



Ray Edwards Show, Episode 512 Pastor "Fired" by Church Becomes Six-Figure Copywriter

Announcer ([00:01](#)):

Ray Edwards Show episode 512- Pastor "Fired" by Church Becomes Six-Figure Copywriter. The Ray Edwards Show. This is the podcast for prosperity, with purpose.

Ray Edwards ([00:19](#)):

Okay, how's this for a true story. Husband and wife are pastors for a church and they get fired by the church. Fired by the church as pastors. So the wife decides she's going to stop being a pastor and become a freelance copywriter and goes from "fired" pastor to six-figure copywriter in record time. That is a good story. And it happens to be a true story- one we're going to hear from Dawn Apuan, who's my guest on today's podcast. Welcome, Dawn, and how in the world are you doing today?

Dawn Apuan ([00:52](#)):

Thank you for having me. I am doing amazing.

Ray Edwards ([00:55](#)):

Yes, you are. You know, your story is so inspirational to me, personally, because I've seen you make huge strides forward in your business since we first met. But for people who don't know you, who aren't familiar with your story, maybe you could just take us back to even before you and I met and talk about what you were doing before you started your own business. And how did you end up in this crazy world of being an entrepreneur?

Dawn Apuan ([01:18](#)):

Oh, I love this question, so thank you for allowing me to share a little bit of my story because I have not always been an entrepreneur. I think if you had asked me a few years ago, I would have laughed and said, I don't have an entrepreneurial bone in my body, but as it turns out, I'm perfectly fit for entrepreneurship and I absolutely love it. So to take you back, it's, we've got to go back about four years to when my husband and I were pastors within the salvation army. He had pastored for almost 25 years, me for almost seven. And it was actually this month, four years ago when we had a review with our local leadership. And basically what we were told is that we were failing because our church wasn't big enough. And that crushed me in that moment, um, in a lot of ways. But I, you know, as a pastor, I had poured my blood,

sweat and tears into ministry. We were doing about 80,000 services a year with a staff of five, including my husband and I. So, um, if you want the definition of overworked and underpaid, it's kind of where we were at. Although, you know, it was for good, right? We were doing good in our community. We were the executive directors, you know, running food programs, housing programs, Bible studies, Sunday church, like I led worship. Like we just, I preached as well. Both of us are ordained. So that's what our life was and it was everything. And I had a baby. She was one at that point in time. And it just crushed me to be told that I wasn't doing well. So that's what started my journey really was as a result of that review, my husband and I were transferred in demoted to another city. We had to move and they wanted me to put my daughter in childcare. And I just couldn't. Um, I legitimately was having panic attacks and anxiety attacks visiting daycares trying to find a place for her. And I got really unhealthy. My husband thought I was going to take my life. He came home on a couple of lunch breaks, like just to check on my safety. Um, I wasn't, um, I never was at that point, you know, I have that history in my family. That's a whole nother conversation to have, but I knew I wasn't that unhealthy, but, um, I was pretty depressed and having anxiety attacks. So from that place, great place to start a business. I started Googling work from home because I thought, okay, something needs to change. I went to that same leader for help to say, you know, this is what's, this is my experience. I'm really struggling. And I was laughed at and told that parents don't stay home with their kids. So yeah.

Ray Edwards (04:07):

What?!

Dawn Apuan (04:07):

Yeah. This is pre COVID, right? Um, but that's, that was the response that I got and so from there I thought, okay, there's no one to help me. Um, and that was sort of, if we talk about line in the sand moments, that was my moment. I was like, okay. Um, the Hulk awoke in me and I thought, if anybody's going to change this, it has to be me. No, one's coming to save me. And that's when I Googled work from home, I started figuring out what was legit and what wasn't, bought my first online course. From that I learned to build funnels and run Facebook ads. So I started doing affiliate marketing, but you know, that pastor in me that wanted to have purpose in life that wasn't, it wasn't just about making money and being home with my daughter. I wanted to do something more. So it took me a while. I know I'm not alone when it comes to entrepreneurs trying to figure out, you know, what is our thing that we do? We say serial entrepreneurship. And I tried a few different things at that point in time. I didn't know what a copywriter was. I met someone, you know, about a year after that, that was a copywriter. We had a conversation and I was like, I can get paid to just write stuff for people? Like this is amazing. And that's really, when I shifted into just doing copy. I do also build funnels for people, but you know, the, my main passion is writing the words. That's what I love to do. And when I shifted into that, I really saw exponential growth. I hit six figures after 11 months of deciding to really zero in on copy. So that brings us, you know, into 2020 and COVID era where I had grown my copywriting business. And that's when you and I started dialoguing more. And you know, me being in your workshops and things like that, of course I don't actually, when I first read your book, it was early on when I started really diving into copy and buying more courses. And of course I have several of your courses as I was learning and training myself, essentially, I bootstrapped and figured out how to be a good copywriter and then how to get clients and things just took off. And that's, uh, where I am today.

Ray Edwards (06:21):

I love that story. I don't love the part where you were treated badly. That makes me boil a little bit. But moving beyond that, were there any other challenges that you ran into? I mean, I imagine that there were, because usually when we're starting out in a new business, like

being a freelance copywriter, anything in particular come to mind that you stumbled into along the way that you didn't expect?

Dawn Apuan (06:43):

Yes. There's always things always challenges. Um, I think the first, Oh, there's a couple. So I would say money. You know, from a ministry perspective, you know, we were, we lived in a home that was fully furnished and provided for us. Cars were given to us. So we were making about \$2,500 a month as a married couple working full-time plus for a ministry. So, you know, a lot of times people who are bootstrapping and starting in business, they're like, well, I have no money. Um, and when I share my story, you know, I went to events my first year. I joined programs that were multiple five figures. How did I do that? That's committing to something, having an intention to do it. It's what we say in copy. Like people always have the money. Like it's, it's a difference between resources and resourcefulness. I was very resourceful because I was committed. I was committed to leaving that situation, that it got worse. It got way worse than being told we were failures. It got very abusive, it got very unhealthy and we had to get out. So I had a very strong why. So that's something I learned, like, know your why and be committed and you can do anything. Be resourceful. Money will come. If you're committed enough, you can figure it out. I did. I've since invested, even in the last couple of years, I've invested more than six figures in my business. When I started making like my annual income for a family of six was around 30 K and in two years, I've invested more than six figures. So think about that. Like the numbers don't make sense.

Ray Edwards (08:20):

Ya, now are you glad you did that?

Dawn Apuan (08:22):

Oh, 100%. 100%. We were able to resign just over two years ago and now we own our own home. That didn't happen right away. So I would say another thing I learned is we tend to overestimate what we can do in a day and underestimate where we can be in a year. Um, and so have patience. Know that it's coming- just believe, believe in faith, that what you desire is coming. It may not happen today. Tomorrow, next month. You know, I wanted out of that abusive situation so bad, it took me 18 months to get my family out of it, but I wouldn't trade it. You know, I'm so grateful for that time now. I'm grateful for the lessons learned. I'm grateful for those challenges because it makes me really appreciate the freedom I have now. It makes me appreciate that I actually live in my own home, that I get to decorate, that I get to choose where I live, where, you know, just last week, my daughter did her assessment for kindergarten at a private school that's meeting in person right now that never would have been possible. I mean, the tuition alone is, you know, like half of our, what we were making monthly as pastors. And so I have that choice. So money, money gives us choices. And I think now I'm so, so grateful for that because of that challenge. Other challenges, uh, would be clients as you learn as a service provider, anybody who's listening that works with clients, probably a lot of you, especially if you're a service provider, uh, not all clients are fantastic to work with. Um, and that's another challenge that I've come up against. And part of that is I tend to just give and really be a support. And that turns into getting taken advantage of at times, for sure. So I've learned the hard way with some clients. I've also learned to trust my gut and when I haven't trusted my gut, I pay for it big time.

Ray Edwards (10:23):

So let's be specific about that. When you say trust your gut, what do you mean? What should people be looking for?

Dawn Apuan (10:30):

That's a great question. So what I've found and it's a process, I think we have to have those bad clients in a sense to learn, you know, about ourselves. Like, I feel it in my body. I knew when I was talking to her that it just didn't feel right. But sometimes what's hard for me is my brain will try to take over and be like, well, this is an easy job. Like, it's really simple. It's straight forward, you know, my brain or if you really need the money, that's the other thing. Um, and I wasn't necessarily in that scenario of needing the money, but my brain, because it was a person who was in a mastermind with me who had also done like a specialized leadership training. So my brain was like, well, she has these things in place. She's in the mastermind with you. You know, it can't be that bad. It was very bad that doesn't always mean, you know, that somebody is great to work with, right?

Ray Edwards (11:27):

Yeah. Yeah. I mean, if you ever find yourself asking the question, how bad could it be? Really spend some time creatively answering that question because it probably will get that bad if you're asking that question.

Dawn Apuan (11:40):

Oh my goodness. And trust me, it is not worth it.

Ray Edwards (11:43):

It's so difficult when you need that money, you feel like I need to take this check. And it makes me think I was listening to part of the story of Sylvester Stallone. When he was getting started out, he had written the script for Rocky and he had no money. Like he literally, the last thing he had done was he had hawked his wife's jewelry so they could pay their rent. And he made the statement "so, there are a few things in life you never should do. That's one of them, because at that point she hated me. She decided she hated me and all I had left in the world was my dog. And I had no money." And he said he was, he had written the script for Rocky. And some company had offered him like \$10,000 for the script or a hundred thousand dollars for the script. And he said, I want to star in the movie. And they said, "no, you can't be in the movie cause you're you don't, you're not very good looking. You don't seem very smart. Nobody would come see a movie with you in it." And they actually wanted Ryan O'Neal to play Rocky. Think about that for a minute. And Stallone said nonand he ended up selling his dog to survive. He sold his dog for \$25. And he said that dog was my only friend. And he went on through negotiations with this company. And finally they had offered him \$300,000 for the script, but he still couldn't be in the movie. And he said, no. And so they, their final offer was they came back and said, we'll pay you \$30,000 and you can be in the movie, but any other money you get has to be a percentage of sales because we don't think this is going to work. So he agreed to that. He took his 30 grand, went back to the liquor store where he had sold his dog to some stranger and waited for days until the guy came back and he bought the dog back for \$15,000. And he had to promise to guy a role in the movie.

Dawn Apuan (13:29):

Geez.

Ray Edwards (13:30):

So I'm thinking, okay, you're so broke. You've lost your wife. You sold your dog. You have no money for food. You get \$30,000, which at that time we're talking back in the, was it the seventies, I guess, early eighties, late seventies, you take 15,000 of your 30,000, which is more money than you've ever seen and use it to buy back your dog.

Dawn Apuan (13:51):

That you sold for 25.

Ray Edwards (13:52):

That you sold for 25 bucks. That is somebody who's got faith in their dreams like, I know what I want. I know the outcome I want. That's what I was thinking of when you were talking about, you know, you had the one situation where the church was telling you your church wasn't big enough and they weren't paying you enough to live on, but they had, they had you in a house and you had cars. So they kind of had a golden lasso around you, holding you in place. And then you had to break loose and find a way to get money you didn't have to start your own business. That's pretty astonishing. What would you advise someone who's in this service business? And I mean, if you go back to the very early days when you maybe didn't know what to charge or how much to charge or how to, how to structure your fees, are there any thoughts you have for somebody who's at that place? Like talking to them about how to get going, get some income coming in?

Dawn Apuan (14:48):

Oh man, that's a really big question. Um, you know, my immediate thought is mindset. Um, and I know that might not be the answer people want to hear, but it's through changing my mindset that I think I was able to shift. Um, I often laugh when I first started into copy and funnels. My first funnel was for a five day challenge. I did like 15 emails plus the sales page, plus the opt-in page. Thank you page. Like everything, whole package \$450.

Ray Edwards (15:24):

Wow.

Dawn Apuan (15:25):

I've had people that are like, man, I wish I knew you back then. Somebody got a good deal. Although ironically, she didn't think so. Which again is mindset on her part in the whole conversation about value and investment, but that's a whole nother conversation. So, you know, my mindset changed in the value of what I had to offer. I'm still as you know, up leveling that mindset. Um, and still in some cases undercharging. We've had this conversation. And so it's, it's all about mindset and your own confidence. Do you believe in yourself? Do you believe in the value, not even just of what you're offering, but the worth of you. And so it's, it's a much deeper conversation than just what price tag is on there. Like you have to be confident in that price. I had something you said early on is being able to name my price like I tell someone my phone number and that has stuck with me for a long time. Um, as I keep increasing my price and getting confident in those prices, you know, that's, that's a journey and I think we'll always be on that journey. Um, you know, as we get better, as we hone our skills, as we change who I think you have to start somewhere. So if you start at \$450, like I did it, at least got me in the game, it got me a testimonial. It got me out there. I didn't do it for free. Um, in order to get a testimonial, like a lot of people ask me that like, well, what's your opinion on doing something for free in exchange for testimonial? I wouldn't recommend it, but it got me started. But then I also, I worked so hard on my mindset. I still, to this day, invest in coaching. I invest in my mindset because that's the biggest game changer.

Dawn Apuan (17:17):

You are your biggest block, I think, to your own success. Um, what's between your ears and the belief that you're worth it, the belief that your work is valuable. And I, and I say that from a place of still being on that journey of still increasing my belief in myself as I increase my prices. So I think people need to start there when it comes to first starting out is just believing. Believe that you have value to give and have that solution and then say it as easily

and effortlessly as your phone number and just go for it. Be confident. People buy confidence. So really, if you're not confident, I don't care if you're selling it for \$5 or \$500 or \$5,000. If you're not confident in it, it's not going to sell. People will read that. So work on your mindset. I would say that's the number one thing that has shifted things for me is getting belief back in myself, believing that everything is working out for me. Um, believing in faith, even when it looks like it's not going to happen. And that's, that's a whole nother fun faith conversation, but, um, yeah.

Ray Edwards (18:35):

Yeah. That's, I think that's really powerful. And one thing that people get confused about when we talk about increasing prices, I think sometimes people hear me say, well, just double your prices. And they're like, why would I do that? I mean, in many cases they don't feel like it's worth what they're charging now. And that comes back to that mindset question. I mean, obviously the price you're charging has to be a fair price in that if I'm investing and I do my part correctly with the copy that you wrote for me, I have a good chance of making a return on my investment. We don't ever, I don't ever encourage anybody to figure out my product or my service is worth a hundred dollars. Therefore I'll charge a thousand. That's not my point. I think the, the challenge people have is understanding how much value they do bring to the table. And if, if you have a really accurate view of your value and you're still not making enough money, then the answer is increase your value. Get better.

Dawn Apuan (19:33):

Yeah.

Ray Edwards (19:34):

That's usually not the problem though. And I, I'm sorry to inform you that there are people who will take advantage of you if they sense that you're not super confident. There are people who will say to themselves, this person is very talented and gifted and they don't know it. And therefore I'm going to get them to do this for 500 bucks when I would pay 5,000. That does happen. So working on your mindset is, is really of paramount importance. Talk to me a little bit about where you feel like your business is today and what you think is next for you.

Dawn Apuan (20:10):

Where I am today? So like I mentioned, within that first year, I hit six figures and then my goal is to get into the seven figure range. I know you and I have talked about this. I, I want to be a six-figure giver. I have a heart for others, um, which, you know, as a service provider, that makes sense. I like to help people, but often it takes money to help people. So I'm on track to hit multiple six this year with a goal of seven in 2022. Now it could happen faster. Um, but you know, you just never know, just knowing, like I'm believing in faith that that's where I'm on track to hit and, um, to be able to serve that number of people, you know, as a copywriter, I'm super passionate about the fact that what I do serves the world because I'm helping other coaches and people who are solving solutions, solve more solutions by being able to sell more of their programs, more of their products, things like that. So I'm also kind of picky about who I take on as clients, because I want them to be transforming the world and making it a better place. So there's that facet of my business. I currently have multiple income streams, if we're talking about like done for you done with you. I love VIP days. Um, you know, something that you also teach, I know, is designing your business around your life. So knowing that my business is going to shift and change, I do a lot of done for you right now because I still have a kid at home. You know, we like to go to the park every afternoon. I don't want to be working. So, you know, done for you allows me to do it at night. So that's something definitely to consider for people. And I think I'll shift out of that, eventually. Lots of copywriters tell me I won't do it forever. The done for you projects. Um, and I love

coaching. I love teaching. So I do know, I believe that I will shift into that in the next, my daughter starts school in the fall. So I'm looking at my one to three year business plan. It does involve more coaching and more VIP days more working with people. Cause I really do love that. Um, and so right now I have a nice blend of done for you and done with you. So I get to work with people, but I also get to do a lot on my own so that I can fit it into my schedule. And one thing I thought of as you were talking earlier and just the whole mindset and confidence and what has shifted for me in 2021 is operating from more of a place of courage. And that came with, you know, having a lot of client successes, but also believing in myself and putting myself out there way more than I have been before. Um, I know in, in one of our mastermind calls that I had shared back in January, I did about, uh, over six figures of client contract within 11 days, which was more than all of 2020.

Ray Edwards (23:12):

Yeah. That was super exciting. That's how I ended up having this conversation. I'm like, dang, we need to tell people about that. That's inspiring.

Dawn Apuan (23:22):

Yeah. It was super fun. And um, that the one word I would say that made the difference was courage. And what I mean by that is I was putting myself out there. I was making offers all the time. I think we, we don't realize it. We don't do it on purpose, but I think we think people are just going to like come to us and, you know, book these big packages just out of nowhere. And you know, sometimes that might happen. You know, if somebody listens to a podcast cast episode, I've had that happen, somebody listened to a podcast I was on and then they reached out and they booked a big package, but you know, it also takes us making the offer and having courage. I was contacting, you know, at least 10 people a day reaching out and just asking, you know, how can I support you? I had a new retainer package at the time. Um, and so I was sharing some of that with contacts from masterminds, from past clients, from people who I knew had groups. So, you know, we get to be creative in how we find clients, whether it's guest experting for a mastermind or being on a podcast or, you know, who do you know in your circle? That's one reason that I love masterminds is who you get to meet in there, not to take advantage of them or, you know, try to just, just join for what you can get from it, but what you can give and the relationships that we build are phenomenal. I mean, I've met incredible people. It's one of my favorite parts of being an entrepreneur is all these friends that I have. It's funny. Um, a few weeks ago, my husband, I had put up a post and my husband had looked at it and he's like, I don't recognize any of these names. And he just was commenting about how fast, you know, in two years, like my whole friend base has changed, you know, my entrepreneurial world. And it's that whole thing of like, who are you surrounding yourself by? Um, has shifted from everybody who is, you know, maybe commenting on my posts a couple of years ago where people within ministry, within that circle of friends and now, and you know, he was a pastor with me. So we had all the same friends and now, like he doesn't know any of my friends, cause it's all online. You know, it's this whole community of people that I relate to, that I have these great friendships with, even though it's, you know, we're not anywhere geographically close, but we get each other. And so, you know, from those, like I said, you, you get this community, but you can also serve within the community. I, part of that, um, six-figures of contracts was one coach who has me come in every week to her mastermind to, to do hot seats for copy. So you just don't know, you don't know what connections and relationships that you build, what opportunities could come later from them. And, um, it was me just being courageous and putting myself out there again and again and again, and I did it afraid and I think that's an important piece of the conversation is that it wasn't easy for me, I'm an introvert by nature. One of those, you know, supportive type people who's, uh, you know, like at the party, I'm not the life of the party, I'm the one doing the dishes and making sure that everything's getting cleaned up and then everyone else is having fun. I'm not, you know, the, the center. So for me to put myself out

there, it did take courage and it did take confidence in knowing my worth and my value and just like admitting that to myself and then standing in that and taking nos and being okay with it. Um, so yeah, that's, that's the magic I created back in January and, uh, it was a fun ride. I learned a lot. And I think you also, it broke open possibility that, you know, getting clients is often a huge barrier for people, you know, I'm sure you've probably, I think you have a whole, you have a whole course on it. Um, people struggle with this and I've struggled with it as well. Like how do you get clients? Um, but when we can shift into this mindset that clients are there, we just need to be putting ourselves out there, having courage, doing it afraid and being okay with no, because no doesn't need to be a personal thing. It's just it's a no- it doesn't need to mean anything about you and that's okay. And then you'll have some yeses and I had yeses and it was amazing.

Ray Edwards (28:11):

Yeah. I mean that, what you're talking about really is the very definition of courage, which is not the lack of fear. It's feeling the fear and still going ahead and doing it, which is what you've been saying. And I love that about you. I admire it. It's inspiring. And your success is well deserved.

Dawn Apuan (28:27):

Thank you.

Ray Edwards (28:28):

And I'm sure there's more to come. If people want to get in contact with you or follow up with what you're doing, where's the best place for them to go.

Dawn Apuan (28:35):

The best place is my website, which is just dawnapuan.com or Instagram at Dawn Apuan. That's where I play the most on social media these days.

Ray Edwards (28:45):

How do we spell Dawn Apuan?

Dawn Apuan (28:48):

dawnapuan.com

Ray Edwards (28:54):

And we'll have that link in the show notes. Thank you so much for sharing. I really appreciate it. It's been fun going on this latest part of the journey with you and it's going to be fun as we continue on together.

Dawn Apuan (29:05):

Absolutely. I can't wait to see what the rest of 2021 brings. And thank you so much for having me on.

Ray Edwards (29:11):

My pleasure. So be sure and check out Dawn's site at the link that you find in today's show notes for the podcast. Until next time I pray that you live long and prosper. See you soon.

Announcer ([29:28](#)):

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