



## Ray Edwards Show, Episode 288

### How to Build a Business Around a Podcast

**Ray Edwards:** *Ray Edward Show, Episode 288: How to Build a Business Around a Podcast.* An interview with the podcast answer man himself, Cliff Ravenscraft.

**Automated Voice:** *The Ray Edwards Show, move your destiny by design start, run, and grow your own internet based business, and create the life of your dreams. You can do this is The Ray Edwards Show.*

**Intro Music:** ♪ *Let's change the world and watch your business grow, welcome to The Ray Edwards Show. The Ray Edwards Show* ♪

**Ray:** This week's episode of *The Ray Edwards Show* is a little different because we're going to get right to the interview. I believe that our normal segments, the tip of the week, spiritual foundations, et cetera, are actually contained in this interview. And I didn't want to edit any of the interview out, I wanted you to get the whole thing just as we experienced it. Let's dive right in as Sean and I interview Cliff Ravenscraft. Cliff, so excited to have you here. Welcome, my friend.

**Cliff Ravenscraft:** Ray and Sean, I am so excited. I know I've been on the show before but, Sean, I'm glad to have an opportunity where I'm on *The Ray Edwards Show* with both of you guys.

**Sean:** Well, let's hold that. You might not be so thankful.

[laughter]

**Ray:** Let's see how you feel about it later.

**Sean:** My father's gotten used to me with putting out the off-color commentary jokes.

**Ray:** Not really off color off-color.

**Sean:** Not off-color, no.

**Ray:** We edit all that out.

**Sean:** Yes, no. I meant, throw him off his game.

**Ray:** Like you've already done.

**Sean:** Yes, like I'm already doing, I'm just a disruptive force, Cliff.

**Cliff:** I'm looking forward to the challenge.

**Ray:** If we were the X-men, he's like our Loki.



**Cliff:** Nice. I'm going to be jumping into the Neil Gaiman game, and however you pronounce his last name; *The Norse Mythology Book* one of these days.

**Ray:** Oh, my goodness, that's a big one.

**Sean:** Isn't it?

**Ray:** Gaiman is a genius. Okay, let's jump into what we actually came here to talk about today which is, how to build a business around the podcast. The reason I wanted to talk to you about this cliff is, I get this question a lot. The podcast is central to my business, and we're coming up on-- soon, it'll be 300 weeks in a row we've done the show.

**Cliff:** Wow, congratulations.

**Ray:** Thank you.

**Sean:** Just 65 more weeks which compared to the other 300 doesn't seem like much, but that's like a year and three months.

**Ray:** A year of weeks.

**Sean:** We'll have a year-- like you could listen to an episode of *The Ray Edwards Show* every day for one year straight.

**Ray:** And I recommend that you do.

**Cliff:** I bet you there are people who actually do that.

**Ray:** I know. I have people, new subscribers, fairly frequently will come on board and say, "I heard one episode and I went back and listened to every one of them." I'm like--

**Cliff:** I have heard that come up several times from people. I would say over the years I have, at least-- I just published my 502 episode of *The Cliff Ravenscraft Show*. This is not an exaggeration, I would say it's a minimum of 100 plus people who have said, "Cliff, I found you within the last couple of months and I've listened to every episode you've produced." That's just within the last 200 episodes.

**Ray:** Wait, how many episodes?

**Cliff:** Well, *The Cliff Ravenscraft Show* which is also known as *Podcast Answer Man* has 502 episodes.

**Ray:** On average how long are those?

**Cliff:** On average an hour a piece.



**Ray:** If it's 502 hours and there are 24 hours in a day, that means there are 41.8 days of like just straight *Cliff Ravenscraft Show*. So someone in the last few months has said that to you?

**Cliff:** Yes.

**Ray:** That's 42 days. So in the last three months, which is 90 days, they're saying half of their days-- [laughs].

**Cliff:** There are people who are long hours truck drivers, there are people who sit and do data entry--

**Ray:** Totally. To think about it in that context, though. To realize that there's 41 straight days of your material and people have listened to that, that's incredible.

**Cliff:** That I believe is a direct tie in to what we're talking about here today--

**Sean:** Well, that was my sneaky segway.

**Cliff:** That the power of a podcast for getting your message out in promoting the business efforts that you have, the products and services that you have to offer people. What podcasting allows you to do, I believe, better than any other platform out there is it allows people to come to know, like, and trust you by hearing your voice consistently as a regular source of influence in their lives so much so that they literally feel like you are a close friend.

**Ray:** Do you ever have this thing where people come up and say things to you that freak you out that they know them, and you realize they know that because of the podcast?

**Cliff:** I've been doing this for almost 12 years now so it doesn't freak me out today, but, yes, I do remember that phenomenon in the early days of my podcasting journey.

**Ray:** Well, let's back up. I want to go back to the early days because you didn't start this thinking, "I'm going to build a business empire with my podcast."

**Cliff:** No, I did not. In fact, I had no ambition to do anything other than what I was doing at the time which was-- at the time I was doing ministry as unpaid, but yet very much full time associate pastor in a small Nazarene church at the time.

**Ray:** They're like those unpaid pastors.

**Cliff:** Yes. For my full time gig, I worked in a family-run insurance agency, an independent insurance agency, where I was licensed to sell auto home life and health and commercial insurance. That family agency was owned by my mom and dad, and it had been in the family since my grandfather started it back in 1939. I was next in line to take over the insurance office. Extremely successful as far as the



amount of sales that I did and being on the leader boards. I thought, "Hey, my future, as far as a career, has been carved out for me, it's a paid." When you talk about job security, the chance of me losing my job were pretty slim to none.

When I started podcasting, I wasn't looking to create a business, I wasn't looking to escape anything, but instead I wanted something to just occupy my free time as a person who loved geeky technology stuff. Also, who happened to have fallen in love with listening to audio podcasts. It was when I started watching a television show with my wife and jumping in on a passion she had for the TV show *Lost* that I discovered, "Hmm, why don't I create a podcast about this TV show?" In fact, how it started was, my wife was watching the first season of *Lost* on television. I never really understood why, I had heard it was a scripted version of *Survivor*.

**Sean:** Oh, my gosh really?

**Cliff:** Yes, that's how they promoted it before it launched, and I'm like, "Why would anybody watch this scripted version of *Survivor*?"

**Sean:** I thought *Survivor* was scripted.

**Ray:** That's another discussion.

**Cliff:** She would be watching this every week and I'm like not allowed to talk to her, walk in the room, and make too much noise when the show is on. During the finale of the first season, I sat down on the couch with my laptop, she's watching this thing and then all of a sudden there's all this mysterious stuff happening. There's these two guys that are uncovering or unearthing this underground hatch and a light emanates from below it out of nowhere, then there's these people escaping on a raft. I hope I'm not spoiling anything.

**Sean:** Well, it's a little late to spoil it.

**Ray:** If people haven't seen it by now--

[crosstalk]

**Cliff:** They can fall. There's these people escaping on a raft and it looks like they're being rescued and all over a sudden they're approached by the guy named Mr. Friendly who says, "We're going to have to take the boy."

**Sean:** Oh, man, I forgot about that.

**Cliff:** They take the boy and leave the people on the raft and it's like, "What is going on in the show?" I became intrigued, I got stuck into this mystery, and I went back and started watching the first season by myself. Actually no, Stephanie and I watched it together. I went online to see if I could learn a little bit more about this. I said, "I'm already in the podcast. I wonder if there are any other podcast out there?"



There were five podcasts devoted to the TV show *Lost* including one that was created by Damon Lindelof and Carlton Cuse, the executive producers of the show itself. I subscribed to all five of them, listened to every episode every week of all five shows. Plus, I was on the online forums uncovering all the different things that were hidden clues or Easter eggs hidden in the show that average casual viewers may have missed. I started developing theories, I started blogging about it on my blog that I've been doing.

**Sean:** Did you have like a wall with pictures, newspaper articles, and yarn linking things together and a map to the island? Because I want to think that you did.

**Cliff:** Virtually, I had that on my blog. I was doing blog posts and I created this thing called the Thomas theory, and I'm absolutely certain that I was right about it. I came up with this entire *Lost* theory. I had screenshots side by side proving every little thing, audio sound clips and all that stuff. I recorded a three and a half minute audio clip sharing my theory and why I knew

**Cliff:** I was right about Thomas and the fact that Claire's boyfriend had once been on the island, and why the people on the island wanted this baby.

I shared this in a three and a half minute audio clip that I recorded myself and then I sent via email to Ryan and Jen Ozawa in Hawaii who did the *Lost Transmission Podcast*. They played my feedback on their show. By the way, I gave myself a little plug. If you guys want to see my screen captures and all the other things that I've talked about here, you can go to [ravenscraft.org](http://ravenscraft.org) which was my blog at the time. My blog traffic went through the roof. I used to get 70 people a month that were on my site, it went to thousands per month on site.

**Ray:** Wow.

**Cliff:** In fact, EW.com which is *Entertainment Weekly*, did an entire article on EW.com linking back to my blog.

**Ray:** That didn't hurt.

**Cliff:** No.

**Sean:** I'm sure that gave you a nice little boost.

**Cliff:** That gave me a little boost as well. Then Ryan and Jen-- actually it was Ryan who said, "Cliff, man, people are giving us tones of feedback about your theory. Man, have you ever thought about doing your own *Lost* podcast? You should do one." I'm like, "Wait a second, that's an idea." I did start to get some other feedback, a lot of comments on my blog and people say, "Cliff, you should do your own *Lost* podcast. And that's how this all got started.

**Sean:** Wow.



**Ray:** How long did you do the *Lost* podcast?

**Cliff:** Oh, I think four or five years. We started in December 2005. It December 16th 2005, I believe was the first episode. We went to June 12th 2010, we did 261 weekly updates.

**Ray:** Oh, my gosh.

**Cliff:** It was 261 episodes, sometimes we did two episodes a week.

**Sean:** Cliff, I've always known that you're a geeky guy, but this, I did not know this side of you. It makes me happy.

**Ray:** Now, I don't want to go into this on this show right now but I want to talk about this later. Do you have a complete explanation of what happened in the last episode?

**Cliff:** I do not.

**Ray:** Oh, I do. I know what happened.

**Cliff:** Let's see here, episode 259 is a series finale initial reaction. We actually recorded it live in front of a studio audience, people from all over the world who came to watch this with us. Then episode 260 and 261 were the finale review Part One and Part Two. Those can all be found at [lostpodcast.com](http://lostpodcast.com). I have not listened to them since they were produced in June of 2010, but at [lastpodcast.com](http://lastpodcast.com) those are the most recent three episodes shown on the website.

**Ray:** Okay, we'll let that go for now. That's another discussion. So how did you go from doing the *Lost* podcast and you got successful? A lot of it was your thorough geekiness, I know that and your personality. You and Steph did the podcast together, so there's that. How did you go from that to being the Podcast Answer Man? There had to be some transition that happened there.

**Cliff:** Here's what happened, the TV show *Lost* had all sorts of different themes. There was an episode called *Tabula Rasa* which is starting over with a clean slate. There was an episode titled *All Good Cowboys have daddy issues*. Ray, I personally in my own life have some daddy issues.

**Ray:** What?

**Cliff:** Yes. There was episodes on there that talked about finances. There was episodes that were all about faith. In fact, there was an entire episode all about baptizing a child. There was an episode titled *The 23rd Psalm*, where there was a guy who pretended to be a priest. Again, spoiler, sorry. A guy who pretended to be a priest. He actually quotes the 23rd Psalm, but actually reverses two of the lines which actually changes the meaning of the actual Psalm.



The reason why I say that they had all of these themes: Religious themes, family themes, just human development and psychology themes. They had all these themes on the show which allowed my wife and I to get behind the microphone and talk from our hearts what we think. Talk about our world view. Talking about our experiences.

We wouldn't just talk about what's going on the show, but we would talk about how we identify with those characters. As a result of sharing our own personal stories, people started to send us email. They said, "Hey, Cliff, Stephanie, I loved what you said could you talk more about that marriage conference that you went to?" I had somebody say, "Hey, Cliff, can you tell us a little bit more about living debt free? What the heck? I've never heard of anybody who's literally completely debt free, and you guys are pursuing debt free. Talk more about that on your podcast." The reality is this, this is a podcast devoted to the TV show *Lost*. You can ask this as a follow up question if you're interested, but we happen to have tens of thousands of subscribers within the first 10 episodes. That's not going to happen for everyone, but it just happened to us, and you can ask a follow up if you want. Anyway, because we had such--

**Ray:** Hold on. I do want to ask, how did that happen?

**Cliff:** Okay. I told you there were already five podcast devoted to the TV show *Lost*, right? By the time I started my first episode devoted to the TV show *Lost*, there was four of those podcasters which were enthusiasts, they weren't the official. But the four of those podcasts, they joined together and created something called the Lost Podcast Network. All the individual podcasts had their own podcast feeds, but they also created one feed on the service called blogger, which was eventually purchased by Google. They gave access to all the independent podcasters who had a podcast about *Lost*, and we would all take the episode we put in our own feed and we would put it in the blogger feed as well. So people out there could subscribe to a single podcast feed that had every episode of every podcast that was devoted to the TV show *Lost*.

**Ray:** Wow.

**Cliff:** Those people had already developed an audience of tens of thousands of people which is why we had such a large audience right out of the gate.

**Ray:** Interesting. One of the thing I know that I want to make sure we share, did you or did you not have Ho Hey on your show?

**Cliff:** We had Ho Hey who called and left us feedback on the show. In fact, I have proof, you want to hear it?

**Ray:** Yes.

**Cliff:** All right, so check this out. Well, click this.





**Caller:** Got a lock to this line secure.

**Receiver:** Line secure go ahead.

**Caller:** Hey, Cliff Stephanie [unintelligible 00:16:57].

**Cliff:** All right, there you go that's all you need.

**Ray:** Wow. Okay, so I interrupted your story.

**Cliff:** That's fine. Going back, we had this podcast devoted to this TV show, and we had lots of listeners and these people are die hard *Lost* fans. Not many of them are diehard Cliff and Stephanie fans. We had just started, nobody knows who cliff and Stephanie are. Who cares about Cliff and Stephanie, this couple in Northern Kentucky. We're here for the *Lost* content, we're here for the Easter eggs, were here for help in being the king of the water cooler. That's why we put in to this podcast.

That's what we wanted to give them and we couldn't come back the next week and say, "Hey, so and so wants us to talk a little bit more about living debt free." No, we couldn't go off topic like that. At first, I was trying to respond to every single one of those people via email. I was spending hours every week responding to every question via email.

Again, remember just a little glimpse of what I said earlier, I'm a pastor at the time, I believe in Christian ministry. I want to help serve and encourage and inspire people and help people become more of who God created them to be. So I'm taking all of this feedback, or all of these email, and I want to personally serve and help inspire each of these individuals who are emailing me, but it became so much, Ray, that I couldn't keep up with it.

I started to think, what if I created a second podcast that allowed me to talk about anything and everything I wanted. So I created a second podcast, at the time it was called, *My Crazy Life*. Eventually that became a podcast called *Pursuing a Balanced Life*. I just rebranded it and I'm looking here real quickly, I did over 600 episodes of that podcast. The very beginning, episode number three *Kim's Email* was the title.

*Kim's Email* was a girl named Kim, as you might imagine, who emailed me and says, "Cliff, I heard you and your wife talk about the fact that you believe in Jesus Christ and I have a question for you. And I don't mean this in a cynical way or anything like that, but I'm very curious, how did you come to place your faith in Jesus as a living God that is involved with you personally in your daily life? That just doesn't make logical sense to me and so I'm just curious, how can you describe how you came to faith?"

I wrote back, and of course, a lot of people have been asking me similar questions via email. So I said, "Kim, I have a question for you, do you mind if I read your email in a podcast episode and answer you there. Because this question is coming up a lot and I would love to just record it once and allow everyone to hear my response to

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that particular question. Then I could link back to that episode as often as I need to in the future." I said, "If you'd like, I can completely remove your name and any details that you shared in your email that could tie back to you so that you could remain anonymous if you'd like?" She goes, "I would love for you to do a podcast episode based on my question or my email." And she goes, "Please, include my name." So that episode was titled *Kim's Email*.

I did an entire episode, I read her email. I shared my testimony, if you will, of how I came to faith and my experience up to that point of my life in faith, and I hit stop and I published it. As soon as I hit publish. I sent a link to her and said, "It's in the podcast feed, here's a link to it." She wrote me back a couple hours later, the email said, "Cliff, I just got to let you know I had to leave work because I listened to your podcast and I began crying uncontrollably. I want to let you know that I have given my life to Jesus Christ. I want to know what's next".

**Ray:** Wow.

**Cliff:** That was the beginning of what I knew was going to radically change my life when it came to what had fallen in my lap, this thing called podcasting.

**Ray:** Your church must have been very excited and wanted you to help them create a podcast, and then must have been about your worldwide ministry that you just launched. Is that how it worked out?

**Cliff:** Not so much, no. In fact, you're leading me into a story of how the podcast became a little bit more than a hobby, it became an obsession of mine as far as when it comes to the amount of time that I was spending doing it. When I first started podcasting as a hobby, I was probably working about 50 to 60 hours a week at the insurance office, and I was probably putting in about 10, maybe, 15 hours a week into ministry related stuff: Meetings, leadership, small group leadership, all that stuff.

What happened was, over a very short period of time, we'll say a couple months, I started to really ratchet down the amount of time I spent at work. I never got below 40 hours a week spent physically at work, although mentally I was there a whole lot less than that over time. I think you get where I'm coming from. When it came to church activities, I started to cut back the number of hours that I spent there as well.

**Cliff:** Bad Christian.

**Sean:** Yes, totally.

**Cliff:** What happened was, they had some desires for me to be a part of the official structure of the church. They wanted me--

**Ray:** To work more?

**Cliff:** By this time, I had actually left the Nazarene church and went over to a non-denominational church. They wanted me to be a deacon because in this particular



denomination you couldn't become a voting elder until you spent at least six months as a deacon. Those are the requirements of a deacon in that church were not in line with my spiritual gifts so I told them no, flat out.

They began to question my priorities, they said, "Cliff, you told us when we brought you in here, that you felt God's calling on your life is to full time ministry and maybe one day that you would like, if the opportunity came, to become a full-time pastor. You would take that in a heartbeat and you'd leave your career in insurance." But here we're not seeing that level of commitment to this vision because it seems to me like you've got this hobby that's pulling you away. You're sitting there spending all those hours and you tell us you can't do this because you have this podcasting stuff you're doing on the side."

That began a little bit of a conversation. Then also, in another meeting, they were talking about the fact that, "Hey, we've heard about this podcasting all these big Christian radio broadcasters are now putting their radio shows out there as a podcast and some of the big huge mega church." I was in a small mega church at this time, but the really big mega churches were putting their celebrity pastors out, their sermons out as a message. They were talking about the fact that they'd like to do this because they were very much involved in turning their approach to ministry and to following the biggest and most successful corporations in America and all this other stuff.

I told them, I said, "Hey, guys, if you're interested in this podcasting stuff, I I could create a podcast feed and we can take the messages here and put them out as a podcast". They said, "Cliff, thank you so much for your input and your offer, but when we do this we want to make sure we do this with excellence."

**Ray and Sean:** Ooh.

**Cliff:** At that point in time, I had been podcasting for about a year and a half. I was already producing a total of four different podcasts on a weekly basis. Some of those podcasts like the *Pursuing a Balanced Life* which formerly known as *My Crazy Life*, I was doing that already on a daily basis. I was doing a another podcast called *The Almost Daily Devotional*. I had quite a bit of experience, and I was boning up my skills, if you will, when it comes to podcasting. That shocked me when they said that statement.

The other thing is when I made that offer they said "In fact, we want to talk to you about your commitment level to this vision," and they suggested that I might want to pray about where my priorities are. They noticed that I've been spending a lot of time here and there doing all this other stuff. They said, "It seems to me that you don't have enough hours in the day to go around to do all the stuff that you're doing, and you might want to pray about where you could cut back."

Here is the thing, I would tell you, I had the utmost respect for the-- I don't have it today, and you could probably tell in the tone of my voice. I have zero respect for



spiritual authority these days. But I had the utmost respect for the spiritual authority that these men had over my life. Those words cut through my heart in a very big way.

**Ray:** Let me just clarify. When you say you have no respect for spiritual authority, you mean you have no respect for people trying to use spirituality to control you?

**Cliff:** Thank you very much. That is very good clarification, exactly what you just said. Which is hidden under the guise of spiritual authority, it's what some people call. Anyway, what happened was--

**Sean:** Spiritual manipulation.

**Cliff:** Exactly. I was all open to their spiritual manipulation. I was like, "Wow, I need to check myself before I wreck myself." I went away in quiet contemplation and with a lot of angst and anxiety and all this other stuff. I just began to feel really guilty about podcasting.

**Ray:** Which is all those feelings are what a relationship with Jesus leads you to: Anxiety, guilt.

**Cliff:** That's what spiritual manipulation is supposed to produce in you.

**Cliff:** Exactly, they were doing their job well. I came away from my time of contemplation that, "Okay, it doesn't make sense, something's got to go. Obviously, I know for a fact God is calling me to ministry, and there's no doubt about that. Yes, this podcasting has opened up some stuff, but it's not paying the bills and it's not responsible. There's no opportunity for me right now financially to be generating income from my ministry efforts. So I need my day job and insurance, insurance can't go. If I'm ever going to have an opportunity to do full time ministry, I happen to be in a position that they're wanting to lead me in that direction down that path. They're clearing the next portion of the path for me. So, the only logical thing is for me to stop podcasting." I made the decision that I would stop podcasting and I stopped cold turkey.

**Ray and Sean:** Woo.

**Cliff:** I did.

**Sean:** Man, those spiritual manipulators, they were really good.

**Cliff:** Well, I figured you know I can't be tempted to continue to do this. It is a distraction from what-- it was it was clearly a distraction from being the husband and father that I should be, the employee. Let me just tell you, I was already feeling a little bit of guilt without any manipulation from spiritual leaders. I was already not feeling so good about how much time I was spending at the office not thinking about things related to the office, but instead, thinking about things related to the podcast. I



want to say, it's just not the podcast, but the community of people that I had the opportunity to serve related to those podcasting efforts.

**Ray:** Clearly your hiatus from podcasting did not last or you wouldn't be here talking with us?

**Cliff:** What happened was I-- that week, Ray, was the first week in my life that I could ever physically remember being depressed. Like in the deepest darkest nights of the soul depression. The very next day I went to work and I had no motivation. I could barely get out of bed, and as soon as I got to work, which I was late that first day, the only thing I could think of all day long was how many hours before I can go home and go to bed. Not how many hours before I could go home and see my family, no, it was how many hours can I go before I can get rid of this pain that's inside of my heart right now from what's missing.

**Ray:** That's good depression is one of the fruits of the spirit.

**Cliff:** Yes [chuckles]. That actually went on day after day and after one week I said, "Forget it. No, I have to podcast. I'm firing the podcast up." I went back and I started podcasting. I was very open and transparent in my podcast about what I was feeling. I went in the next week to those spiritual authority figures in my life, and I said, "Guys, I have to thank you so much." They said, "Yes." I said, "Yes. You guys really opened up my eyes to the fact that I had really lost sight of God's vision and calling of where he wants me to devote my life to serving and helping others through Christ."

**Ray:** Oh, they were so excited about what you were saying.

**Sean:** Yes, man you were about to pull the rug out from underneath them?

**Cliff:** Yes. I sat there, I said, "There's no question in my mind, there are more things that I have committed to at this point in time than I have time for and something has to go. And it's for that reason that, number one, I am resigning from all official positions within this ministry, and my wife and I and our family are leaving this congregation effective immediately."

**Sean:** Oh, my gosh. How did that go over?

**Ray:** Yes, how did they take that?

**Cliff:** They did not agree with me but they were also-- I had a good relationship with these people. Obviously, they thought that I was making a terrible mistake and an irresponsible--

**Sean:** Clearly, you have.

**Cliff:** Yes. I was making irresponsible decision that they did not agree with, but at the same time would you-- if somebody had that mindset and would actually make that



decision, do you really want to keep them on? Probably not. So I think they were happy to see me go. That ended that relationship, but that ramped up my podcasting efforts.

The other thing I will tell you is this did not-- everything we're talking about, the one week without podcasting was a real time one week, but all this other stuff, the angst and all the going back. I said it is as if it was two conversations, but it was really weeks, if not months, of conversations, if you guys follow where I'm coming from.

**Sean:** Yes, we get it.

**Ray:** Because I want to make sure we cover How to Build a Business Around a Podcast, I would strongly recommend anybody who's interested in hearing the full detail of the story plus your wife's perspective, listen to the episode you just recently did where you tell this whole story, where can I find that?

**Cliff:** It's at [podcastanswerman.com/500](http://podcastanswerman.com/500), we did our 500 episodes where we recounted our origin story of how we got started in podcasting.

**Sean:** Dad, you you've done a podcast with your wife, my mother, it's a couple weeks ago. Cliff just did one, I guess, I need to do one.

**Ray:** Well, you need to get a wife.

**Sean:** Oh, wait, yes, that's true. Another reason I need to get a wife so I can do a podcast episode with her?

**Ray:** If you know somebody who wants to be Sean's wife you can send an email to [support@rayedwards.com](mailto:support@rayedwards.com).

**Sean:** Those are few. I am an interesting peanut.

**Ray:** Oh, boy, you scared me for a second there.

[laughter]

**Cliff:** The thing is, if you want to pick up the story and actually hear a little bit more before, and obviously what happened after that, check out [podcastanswerman.com/500](http://podcastanswerman.com/500).

The quicker answer to the question of how did I get into this where I turned it into a business was, well, over the first 18 months, I had produced hundreds of podcast episodes. We're talking, probably at that time, maybe five or six different podcast individual shows. I had lots of people from lots of different niche focuses, whether it be faith, technology, television shows, or whatever. Out of all of these different podcasts, there is a very small percentage of people who are listening who said, "Cliff, I want to know how to create a podcast, can you teach me?"



At first, I would just get on the phone and talk to people and answer their questions for free. Again, this was a hobby for me. Very early on people said, "Cliff, you should charge people for this. I would have paid money for this." I'm like, "Really? Why don't you pay me some money for that?"

**Ray:** "Where is your checkbook?"

**Cliff:** I did not say those words to them, but I thought them. I had enough people say those words to me that probably the eighth or ninth time I actually set down to tell somebody how to podcast or when they asked me how to podcast I said, "Sure I can teach you." I said, "It's 50 bucks an hour." They said, "Sign me up." I would get on there and I would teach them. Somebody said, "Hey, Cliff, you should do a webinar. I think you could charge people for a webinar to do this."

I did a webinar. I was a 90-minute webinar on how to launch a podcast. I charged 150 dollars per person. This is way before GoToMeeting really got popular, and it was super expensive back then. I did not want to spend a whole lot of money. I used some of these services that limited you to 12 people but you could do free online conferencing. I did a webinar with 12 people at 150 dollars a piece, sold it out within a couple days. Every single person on that webinar said, "I would have paid 10 times the amount that you charged me for this." I'm like, "Whatever, there's no way."

I did more webinars at 150 dollars a piece, and I continued to get a very high percentage that says-- one person said, "Cliff, I will tell you, I have spent thousands of dollars for admission to a weekend conference, and then a couple more thousand dollars on travel, hotel and meals to be at that event. In 90 minutes with you, I gained five times as much valuable insight and information that was going to help me propel what I'm doing and move the needle forward, five times the value from 90 minutes with you than I ever got from any of the biggest conferences I went to." Then I said, "Mm? Interesting." Just working with people one on one, I started to get a little bit more confident and then this little sneaky thought entered my mind, "What if I could actually do what I love for a living?"

**Ray:** What?

**Cliff:** Yep, I did not allow those words to surface for the longest time, but I eventually came to this question, "What if I could actually do what I love for a living?" And it came from listening to a bunch of other podcasts. Ray, I have to tell you, there are a number of times I heard people say, "If money were no object, what would you do?" You know what I thought? Some of the people who are listening today might actually have this reaction. I don't know about you, Ray, but when I heard people say, "What would you do if money--" I thought to myself, "What a stupid question?" Money is always going to be an object. "What would you do? Those are hobbies." That's hobbies. If you want money you have to do things that are hard, and I actually had this mindset at the time that the more you hated your job and the more difficult it was, the more you should get paid.





**Ray:** To quote Red Forman, "Work's not supposed to be fun, if it were fun it would be called not work, it would be called happy wonderful fun time."

**Cliff:** Exactly, which of course, with my old mindset, obviously people who are garbage collectors should be billionaires. Because they must love their job too. I don't know, I just thought what if, just a little dream, started to plant a seed in my heart that says, "What would life look like if I could make a living getting on the phone and just sharing with people the things that I'm passionate about, the experiences that I have and using the gift of teaching the technical things that I know and understand, and helping them use those things to make their lives better?"

In correlation with the fact that I also have this opportunity that when I'm working with these people that I get a chance to do ministry, in that I am encouraging them and I'm inspiring them, and through sharing what my experiences are and how God's using these to help me become more of who he's created me to be, I'm able to take those experiences and teach, train, and help other people so that they can become more of who they're created to be, AKA doing ministry. What if I could do that full time?"

Here's the deal, and I started to think-- I'm thinking through all this in my head, "If money were no object, I would create a business that would allow me to do those things. If money were no object and I did not feel obligated to the family business, I would not be selling insurance. I'm selling insurance--" By the way, this was not only always the case. If you listen to episode 500, that I mentioned earlier, Stephanie will tell you that, "Cliff, wait a second, before podcasting you really did enjoy your job."

I really felt like I was actually performing ministry in my job because I was using my gifting and my talents. I was doing some of the things that I just told you one on one with clients physically. But the thing is I hated insurance itself: The products, services, and stuff like that. I had no desire for that stuff technically. It wasn't the thing that really drove me, but podcasting and technology services tools and stuff like that, and people are-- yes, I love that.

Podcasting and all the things that came from helping people through podcasting in this community that I was serving, it opened me up to what I really, genuinely, was passionate about. That's when the question became, "I wonder if I could ever do this for a living?" I shared that in a podcast episode of *Pursuing a Balanced Life* multiple times, by the way. You know what happened? I got email after email after email after email from people who were these things called entrepre-- what is it called?

**Ray:** Entrepreneurs?

**Cliff:** Yes, these people out there who have not lived an entire lifetime working as an employee which was my experience by the way cause I had had worked for 11 years for my mom and dad in and in the insurance agency but I was still their employee and prior to that was a lifetime of being an employee all the way from my first job at McDonald's to every employee position I had up all the way up through being an





insurance agent. I never knew about this idea of being a business owner although I should have known a little bit about it because hello my dad owns a business right?

**Ray:** Who listens to their dad?

**Cliff:** Exactly, these people who own their own businesses who have been working for themselves for years who have multiple, wait a second this concept of multiple streams of income have you heard about this?

**Ray:** I have heard about it is it real?

**Cliff:** They were telling me hey Cliff do you know that you could create your own business based upon the things that you're talking about your podcast and the experiences you're having. You're creating these workshops and webinars and stuff like that people are already pay-- Let me tell you they said Cliff can I get on the phone I'd love to encourage you about five different ways you could make money if you did this full time. These entrepreneurs got on the on the phone with me and would spend as little as 30 to 45 minutes some of them would spend a total combination of hours and hours trying to convince me of all of the different ways that I could create a successful profitable business around what I have been doing with the audience that I had gained around these podcasts.

Every single time I had those emails and those phone conversations I would come home and tell my wife everything they said and my wife over a very short period time became absolutely convinced, me I still had all those doubts. So one day I had a terrible day at work, a string of a couple of months of them, but this one day I came home and it was the most horrible experience. I came home, my wife says, "Okay enough is enough you have to quit your job you already know that God is calling you to do what's coming up through this podcasting you know that this is your ministry that God's calling me to, you know that there's a business opportunity here people are lining up to tell you all the ways that you can become profitable in starting your own business. Your own pastor-- We had a different pastor at the time, but the pastor of the new church where we were going he says, "Cliff why are you still working for your mom and dad it's when you get behind the microphone that's when you come to life, dude when you start talking to me about podcasting and when you start talking about how you're teaching people all these different computer software programs that's where you come to life, I never hear you get that excited about your job as an insurance agent why don't you leave?" And so Stephanie was recounting even our pastors telling us this you need to go into your dad tomorrow morning tell him you're quitting and you're going to start your own business in 90 days.

**Ray:** Hello

**Cliff:** She convinced me that night and the very next day I went in and told my dad that I was leaving.

**Ray:** Then you became the podcast answer man overnight you were a success?



**Cliff:** Overnight, yes.

[laughter]

**Cliff:** That day that my wife convinced me to quit my career as an insurance agent that was 18 months into podcasts casting journey and by the way at that 18 month period of time by the way there is zero quote and quote church work doing instead I shifted from doing church work to doing the work at the church.

**Ray:** Very big distinction very powerful.

**Cliff:** Very big distinction at that point I'm doing no church work and what I'm doing is I'm literally at the office physically a minimum of 40 hours a week realistically I'm there, mentally about 10 to 15 hours a week at the office. I've probably got at that point in time 18 months into my journey I'm probably working on the podcast production and also the business around and community management of podcasting, I'm probably putting in about 60 to 70 hours a week on top of my full time job. That's where I was when my wife says, "Yes you should just move" This, in fact she says, "Listen I need my husband back and the kids need their dad back you're quitting your job."

**Ray:** How did your dad respond when you told him?

**Cliff:** I thought for sure he was going to like flip right, I'm like okay we're going to make this decision and real quickly, my wife and I recorded a podcast episode as soon as I made that decision and we published it immediately because I didn't want to go in the next day and just be talked out of this by my dad. That's an episode of a podcast answer man somewhere as well maybe I can look it up for you later whatever but anyway I went into my dad and I am freaking out cold chills I didn't sleep hardly that night at all, but I'm thinking he's going to flip, let me just fast forward he said listen I've been waiting for months for you to come in and tell me you're ready to leave and he said he goes you're next in line to take over the insurance agency and by the way at that point we already had the insurance policies and we also had all the legal documents prepared ahead of time for a couple years down the road when I would take over the agency. It was a guaranteed thing for me right and he says "Do you know how much money you could make if you stay here?". I said "Yes" He goes, "But I'm going to tell you right now this is the right step for you" He goes, "One thing I know about you and I as I've watched you grow up and where your passions are, where your gifts are, what your talents are and all the things you've been telling me up about what you've been doing in all your free time and the things people been telling you" He goes "I can tell you right now as much money as you know you could make in insurance you'll make exponentially more money doing what you're about ready to go and do then you could ever dream of making an insurance."

**Ray:** Well what a good dad.



**Cliff:** He said, "You have to do this by the way" He said, "You can always come back here you'll always be able to come back here no questions asked but you can never" he said 'You can't allow yourself for ever second guess what would have happened if I did that." He says "You need to go do this, you must go do this it is the right thing for you to do" And he says, " Although you can always come back here" He goes, "I'm going to tell you right now you'll never come back."

**Ray:** [laughs] well a wise man.

**Cliff:** What I will tell you is I didn't know anything about running a business, actually there are two huge blessings that I had from my career as an insurance and for 11 years and also the blessings that I had involved in ministry as well, including the actual church work. The blessings that I had going to the start of the official first year of my business, number one I had amazing sales training. I loved to sell because I believe selling is actually helping and serving people and convincing them to do things that are in their best interest. Alright, that's what I believe sales is. I believe it's convincing people to do the things that they ought to do whether they currently know that they ought to do it or not my job is to convince them of why this would benefit them. I love to sell and I had lots of tools over all of the training on how to do that effectively and yes I had received lots of the super sleazy psychological manipulation training as well obviously I discarded all of that crud. But I had a lot of the extremely valuable training in sales so I had that going for me. Number two, I had lots of customer service and face to face serving people time in of business setting of insurance literally thousands of clients that I helped one on one and actually seeing people benefit from the services that I've had. Seeing people's houses rebuilt because they had the insurance that I sold them on.

I saw a car's repaired or replaced and unfortunately I had the privilege of an honor of delivering the very large sums of money to families that could continue to move forward without massive disruption to their lifestyle because their loved one passed away because I sold them a policy for life insurance that they can they were convinced that first they did not need. I had that experience going into this knowing that products and services really do serve and help people. Also, I had the training and the experience of the church work, the ministry that the official training that I had that really did always emphasize loving and caring for people.

I had those three things going for me going into my first year of officially launching my online business unfortunately I knew nothing about accounting I knew nothing about pricing, I knew nothing about email lists, I knew nothing about focus I had very little self-discipline and well my first year in business I started January 1st 2008 and at the end of the year I made it-- My business by the way was profitable my CPA because I had a CPA to do the accounting he says, "Cliff Congratulations" He says, "Usually it takes about four to five years for a brand new business to be quote and called profitable and you were profitable in year one" And by the way that first year the business generated enough money to pay for all of its overhead which is software servers office supplies software computer all of that stuff it also paid for health insurance for myself and my own family because obviously that's the one of



the big things people don't want to leave their day job for a while was my benefits while we paid for our own benefits with the business

**Ray:** We got Obama care now so it's not a problem friend

**Cliff:** Yes right, we're not going to go on that one I'm not going to take the bait, but anyway the business was profitable paid for all of that stuff, but there's this other thing called payroll expenses.

**Ray:** Payroll expenses.

**Cliff:** Yes, well the reason why the business was profitable at the end of the year because the business-

**Ray:** Here Comes

**Cliff:**-only put paid its sole employee a total of 11,000\$ net income for the entire first year of my business

**Ray:** Who is that poor sap.

**Cliff:** Yes, that would be this guy named Cliff Raven's Kraft the CEO and founder of Raven's Kraft enterprises LLC

**Ray:** Making a whopping 11,000\$ just first year

**Cliff:** Yes. By the way that's after two years of building an online community [laughs].

**Ray:** Okay. Now everybody is totally encouraged that starting a podcast and building a business around that is the right way to go. There's a long pregnant pause so here's what I want to ask you because you became inordinately successful you ended up teaching people like Dan Miller and Michael Hyatt and Amy Porterfield and Michael Stelzer you work for these people to build their podcast Pat Flynn John Lee Dumas there's a long list of other people that we haven't heard of who have also built successful podcasts but my question for years as we go into the topic of is it right for people to start their own podcast a lot of this seems like it was timing and positioning and I won't call it luck but I'll call it fortunate circumstances and of course you did a lot of hard work you put a lot of your own self many hours into this we've already heard, but is it too late for people now you think the time has passed is the gold rush over?

**Cliff:** Absolutely not matter of fact I would say it would be easier for things that happened for me to happen today than it would have years ago. I mean if you think about it in 2005 really the only people who knew about podcasting were die hard technology geeks. The average every day human being [laughs] walking the face of this earth, no they didn't listen podcasts In fact it is today in 2017 Edison Research does the podcast consumer report every year it's the state of the union of podcasting and Edison Research says, "One out of every three people between the ages-- From



15 and up in the United States one out of every three people in the United States above the age of 15 has listened to a podcast within the last 30 days”.

Okay, now if you would have asked back in 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008 that's the early days for me and remember 2008 was the first year of my business it would have been one out of every 300 maybe one every 400 people knew what a podcast was and I doubt that many of them actually listened to them at the time.

**Ray:** Okay. Now your business is built on teaching people how to podcast what about the people who they don't have an interest like that their interest is in some other subject?

**Cliff:** Well the question is how do you get people to understand that you are a go to person and somebody who are extremely knowledgeable and capable of serving them with whatever it is that is your area of focus. Are you a photographer? Are you a business Coach? Are you a copywriter by nature? I mean what is it that you do that you're an expert at how do you get the attention of people out there to the place where they come to know I can trust you one you can create a blog by the way I don't know if this well over 450 million active English language blogs out there.

**Ray:** Say that number again.

**Cliff:** Over 450 million active English language blogs.

**Ray:** That's a big haystack.

**Cliff:** That's a big haystack and by the way people reading your blog on average on a weekly basis you're going to get about three minutes per post is about your attention span of somebody reading your blog on average you get there's some exceptions to the rule, but on average three minutes of their attention. Now you could create a You Tube channel by the way it's 1 billion it's actually years ago and I don't know I know this for a fact now 300 hours of brand new content uploaded to you tube every single minute. I can't remember how many billions of hours of new content on You Tube every single month. So it's a bigger haystack for people to find you but even if people find you subscribe to your channel and love your You Tube channel and you produced an a video for your You Tube audience every single week at most they're going to give you on average seven to 10 minutes those are proven statistical facts.

However if you had a podcast that is 30 minutes 40 minutes or even an hour your audience that subscribes to your show who has found your show who loves your show and subscribe to your show your audience that subscribes to an audio podcast is going to listen to 100% of every syllable of every word you speak in your podcast every single week and will not miss a single episode that you produce, that's what podcasting offers.

**Ray:** In fact if you miss an episode or you're late with an episode people will let you know.

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**Cliff:** Exactly.

**Ray:** You will just start getting email saying, "Hey Ray its Monday we're your podcast episode".

**Cliff:** Ray let me tell you in the first year of my business people would say, "Hey Cliff I found you as a result of the Google search and I'd like to hire you but can we get on a call for 30 minutes or 15 minutes I'd like to ask you a couple questions to make sure you're the person I need to work with". I don't know how to respond to that by the way this is the early days of podcast *answerman.com* my podcast about podcasting which was where I started this business podcast. I would get on calls and what would happen is we would schedule a 15 minute call I end up spending 90 minutes and what do I do I answer every single question they have and guess what, I didn't charge them a penny and I gave them everything they needed to know that happened over and over again. So what I learned over time is the value of putting all of this content and putting into the podcast episode giving away this information for free to people so that I can demonstrate the value that I bring and what happened was, it was a slow transition, but once I had enough content in the archives I started getting these emails and this was as early as halfway through the first year of my podcasting about podcasting and it's I still get these emails today and Ray you may even get some of these Emails here's the email today I get, "Hey cliff I found you as a result of a Google search on XY Zee topic about three weeks ago since then I've listened to about 15 of your episodes" now that's 15 hours of your voice, the next line is, "I want to work with you how do we get started?"

**Ray:** We get we get those emails as well it's a phenomenon that people don't understand unless they've experienced it or they've heard about it. So my question is Who is it a good decision for to start a podcast and who should be considering starting a podcast?

**Cliff:** Anyone who I believe would like to let the world know about the passion in zeal and enthusiasm that they have for the work that they do and the products and services that they offer people. I would say it's for anyone who has a desire to have a greater amount of influence in their industry where they can actually move the needle of what people's public perception about that industry is. I would say anybody who wants to have a raving fan loyal community base of customers who absolutely are out there consistently telling other people about how awesome you are and what you have to offer the world for anybody that's interested in what your business has to offer as far as product services and things of that nature.

**Ray:** That is a really good answer and I get people asking me pretty consistently Ray, "How do I start a podcast what a thing to do what equipment I need to buy". I always point them in one direction and that's your direction I tell them everything right that I know about podcasting and learn from you all the mistakes I made I figured out myself.

**Cliff:** [laughs] Awesome I love that.

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**Ray:** How can people connect With you if they want to get some of that Cliff Raven's craft wisdom and knowledge about starting a podcast?

**Cliff:** Well obviously they can tune in to my podcast if they want to hear my voice and get to know a little bit more about me over a *podcastanswerman.com*. If you want to work with me to be were I'm your personal coach for four weeks literally direct access to me as your personal coach for four weeks, I do this in a group session four weeks at a time called podcasting A to Z. You can check that out at *podcastingatoz.com*. If you're not ready to pull the plug just yet then I encourage you to check out my free weekly podcast development newsletter even if you're not yet convinced, you want to launch a podcast. I still encourage you to sign up for my podcast development newsletter. Ray, over the past 12 years I've worked with tens of thousands of people in then launching their podcasts through one on one coaching, group coaching and through the tutorials that I sell online and out of all of those years I take the best advice tips, tools and strategies related to podcasting and I give the best of the best away for free every single Friday on my mailing list, and it is literally the best content and that's at *podcastanswerman.com/newsletter*.

**Ray:** We'll have links to all of those resources in the show notes for this episode and Cliff I've learned things about you during this interview that I didn't even know, so this is one other power of podcasting. You get to know people in a very different way because you're so focused on the communication and the interchange. Thank you so much for spending this time with us.

**Cliff:** It is an honor and Sean I was waiting for you to really throw me some curveballs my friend.

**Sean:** Well, you didn't bite. A couple times you didn't bite.

**Cliff:** You wanted me to jump in on the, what was it? The Obamacare [sic].

**Sean:** No, no I doubt I initiated that one.

**Cliff:** That's right [laughs].

**Ray:** I think he was after the spiritual manipulation.

**Sean:** It doesn't matter, there were a few points in there where I threw a couple of curve balls maybe it was the Skype internet lag or something, but you didn't write past him-

**Ray:** You took it easy on Cliff, that's what I'm saying.

**Sean:** Well, I just got to say Sean I really enjoyed the value that you bring to the Ray Edwards show and I'm a loyal listener, I've listened to every single episode and I look forward to it every week, so thank you guys awesome, so much for the honor of allowing me to come back on the show.





**Ray:** Thank you

**Cliff:** Thank you.

**Ray:** I told you you're going to love this episode. If you enjoyed this episode, found value in it, then please by all means subscribe to the show in Apple podcasts and leave us a rating and a review and we'll be back again next week with another episode. Until then I pray that God continues to bless you and that he does more for you than you can ask or even possibly imagine. Peace to your house.

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