this thing so I'm going to do it.

That's very definitive and I'm not an egotistical enough person to say I know God told me to do it so I'm just going to go do it. I've had the experience of thinking that's what happened and discovered, no, it was really just my little imaginary voice in my head that told me to do that one.

I think the only way sometimes to know what the right choice is, even in the face of great advice, is if you feel a conviction inside that makes you feel like I believe God is prompting me, leading me to make a different decision than what I've been advised to make. The only way to know for sure is to go forward and see what happens.

Cliff: Yep, that's exactly what I do. There have been many times that I've followed the advice of the many advisors and counselors, let's just say the majority opinion that seems the most logical. There are many times when I've followed their advice, I did what they said in spite of what I felt in my heart and it worked out great. It's like they were right.

There have been times when I've followed their advice and it was against what I felt I should do and it didn't work out. It's like I should have done what I said I was going to do anyway and then the

opposite is true. There are times when I don't follow their advice and it works out great and there are times when I don't follow their advice and I'm like I should have listened.

Here's what I meant by that statement before where I said sometimes I feel like I just need to make the mistake. The reason why I say that is because I look at the last 10 years of my life and, specifically, the previous 10 years. This has been where I started podcasting as a hobby and made the decision that wouldn't it be great if I could do this podcasting thing full time and all of a sudden feeling, wow, I can't think of anything other than doing this full time and then turning it into a business and actually not knowing anything about what I was doing and having all the heartaches.

Ray, I made so many stupid mistakes over the years, including ruining my health during the first year of my business. People have asked me many times in interviews, Cliff, if you could go back to day one and you could change anything you wanted, what's one, two or three things you would do differently? The answer to that question is I hope that I wouldn't do anything differently. The crazy reason for that is because I am who I am today because of all my experiences up to this point.

Today, I have the opportunity to encourage and inspire thousands of people to take their health and physical fitness seriously because they have seen me, a 272 pound, overweight, super obese, heavy guy who was not taking care of himself and have seen over the course of 17 months that man drop 80 pounds and put on 20 pounds of muscle. That's inspiring them more than all the health and fitness gurus in the world who have never had more than 17% body fat in their entire life.

Ray: The first time I ever had a hint of that, remember the TV infomercials for the Soloflex?

Cliff: Yes.

Ray: Some of them, at least, were shot in kind of black and white and the guy was all seined with oil, he was very muscular and carved and doing these exercises. I read an interview with him a couple of years after those ads and at that time they were the most successful

infomercial ever. He said in the interview, you know, I've never worked out a day in my life and I realized, wow!

So that was apparent proof that this guru knew what he was talking about, but he hadn't really every struggled with what everybody watching the commercial was struggling with, which was they were in bad shape, but they didn't know how to get out of it.

I'm not accusing the Soloflex people of anything. I'm just saying that was a very striking moment for me to realize that you need to probably take advice from people who have been through or experienced or overcome what you've overcome. As Dave Ramsey puts it, don't take financial advice from broke people.

Cliff: Yes. The thing is I'm not saying that I am intentionally looking to go out and make more and more mistakes so that I can help more and more people. I'm not saying that.

Ray: Should we sin all the more so that grace may abound?

Cliff: By no means. What I'm saying, though, is that I'm not afraid to fail and try and risk new things. In spite of the fact that I may be given advice about the logical thing that makes the most sense, what I'm willing to do is trust my gut and the things that I do sense or feel that God is calling me to. Again, I get that screwed up sometimes myself. Sometimes it's my own little selfish ambition that's speaking to me and things.

Here's one thing I know. The more I move forward following my heart after seeking the wise counsel of many advisors, doing that first and then making a decision and moving forward, the more I do that and I see which things work out and which things don't work out, I get to the place where I feel like I'm better at discerning that gut feeling.

Ray: Well, that's how you grow. I believe that's the process you go through where you're transforming the way your mind works and that's how you grow in wisdom and stature with God and men.

Cliff: Yeah.

Ray: I want to circle back to this journey with 'Hamilton'. What I heard happen for you is you were inspired by the music, you were fascinated with his life, but it seems to me that it lit a spark of you seeing a bigger vision for your life.

That's how I would describe it. Some people would describe it as you fanning the flames of ambition. I think you know what I'm talking about and I would like to hear from you, your perception of what happened there and where that's led you to.

Cliff: Okay. I want to point out that what happened was it didn't actually ignite a spark, but it was actually fanning the flame of a spark that existed.

Ray: Okay, great.

Cliff: Ever since I started my business, you know, it's the five-year plan, where do you see yourself in five years from now? What's your perfect day five years from now and what does that look like? What are you doing, what kind of income? I've always felt like I need to do that. Maybe we can come back and maybe you'll bring me back to the conversation of why that never worked for me during the first five years or even the second five years of the past 10 years of my business.

Ray: I do want to come back to that because my opinion is that doesn't work for anybody, but go on with your story.

Cliff: Good, because it didn't work for me. To be honest with you, some of the confusion and heartache and everything that I've just recently gone through is because I decided it must be true because so many people I know, trust, care about and who are successful have been telling me that I should have a five-year plan, I should have a life plan, I should have all of these things.

Ray: Yep.

Cliff: So back in December I decided you know what? I'm going to create a life plan. Finally, I'm going to ask myself in 10 to 20 years from now what do I want my life to look like. I ask myself a question. What kind of work will I be doing? How much money will I be making? What

kind of products and services will I be creating? What will I be known for? All of these questions.

I let those questions run through my mind for weeks and weeks never writing a single thing down, not talking to a single person, but Ray I'm always thinking, thinking. I'm listening to people's podcasts and they'll talk about something that gets me to think, oh yeah, I could see myself and then one day I sat in front of my big whiteboard. My whiteboard is about four foot high, six foot wide. I'm showing it to you there.

Ray: Oh, you've got one that rolls.

Cliff: Yeah.

Ray: Okay.

Cliff: Yeah, I have a big classroom whiteboard.

Ray: You have to tell me where you got that. I want one of those.

Cliff: All right. I have this giant whiteboard and I went up there and I'm like, okay, and I wrote out the questions what do I want my life to look like in 10 to 20 years from now and how much money do I want to make. Ray, that's a scary question to ask yourself because you don't want to lowball it. I believe there's power in writing things down.

Ray: Yep.

Cliff: So I asked myself some questions. If I'm allowing myself 10-20 years down the road... You always ask me why is it 10 to 20 years, why? I forced myself to put it so far out so that I can dream big and there's time to achieve that level.

Ray: It seems more possible.

Cliff: Exactly. It's so funny, though, because sometimes I forget that I'm 43 years old. I'm like wait a second, in 20 years I'm 63. I don't believe I'll ever retire, but that's when most people are ready to wind down and all that other stuff.

Ray: Okay, sidebar. There's a guy named Dan Sullivan, I don't know if you've ever heard of him.

Cliff: Heard of him? Yes.

Ray: He runs a company called Strategic Coach and he has a lot of brilliant thoughts, ideas, strategies and tactics. He works with a lot of high-level entrepreneurs. I've never been in one of his programs, but I've read a lot of his books and bought an audio program from him that he doesn't sell anymore. As I understand, it was kind of a summary of his coaching and he doesn't sell that anymore, I think for pretty obvious reasons. If I've got your coaching and audio, then why would I come be part of the real one? Well, the answer is I think you ought to be immersed in that environment, but that's a rabbit trail.

The point of me bringing him up is I think he's 70 years old now and a friend of mine who is in his coaching program told me that Dan just announced to his coaching students that he just came up with his 25-year plan for his life.

Cliff: Nice!

Ray: I think it's different than the kind of plan we were just talking about, but what I like about that is Dan Sullivan has presumed, hey, I'm going to be around 25 years from now and I'm not going to be useless. I've got plans. They may or may not work out. My identify is not dependent upon that, but this is what I'm planning to do, given the opportunity, given the right circumstances and given the presumption that I still believe this is the right thing for me to do 25 years from now.

I love that spirit of optimism, trust and faith that doesn't decide I'm 70, so I'm finished. I love that.

Cliff: I do too.

Ray: I interrupted your story, but I just had to share that because I thought it was so cool and such a novel approach to being 70 years old.

Cliff: I appreciate you sharing that. I'm looking here to see if I can find this episode I did. Actually, can give a URL to your audience?

Ray: Yes, of course.

Cliff: Gosh, there's no easy way to do this one. How about this, we'll do PodcastAnswerMan.com/20years. By the time people hear this I will link that to episode 624 of a podcast I used to do called Pursuing a Balanced Life. I actually shared every single thing I had put on my whiteboard about what I want my life to look like in 10 to 20 years from now.

Ray: Interesting.

Cliff: By the way, there were four questions I asked myself. How much money do I want to be earning in 10 to 20 years from now? What do I want my life to look like, what will I be doing in 10 to 20 years from now? What do I want to be known for? And, number four, 10 to 20 years from now, what is it that drives me to do what I do? Not today, but in 10 to 20 years from now living whatever life that I desire for myself to have.

Ray: La vida loca.

Cliff: I can tell you, often times I still struggle today. Some of what drives me to do what I do today is financial.

Ray: Well, of course.

Cliff: I'll just be bluntly honest. Right now it is a primary drive for me and it has not always been. I realize I have lost touch with my original reason why and I am getting back to it, by the way. That's a whole other conversation about faith and God.

Ray: Well, we're going to have that conversation as we talk here today. I want to show you something. Can you see this?

Cliff: Yes, heart over money?

Ray: It's a heart over a dollar sign. It's a symbol I stole from Aaron Tippin. Those of you who are country music fans will know who I'm talking about. He had a song called 'Love Over Money'. I want to come back to that because I don't necessarily believe it's a choice. At any rate, let's get back to your story where you wrote down your life plan.

Cliff: So I answered the questions what do I want my life to look like, I updated my mission statement and everything like that and I'm like, okay, now I have it. Then what I did, Ray, is say, okay, now it's time to create the plan. You work it backwards. If I'm making this much money, I'm speaking in stadiums in front of this many people, I'm creating these kinds of book, I'm creating this kind of material, it's all of these things and what I know for is way beyond podcasting, okay, now I need to reverse engineer that so I can create a plan.

What do I need to do over the next 20 years to get to that place and then what do I do within the next 10 years? Knowing that, to make that happen, what do I need to do over the next five years and then what do I need to do over the next year? What do I need to do over the next six months? Then I'm like, okay, I've got lots of work to do.

My task list started filling up and all these other things and, to be honest with you, Ray, I got overwhelmed. I got a little bit anxious about it. I'm like I'm not ready for this. I was just overwhelmed. It overwhelmed me to think about what I need to do and I've come to the place, Ray... This is what I love, bringing it back to Hamilton, okay, bringing it back to Hamilton.

Ray: Nice!

Cliff: All right. When Hamilton was a teenage boy on the Island of St. Croix, he was not thinking, how can I get my face on the \$10 bill?

Ray: I love that statement.

Cliff: When he came to America, he was looking at colleges and wanted to get into an accelerated college. What he knew is that he wanted to rise above his station. He wanted to achieve success in his life that would go beyond what "fate" had delivered to him. He wanted to rise above his circumstances.

He did have an ambition and a drive to do things that were significant, but he never once said everything I'm doing I'm going to do so that I can be the first Secretary of the Treasury of the United States of America. He never set that 20-year plan out in the future. Instead, what you'll find is that he simply said I feel called to take everything I'm doing in my life to the next level.

I am on the island, okay, what am I going to do? I'm going to start as a trading charter and there's this hurricane that came and destroyed all of that. His hopes are dashed, right?

Ray: Right.

Cliff: He's like, okay, I'm going to write about this. I've been writing and he writes a story and what happens? He gets the attention of all these people and they're like this kid is amazing. Nobody writes at this age like this. So they take up a collection, they sent him to the States to get an education, they're going to pay his way and that opens up opportunity.

He goes there and he goes you know what? I've been hearing about this revolution over here and I happen to know because I have no noble blood I can never make it in a high class society based upon my birth and the fact I don't have a father, my mother has passed and all that stuff. The only way I'm ever going to be able to achieve anything beyond what is expected from me is if I do something big and the only thing I can think of right now is to become a part of the Revolutionary War and get a position where I can prove myself and make a name for myself there.

It was always the next thing. What's the next thing I should do? What's the next thing I should do? That's what I love about his story. He did not at any point in his journey, until he was offered the position of the Secretary of the Treasury by George Washington, set that out as his original goal.

His goal was to survive as a kid, his goal was to make a living as a teenager and then his goal was to get an education. Then his goal was, okay, I don't care about this education so much. I think they're going to take too long. I can do better on my own. How can I accelerate this?

His next thing was how can I be a part of this Revolution? Not how can I be a part of it, how can I become a leading force in this Revolution. It goes up and up and up and it's always the next thing. He never said how can I jump from where I am to 20 spaces ahead?

Ray: You've made an extraordinary point. Why is that thread of this story so important to you?

Cliff: I think it's an encouragement to me to that it's okay to have a vision of the future that might or might not happen. I think it's okay to have it, but I don't think it's important. Not just as a result of Hamilton. Hamilton is just a part that has confirmed a lot of other things that have been going through my mind in other things.

Ray: Sure.

Cliff: But what has happened is I don't have to have the five-year plan, the 10-year plan or the 20-year plan. All I know is that I feel called to take what I'm doing today and not sit here and just say, ah, this is comfortable, I'm just going to do this. Although, I will say that lately I've come to the place where if an opportunity comes and it fits within what lifestyle I want to lead right now while my kids are still in high school, then I'll decide on opportunity per opportunity, on a case by case basis whether or not I'll pursue that.

Right now I have achieved a level of success where it's okay for me to have a season of life where I have attained this level of success and I ride it out for a few years. By the way, this is just coming to me, Ray. This is a unique thought, breaking news right here on the Ray Edwards Show.

Ray: All right, stand by, folks. Here it comes.

Cliff: Often times we look at a biography of somebody like a founding father like Alexander Hamilton and we think of his life of a couple points on the map of his timeline. He's born, he's young age, he's teenage, he's in his twenties, college, Revolutionary War, gets married, Secretary of State.

He immediately jumps from this to this to this. We forget the fact that he had weeks, months and years where he was just doing mundane,

routine, ordinary tasks that weren't all that glamorous. Does that make sense?

Ray: It makes total sense. I should explain something. Earlier I made a comment about the whiteboard and people probably wonder, why did you say that? Well, Cliff and I are actually doing this interview, this conversation via Skype and we're looking at each other video, but you're only hearing the audio.

I'm now going to explain another visual. Cliff may wonder why Ray keeps looking to his left. It's because I'm looking up some references I want to share that are pertinent to what you're saying.

Cliff: By the way, share those and I just want to share with you GSPN.tv/whiteboard.

Ray: Perfect.

Cliff: Ray, when you go there and anybody else that goes there, make sure that on Amazon you go through and look for Cliff Ravenscraft and my written review. It's important for you to read all of the updates to my written review.

Ray: Ah, because your opinion about the whiteboard has changed over time.

Cliff: Well, within the first 45 days of ordering. The first one was damaged, the second one was damaged and I think the third one was damaged. Read it, overall I'm very satisfied. Actually, just like Angelica was not.

Ray: She was never satisfied.

Cliff: Never satisfied. Anyway, there is a little dent on one side and I finally gave up, but check it out. Read all my reviews GSPN.tv/whiteboard. Whiteboard are awesome. Now, share what these visuals are.

Ray: First, I want to go back to what you were saying. You were talking about how Hamilton did not start with this 20-year vision that I'm going to be a founding father and I'm going to have my face on the

\$10 bill, I'm going to be all these things that he ended up being. He was just doing the next right thing.

This is why I think having a plan, a goal we're aimed at is important. It's probably important that it is somewhere off in the future, but I personally have come to believe, only recently, that that goal needs to be a little bit ambiguous. Otherwise, we get married to an outcome and we become obsessed with getting exactly what we decided we wanted.

I think the purpose of a goal is like you have a map, you have a chart and you're crossing the ocean. You have a general direction you want to go, but you need to be flexible enough to follow the compass, follow the stars and be sensitive to the weather and what you encounter along the way because that may change your plan.

If you slavishly follow a point on a map and you don't take into account what happens along the way and how you're changed, how the sea changes, how your vessel changes, how your crewmates change, well, you do, you actually miss the important part, which is not the destination but the journey.

Now, I'm going to share something with you I've never told you. Years ago, I was inspired by a musical to the point of obsession and it changed my life and I came at it from a slightly different direction. Up until that point I had been so obsessed with external success. Frankly, it was the only thing, practically, that mattered to me. It was above God. It was above my family. It was above my own health. I didn't realize this at the time, but I was trying to prove something.

I won't go too deep into this. I don't believe in spending lots of time in introspection and thinking about what happened to me when I was five years old that made me... I think it's good if you can see those things and recognize, but not get married to the idea, well, that happened, so that's who I am now and I'm stuck there. I realized I was trying to prove something to my father and that was I'm worthy of your pride. That was my deal.

The musical that changed my life was 'Les Miserables'

Cliff: I love 'Les Mis'.

Ray: I listened to it, just as you have with Hamilton, over and over and over again. I was obsessed with the lyrics, with the story, with reading the book, with understanding why Victor Hugo wrote the book, what he was trying to get across, what was his message, what inspired all those events. Those spoke to my soul in a way. That musical was responsible for unlocking inside me the realization that what really matters is loving people as Christ loves us.

What I wanted to be known for used to be a long list. I want to be known as a bestselling author. I want to be known as making millions of dollars. I want to be known as impacting millions of lives. I want to be recognized. My list of goals was like I want to have this many New York Times bestsellers, I want to be on this many TV screens, I want to have this much of an audience. Those were my goals, Cliff. I want to have this much money, that's how I will know I am successful.

This is what I've never shared. I've never shared about 'Les Mis' and the effect it had on my life and I've also never shared with anybody publically what it is I want to be known for, but I'm going to share it for you now and this is not for anybody else. This is the conclusion I came to. I'm not prescribing, I'm just describing. I want to be known as a person that when people encountered me they felt seen, they felt heard and they felt loved.

That's my external politically-correct way of describing it. My internal representation of that is I want them to feel like they've encountered the presence of Jesus. To some people that will sound incredibly obnoxiously egotistical, but to me it's exactly the opposite.

Cliff: Yeah.

Ray: I used to want to be known for being famous and rich. I want to come back to your story, but I just feel like this weaves into the conversation we're having. The more access I've gained to all those things I used to want, the less interested in them I am.

Cliff: Say that statement one more time.

Ray: Let me rephrase it slight.

Cliff: No, say it exactly like you did. It was profound, but I want to hear it again.

Ray: The more access I have gained to the things I used to say I want, the less I find that I desire them.

Cliff: Absolutely, I agree with that.

Ray: I'm the least interested in being known, people knowing my name, the least interested I've ever been. I'm the least interested in being in front of large crowds than I've ever been. I'm the least interested in being mega rich for the purposes I used to be interested in it than I've ever been. Yet, I find that I have more access to those things now than I ever had and I don't think that's accidental.

Cliff: Right. Wow! I love that. I love that. You hear my talk about my friend, David Foster, all the time. For those listening, David Foster was a pastor who had a profound impact in my life. He passed away a couple years ago. He preached his very last sermon. He had preached his sixth sermon of a six-part series just hours before he passed away.

Ray: Wow!

Cliff: Yeah. The title of the series was The Six People You'll Meet on Your Way to Heaven. It's all about what's life going to be like when you're gone, what kind of income will you have made and all this other stuff. One of the things he says, I think it was in his final sermon that he preached just hours before he died, I don't know the exact words, but it was something like this.

More than anything else, what people will remember about you when you're dead is not how many things you had, how many things you do, what success you achieved, all of those other things that you think of. What people will remember about you once you're dead is how you made them feel.

Ray: Wow! That's it. It's funny because you've talked to me about David many times. You've never told me how many books he sold, how many people went to his church, how well known he was, how many

people listened to his podcast, all you've ever shared with me is how he made you feel.

Cliff: That's it. I've never said anything else about him, other than how he made me feel. He made me feel loved. He made me feel grateful. He made feel... Think about this, Ray. Think about anybody you know that's dead. What's the first thing that comes to your mind?

Ray: It's that. I've never really thought through this before, but I'm just thinking through people I've known, some of whom I've loved, some of who I will just admit I didn't and they've passed on and all I can remember about them, really, my first thought is how they made me feel.

Cliff: That's the first thing.

Ray: I can dig for other stuff, but what really left the impression on me was how they made me feel.

Cliff: Yep.

Ray: Okay, I see now by how much time we've invested in this conversation that this is going to be a two-parter. So I'm going to engage in a little broadcast tomfoolery now and I'm going to set up a teaser for part two. The teaser is we've got so much more to talk about in terms of Hamilton, your journey with that, what you're about now, what you feel like you're headed for now and where you're going and it applies directly to people listening.

I think every one of us struggles, whether we admit it or not, with this internal battle about wanting to be certain about how our life is going to turn out and wanting some variety and excitement in our life and the struggle between wanting to be loved and to love and wanting to be significant. We struggle with these things and I think what you are experiencing and what you've been sharing with people speaks directly to that.

I also want to entice you to listen to next week's second part of this conversation because after everything we just said I'm going to share why I think it's important that you make as much money and as much impact as possible. I know that may seem impossible to

reconcile right now, but I think there is a way. I could be wrong, but I'll share that with you and so much more when we continue.

Ray: How about that?

Sean: That was pretty sweet. You've got to love that guy.

Ray: You have to stay tuned until next week to get the answers to all the questions.

Sean: That's right.

Ray: Including did Gandalf have a backup plan.

Sean: Have a backup plan.

Ray: Fly, you fools!

Sean: All right. Well, if you would like the transcript for this show you can go to RayEdwards.com/232 and if you found the show helpful, please consider subscribing using the Apple podcast app and downloading. Every time we find a new little piece of what helps our ratings, we just keep appending it to the instructions of how they can help.

Ray: I wonder if we offered prizes to people who subscribe and download.

Sean: At some point our closing shtick on this thing is going to be like if you found this show helpful, please consider subscribing using the Apple app. Download it, then listen to the first 30 seconds, then hashtag...

Ray: Every Tuesday. How else can we game the system?

Sean: Anyway, seriously, if you found the show helpful or you do, please subscribe using the Apple podcast app.

Ray: Yes.

Sean: We're on Stitcher.

Ray: Stitcher, yeah.

Sean: Yeah. Anything else?

Ray: Yes, there's a quote that I feel is applicable to this week's episode from Zig Ziglar who said if you aim at nothing you will hit it every time.

Sean: Deep.

Ray: Until the next time, may God continue to bless you in ways that you cannot even possibly imagine, think or ask for. Peace to your house.

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