



Ray Edwards Show, Episode 343

How To Punch Fear In The Face

Female Announcer: Coming up on the *Ray Edwards Show*.

John Morgan: Fear is already at war with us, and to not realize that, to not wake up to that is to remain a prisoner with invisible bars around you.

Ray Edwards: *Ray Edwards Show*, Episode 343. How to punch fear in the face?

[music]

Male Announcer: The *Ray Edwards Show*. This is the podcast for prosperity with purpose.

Ray: Today's episode is going to be a little bit different. I'm just going to have a conversation with my friend John Morgan. We're going to forego the usual formatting in the segments and so forth, just this week, to have this conversation with John. John travels the world as a George W. Bush impersonator. He works at corporate, comedic, and faith-based events around the world. He is uncanny in his impersonation of President Bush. He was discovered at a Bush for president rally in the year 2000. Morgan went from selling appliances to performing at the president's inaugural.

By 2007, he was bringing his big-time comedic impersonation to arenas all across America. Millions of people have seen him on *America's Got Talent*, *Family Feud*, *Headline News*, *Hannity & Colmes*, E! Entertainment Network, ABC's *The View*, *The 700 Club*, and a lot more shows. He's still doing this act. It's hilarious, but there's so much more to this man, and especially when it comes to the subject of fear. We're just going to dive right in with our conversation. I'm just going to say, John, welcome to the show.

John: First of all, let me greet your listening audience. I'm aware that you and I are having a conversation with just a whole bunch of people overhearing us, listening, flies on the wall, if you will. To all of your listeners, I say hi, it's great to meet you. I'm honored to be able to speak to you, and for you to be listening to my voice. Thank you.

I was a young man who came into this world with a big ta-da. When I was up to age four, convinced that I was the greatest thing ever. People would come over to visit my parents or to date my older sisters, and I would sit them down and make them listen to me sing to them. I was that kid that everybody just wanted to smack because he had so much confidence, so much belief in himself.

What I wasn't prepared for was somebody coming along and contradicting my beliefs. When I hit kindergarten, I had no preparation. I had no paradigm for resistance, for attack. My ta-da life was suddenly subjected to intense scrutiny by my

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peers. I was told basically, "What a jerk, what a wuss," and some words that I'm not prepared to use on your show. It wasn't long before there was this huge conflict within me where I tried to fight back with more ta-da. It wound up that I believed the limiting words and came to see myself as quiet, as stupid, as unworthy, and I just shut up.

I went through the rest of my grammar school years just be in that kid that everybody loved to tease. You could make me cry at the drop of a hat, and I would cry. People got a lot of enjoyment out of that. I, eventually, learned just to shut down my emotions and to be cold and hard so that I wouldn't care. I couldn't feel the hate, but I also couldn't feel love. Fast forward into high school, I learned how to play guitar. I learned how to develop this front of acting cool and mesmerizing, so that I can entertain folks, but deep within me there was this knowledge that this isn't the real me. The real me is this thing, this wimp, but I'll just keep this facade out in front of me. It worked, the facade worked quite well.

Fast forward a little bit further, and somebody told me that you could have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. At first, I thought they were crazy. Then, I came to see a light in certain people that I didn't see in other people, and I didn't see when I was doing drugs. With a lot of more detail that I won't share it right now, I came to accept Christ as my savior. Then over time, He helped me to take down that facade and learn that I could have a new creation within Him. What He slowly did, Ray, is he restored to me the John Morgan that He gave me at birth. Little by little, I've developed the ability to be authentic with people. It's just been so much fun. I have no idea what your original question was. [laughs]

Ray: The answer was great. I want to rewind all the way back to the beginning of your answer. You said for the first four years of your life, you lived in that ta-da, like, "Ta-da, here I am." How did your family treat you that supported that, because you had to have a very supportive home life in order to exist like that for four years?

John: I did. I had a very supportive home life, had three older sisters. I was the youngest, I was the kid. They showed me off, they were so proud of me. I was the little brother. I knew my parents saw my desire to sing. They bought me a record player when I was probably three years old. I fell so in love with that little record player that all I did was listen to records, memorize them, learn to sing with them. I actually slept, back when I had a crib, I would sleep with my records and my record player. I probably had some stuffed animals here and there and there too, but I was so in love with music that I actually slept out. That was my comfort, was those records, I loved them.

Ray: One big explanation for how you were able to be so supported was there was no brothers to beat you down.

John: [laughs] Absolutely.



Ray: I want to give full credit to your family, that's an incredible environment to create for your children. Your parents remarkable people, obviously.

John: Thank you. Mom, until the day she died her mantra to me was, "You were born for more than this." She saw that spark in me and did everything that was within her power to enable me to develop into someone who could shine.

Ray: You were born for more than what?

John: Well, mom and dad ran an appliance store. Dad's vision for me was to work in the appliance store, to one day retire himself, turn it over to me, and that he would bequeath the appliance store to me. You're in for the stage, if you will. I yearned for influence, I yearned to make a difference in the lives of other people. Even before I knew how to articulate that sentence that I just said, I yearned to move people. Selling appliances just wasn't my cup of tea.

Ray: Your mom recognized this, even though your dad wanted you to take over the store. Your mom when she said, "You were born for more than this," was that what she was referring to, more than this appliance store?

John: Absolutely, yes.

Ray: That's incredible. How long did you work in the appliance store?

John: Forever. [laughs] Really literally, not literally but I would go there afternoons after school sometimes. When I became old enough to operate a dolly, I was working at the appliance store, moving appliances back and forth and cleaning stoves. I grew up in the business.

Ray: Into your adult life?

John: Yes. I also was a singer-songwriter, as should seem obvious that it would turn out that way. Shortly after I became engaged and married my beloved Kathy, my wife of 36 years, I felt that I was to go into music. I did a short excursion as a full-time singer-songwriter, but I lacked discipline and diligence in the music business. I lacked the hard work side of the music business, and so I really failed at that. I was a good musician, people enjoyed listening to me, but there's two sides to that coin. Pretty soon, I wind up having to go back to my dad, and beg him for my job back. I didn't have to beg him. He was all too happy to, "I told you so."

When I wanted to go into the music business, he would actually tell my friends, "Please, tell John he can't sing. Tell him he's got no voice. He's got no shot." [laughs]. Mom was like, "Shut up, Chuck." [laughs]

Ray: My goodness. You went back to the appliance store. I want to get to the message you're currently carrying and how powerful that is, but I think we need to fill in the blanks about how you got from working at the appliance store to where now



you're this author, speaker, person who inspires other people to overcome their own inner limitations.

How did you get out of the appliance store onto the stage? How did you go from appliance store to stage?

John: When I went back to the appliance store, it was with the understanding that it would be temporary. I thought that I was going to go back, learn business. Maybe it would take four months or so, and then God will release me back into the love of my life, which was the music business. To my surprise, there was no sense of an inner release. I went back to the appliance store. I would pray, Ray. I would say, "God, please don't let me miss your will." I was so afraid that I would miss the train so to speak, and miss out on my calling, that I would be in the wrong place at the wrong time, and the train would leave the station, and I would be left behind.

What I came to learn after about 10 years of begging, "God, please don't let me miss your will," I remember one day I heard a whisper in my spirit. He said, "Hey, I heard you the first time." I went, "Wait, what?" I came to realize this omnipotent and omniscient God who keeps all the planets in their appointed orbits, who knows every detail about every blade of grass on the planet, can certainly make sure that I'm where I need to be, when I need to be there. I came to trust my heart's desire into the hands of the Lord. Then, I could just work at the appliance store. I relinquished that fear, that worry, that strife. I just trusted Him.

For the next 10 years after that, so now 20 years later, I'm still working at the appliance store, but now I'm doing it with peace, with joy. Just saying, "Hey, God. You know I'm here. I trust you with my dream if you ever want me to go do something else. I do believe you do," because I used to beg Him, "Please, take this seed out of my heart if you're not going to blossom it into a flower of some sort." I just trusted Him. Then, so little did I know, He would turn this seed into a bush. [laughs]

Ray: Literally.

John: Yes. Okay, here's what happened folks. George W. Bush, the son of the current president or the former president at that time decided he was going to run for president. I guess, Bill Clinton was ending his presidency. People started tapping me on the shoulder, telling me how much I looked like him. I thought, "Well, that's cool looking like somebody famous. This is a hoot." You know it could be a conversation starter or whatever, but I had no clue what was coming.

On the occasion of my mom who's now in heaven, on the occasion of her 80th birthday, someone at her party named Paula came up to me. She was in the entertainment business. She said, "John, you know there's this emerging industry of look-alikes. You should become a George Bush impersonator, a George Bush look-alike." I'm like, "What are you talking about?" She goes, "They hire them for parties. They walk around. They shake hands. They look like the celebrity, and people get a



kick out of it." Well, the only reference point I had was the thousands and thousands of Elvis impersonators that are out there. Most of whom really need counseling.

[laughter]

I just, "No." I just said, "No, please. I went through that in kindergarten. I don't want to be rejected and ridiculed and all that again." I just said, "That ain't no way." My paradigm had no room for me being anything like that, so I just shot her down in love. My wife in her mind, she said, "Well, that's actually an interesting idea. John, he does have that kind of a effervescent personality that people do enjoy being around and listening to. Maybe there's something there."

About three months later, after some conversations that she had where I just said, "There's just no way." She saw an artist named Steve Bridges who was a very well-known, internationally known George Bush impersonator who worked with complete prosthetics. He actually doesn't look anything like George Bush, but he goes through a four-hour makeup process to look like George Bush. She saw him on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*, and a thought hit her, "Do a web search." She got online, and she found two guys out there booking as George Bush.

She thought, "My husband looks more like George Bush when he wakes up in the morning than either of these two guys. This guy goes through a four-hour makeup process." Then, she looked and saw how much they were asking for an appearance. She got so excited. She went over and woke me up out of a dead sleep, grabbed me by the scruff of the pajamas and said, "I just found a new career. You're going to become a George Bush impersonator." I'm like, "What? Wait, what?" She dragged me over to the computer, showed it to me. I still didn't buy in, but I saw somebody is actually doing this and making good money at it. That sat me forth into a journey of seeking the Lord and praying about it to see if perhaps He wanted me to do it, and the rest is history.

Ray: You without a doubt. I've seen quite a few people attempt to impersonate George W. Bush with various degrees of success. I think it's interesting that God put you in a position of being a Texan. You've got the cadence.

John: I'm not a Texan.

Ray: You're not?

John: No.

Ray: I actually thought you are from Texas.

John: That's the act, no.

Ray: You've got the cadence just naturally when you speak. Certainly, you resemble the person we're speaking of.



John: Thank you. People could go to georgebushimpersonator.com if they'd like to put a face with the voice.

Ray: [laughs] Can't help yourself. How long did you do the George Bush impersonator gig?

John: Well, I'm still doing it to an extent. I did it for 15 years, and it was very successful a lot of TV.

Ray: Did it become more difficult after he was out of office?

John: I talked about that. I had to learn to go to work because when he was in office, I didn't have to work. All I had to do was answer the phone. It was a tremendous moneymaker. I made millions and had the time of my life. Even as I was doing that, my heartbeat to be an influencer not just a pretty face so to speak, not just a Bush. When you have a face like a Bush, you've got to bloom where you're planted.

[laughter]

Sorry. I still long to do more. I really believe that God gave me that season, and this season because I still do it. It's a great icebreaker, if you will, because when I walk out on a stage, really over half the people think it's really George W. Bush. It's really amazing.

Ray: When I first saw you, I actually for the first 30 to 60 seconds thought it was actually George W. Bush.

John: I remember when I walked in, I heard a woman off to my left, and she said, "What is he doing here?" [laughs]

Ray: I heard, I remember just I heard that, but I remember distinctly hearing several people in the audience gasp when you walked up and took the stage. It's uncanny. It occurs to me that it would be easy to just continue doing that and milking it forever, but you've already intimated this. You've got something else burning in your heart that you feel called to do. We can come back and talk about the impersonation game if you want to, but I'd really like to hear what is it that's in your heart and what are you doing and what's on your heart now to do?.

John: Ray, when I meet people, I see what my mother saw in me. They were born for more than this. There's something within me that just longs to see people come into the fullness of their God-given creativity, their God-given inspiration. I just see people and believe that I can call forth the greatness that's within them, and call them forth from out of the cage of fear that's holding them back. I've been successful in doing that with folks, and want to do it more. It's what really I found that I was born for.

Ray: You wrote a book. Tell us about the book.

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John: Well, it's my second book but I think it's the book around which I'll probably plant my flag. It's called *War on Fear: What Would You Do If You Were Not Afraid?* It was born out of a moment when I realized that fear had been a thief that had stolen my life away. I became angry and declared war for myself and then for others. I began to study fear. What is it? How does it work; biologically, spiritually? How is it so effective at keeping us limited?

CEOs that want to grow their company but they're afraid. Individuals that want to make sales calls but they're absolutely petrified. People that want to share an inspiration, a word that comes to them that they want to share with someone else, but they don't. That's most of us. Most of us live in fear. Then, of course, there's the practical fears; fears of spiders, fears of heights, fears of falling off a ladder, fears of getting on an elevator.

There are keys to overcoming those things to various degrees, yes, but unless we engage them, we never will be free. What I found and this is something that is a little hard for people to grasp, is that fear is already at war with us, and to not realize that, to not wake up to that is to remain a prisoner with invisible bars around you. Once you realize that and then you have the tools, the weapons if you will to fight back you can begin to have incredible victory. That's what I'm excited about sharing with the world.

Ray: I have to ask you the question since you brought this up. You said this. What is fear?

John: Fear is an emotion that is brought about by a suggestion that comes to your brain in the form of a thought. There's fear which is debilitating, and then there's awareness of danger. One is good, one is bad. One kind of fear can keep you from falling off a cliff, the other kind of fear can prevent you from climbing a mountain and living your dream. There's a clear distinction between the two and knowing the difference between the two, embracing the one and resisting the other is the key to growing beyond your self-imposed limitations.

Ray: How do we go from being the precocious, audacious, fearless children that we, I think all of us are when we start life, to becoming these fear-ridden creatures that are jumping at shadows? Now, there's a popular phrase called FOMO, have you heard of this? The fear of missing out.

John: Yes, it's one of my chapters.

Ray: If you have nothing to be afraid of, just be afraid of this. You're going to miss something.

John: That's what was happening with me when I was saying, "God, please don't let me miss your well." It was powerful, it was so strong. It's why most of us keep our faces buried in our cell phones and on social media. We feel like there's this urgency to be the first one to know what's going on in the lives of all of our friends. Even



though the things that we typically post on social media are not authentic, it's the best version of ourselves.

Ray: There's been plenty of science lately that's proven the more you use Facebook and Instagram, the more depressed and fearful you become because you're comparing yourself to a yardstick that's not even real first of all. Secondly, you just feeding that need to have things, to have relationships, to have people, to have a certain way you look, a certain way you feel, a certain way the people view you. That you look at other people and think, "Well, they have all this, I don't have it, I'm missing out." We keep feeding it because we're afraid we're going to miss something and yet it feeds the fear within us. That sounds like somebody's out to get us.

John: [laughs] I tell people, "Be yourself, George Bush is already taken."

Ray: What was the key that first unlocked that cage of fear for you?

John: For me, it was being willing to take risks that I had before been unwilling to take. See, fear is a dialogue, fear is many things really, but fear is a script and it plays in your head and tells you what you can or cannot do certain things. In order to move beyond the limitations that fear imposes upon you, you have to first recognize that the script is inaccurate. Then, you have to re-write the script, you write a new script for yourself. Then, it's what you believe, you have to choose to believe the truth rather than the fear-filled debilitating script. Then, when you say, "No, that's not true, this is true." Then, you can move beyond the fear. Does that make sense?

Ray: Yes, absolutely. There's a phrase that appears in the Bible 366 times. The phrase is, "Do not be afraid." I think it's other people have observed that's 365, that's one for every day of the year, and an extra one for leap year. What's interesting to me is almost every time that God said or one of his messengers which we call angels. Every time they spoke to a human being and said, "Don't be afraid," it seems like there's plenty of evidence that there's a good reason to be afraid. Yet there is a key early in the Bible where Moses is afraid and God says in answer to that fear He says, "I'm with you."

John: Absolutely. When you realize that He is with you and in you, there's nothing that can harm you really. It's an amazing truth that you have been given all that you need. If you believe that and you walk in the good of that, then everything you need when the time comes will be there for you. That's the experience that I had. In my book, I give an example my father who's now in heaven, bless his heart. Every now and then he would be hit with the fear that he couldn't walk, and he was older-- he was feeble but when he believed that he couldn't walk, he was absolutely petrified to stand up because he was afraid that he would fall. He wouldn't stand up, he absolutely was convinced because of fear he believed he couldn't walk. Now, my dad could walk, but when this fear came along because he wouldn't walk, the effect was he couldn't walk. The fear was confirmed in his own heart. I can't walk. See, I'm not walking because I can't. You do that a few times pretty soon you won't ever walk again.



Ray: Psychologist call it learned helplessness. Not that we are helpless we learned to believe that we're helpless.

John: Yes I have a daughter in law. I love her. Emily. She and my son and three of my awesome grandkids moved out to San Francisco not long ago for my son to pursue his nursing career. Well, when he got to San Fran the streets are so crooked and weird and scary that my daughter thought she didn't have to drive so she didn't. She's a jogger and she's very healthy and she would just run everywhere she needed to go. They had one car and pretty soon she wouldn't drive because what was a choice became a limitation or a fear. Now she realizes I don't want to be afraid. I'm not going to let this run my life. Now she's fighting back against that self-limiting thought that presents itself as truth. You can't drive in San Francisco. Now she's, yes I can, you're not going to do this to me, whoever you is. Whether it's the devil or whether it's her own psyche. Now she's intentionally driving to make sure she doesn't have a fear of it. Bravo, I say bravo.

Ray: Agreed. Well, you've got a strong message. I highly recommend your book to anybody who suffers fear. That should cover everybody on the planet.

John: Myself included. I say in the book, just because I wrote this I make no claim to have arrived, having arrived. I'm still on the journey you know. Even though I've accomplished a lot and learned a lot and I can help you accomplished it and learn a lot. Fear will never be dead. You know until we're all with him in heaven. We will constantly fight but we will we will gain new ground we will grow. We will have new challenges and have greater and greater victories.

Ray: Where can people get the book?

John: They can go take it up on Amazon. I'm happy to say it has a five-star review. Or they could go to my website waronfearbook.com and pick up a copy. Now.

Ray: Now you're still doing the George W Bush entertainment stuff. If people wanted to book you to speak I would encourage people to have you speak about overcoming fear. I think that's the powerful message that you have to bring to the world. If you have an organization or a group that would benefit from a message like that whether you're a church or a business I think I know John would serve you well in that capacity.

I really believe that God is giving you this gift of this impersonation and this sense of humor and entertainment and music because it's almost I don't know how you feel about this job. It's almost like you give people an anesthetic before you go in and do the heart surgery to get rid of the fear because they can laugh, they can relax, they can open up, and then they can hear what you have to say. How do you feel about that?

John: I totally believe that they say I just heard an entertainer say this on the MTV Awards the other night. He said, if you're going to give a dog some medicine wrap it in a piece of hamburger he'll never even know he's taking medicine and I believe

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humor is the same thing. Humor sets up the soul to receive teaching. I'm happy to say I won the comedian of the Year award DEV award from the Gospel Music Association taking the skills of songwriting, impersonation, and comedy writing and weaving that into a presentation that is hilarious and fun.

It kind of takes people to a different place where suddenly oh my gosh here we were in our convention and suddenly we're in the presence of George W Bush or even Donald Trump which has begun impersonating the new president now which is a whole another podcast but there's this great level of enjoyment. Then when people realize that I'm not him I introduce myself that euphoria that endorphin rush is in place and people are prepared to receive truth in a way that really, really stays with them.

I've been told by people from around the world that though they really enjoyed the George Bush impersonation that they laughed harder than they've laughed in years that what I shared after that was what, was the meet that will change their life.

Ray: Well, if you enjoyed today show, you found it beneficial and you'd like to help us out, you could do so by subscribing to the show in your favorite podcasting, the Apple podcast app is a good choice but not the only choice. It would really help us if you gave us a review and a rating that elevates our place in the rankings when people are searching for certain topics and that means new people who are looking for the kind of stuff we talk about can learn about the show, and that's helpful to us and helpful to them too I hope. I appreciate you very much, I pray that God will bless you that He'll do more for you than you can ask or possibly imagine.

I pray that you would prosper in all things and be in good health just as your soul prospers. Peace to you and peace to your house.

[music]

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