



Ray Edwards Show, Episode 527 You Are the Brand with Mike Kim

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

Ray Edwards Show, Episode 527. You Are the Brand with Mike Kim. [00:00:10] The Ray Edwards Show. This is the podcast for prosperity, with purpose. .

Kris Edwards ([00:00:20](#)):

Welcome into a very special episode of the Ray Edwards Show. Why is it special? Well, because of the amazing Mike Kim, that's why. Mike and Ray had a conversation talking about Mike's new book, which is called You Are the Brand. And I predict that this will be one of the most listened to episodes. One of the highest rated episodes, because it's going to help clarify things for a lot of people. We'll have all the links in the followup stuff at the end of the day. Meanwhile, let's jump in.

Announcer [00:00:45]

And now our feature presentation.

Ray Edwards [00:00:48]

How you doing, man?

Mike Kim [00:00:49]

I'm good.

Ray Edwards [00:00:50]

You have been super busy lately.

Mike Kim [00:00:52]

I mean, yes. But what do you expect? It'll sort of be over in like two weeks, which I'm happy about. Um, and I'm playing this little game with my scheduling. Did we start by the way? Is this like starting?

Ray Edwards [00:01:06]

We're starting. We started,

Mike Kim [00:01:07]

oh, we did. Okay. All right. Okay.

Ray Edwards [00:01:10]

I mean, no! This is all off the record.

Mike Kim [00:01:13]

Oh, okay. Yeah, I've been busy. It's been good. A good busy, and you know, this, like there are seasons where you just have to press the gas and there's no other alternative.

I mean, you just gotta, you gotta give what the project or the initiative deserves. You know, you gotta feed the, you gotta feed the baby.

Ray Edwards [00:01:33]

What you're good at though, let me just give you this perspective, cause I know what it's like on the back end of all this, but you're good at, on, on your social media of presenting the truth.

I mean, it's like, I've wrote all this stuff. I've been working on all of these documents, how many pages it was and it looks so fun and like that's the best job in the world. That guy's got the best job in the world. And then I see that and I'm like, why is it my business? Like then I realize, but I know what that's like on Mike's end of things right now. He's like he's in the red, he's going to be running in the red for a while. Is that right?

Mike Kim [00:02:12]

Yeah. Yeah. Definitely running in the red. And I think you and I are like this, uh, we can take an inordinate amount of work stress when people like you and I feel stressed. It's probably worse than most people. The load you can carry is significantly worse than most people can carry. Right. So when I know I'm feeling stressed, I'm like that's a, I'm clearly doing too much. About two or three weeks ago, I took a week off. I mean, I, I just completely took a week off in the middle of a book launch.

Ray Edwards [00:02:43]

Let me just qualify this taken a week off. Is that like, you really took the week off or is that like when people in our business say they have the week off, but they don't really they're checking social they're checking email. They're they're slacking on all their team members.

Mike Kim [00:02:56]

I deleted social media off my phone. I did not check. I deleted email off of my phone. My phone is, um, you know, a blessing and a curse, like it is for everybody. We're addicted to our phones. So I found that if I break up with my phone, it saves me a lot of other heartache. So my phone and I, you know, we're kind of seeing other people during that week.

Ray Edwards [00:03:18]

My wife has a friend for her friend and her husband have a problem. And her, my wife's friend was saying, well, yeah, he sleeps with his phone. And I'm like, is that, is that bad? Is that wrong? Am I doing something wrong?

Mike Kim [00:03:34]

My phone's not far from me. And that's the problem. I'm like, Hey, we're breaking up for a week. And I find that I'm not my laptop and I don't have that kind of relationship. My laptop has good, good boundaries. I have good boundaries with my laptop.

Ray Edwards [00:03:51]

It's more casual.

Mike Kim [00:03:53]

It's more casual. It's kind of, I'll see you when I see you.

Ray Edwards [00:03:56]

And there's no problem with that, either way.

Mike Kim [00:03:58]

No problem with that either way, it just sits on the floor. And, uh, really, that was the key. If you want to talk about essentialism, right? You make the one decision that saves you from making a thousand decisions. I decided if I'm going to break up with my phone for a week, then I won't have to decide when I'm going to open Instagram or not. And all these things. So what I did during my week off was, uh, oddly enough, I watched a lot of various TV shows. Uh, I exercised quite a bit. I slept a lot. And, um, that, that was it. And it was great. I really did take the week off. Then I said, I said this to myself, Ray, if I can do this in the middle of a book launch, why can't I do this every month? And I, I decided to play this little game. How many week offs can I take for the rest of the year? And I looked at my calendar and I was like, why don't I take a week off every month? How would I make this happen for myself? Come on. And then I looked at, well, I noticed there's nothing on Fridays. So what if every Friday I took off like really took off and not just didn't have Zoom meetings, but just really took off. Like how. And I know this might sound a little unbecoming to a lot of people who are listening. Cause right now they might be in the, you might be in the startup phase, which is what your business I've been in this for like eight years now. I'm like, if I'm working as hard as I did, when at this phase in the business, as when I was in the startup phase in the business, something's wrong, you know, like I'm not hiring out or I'm not doing things efficiently, like what's wrong? So now I'm trying to figure out, you know, half jokingly, how little can I do to keep this thing running? That's my quest for the rest of the year.

Ray Edwards [00:05:46]

I like that. And I think that's a good thing to do because it's so easy whether you have a business like you and I do. I mean, we're, we're kind of this, um, consultant, coach, Seth Godin would call us freelancers. I mean, I say I have a business, but the truth is, I think Seth's probably more, more on point. I'm really more of a freelancer. I have these big projects that I

do that bring in revenue. What you're talking about is so hard for us to do. And for people who are like climbing the career ladder, because you feel like you get caught in this trap feeling like, well, I got to keep feeding the social media machine. If I'm not putting stuff out there all the time, then I'm not present in the marketplace is what we're thinking. And I w what do you think about that?

Mike Kim [00:06:33]

I think it's a big lie because if you took everything away from my business and you only gave me one thing that I could have. It would just be my email list. That'd be it. A second podcast.

Ray Edwards [00:06:51]

That sounds so old-school.

Mike Kim [00:06:51]

Yeah. The second is my podcast. Now you knew me years ago when you know, my, my life kinda hit a, hit a wall, my personal life. And I didn't have the creative energy to do all this, all these shenanigans online, social media and all that. Dude, all I did was just write your email list and keep doing your podcast. That's all I did. And, and I kept the business afloat. So I look at this now and all the other things that we're doing YouTube, Instagram, especially these visual mediums that take a lot of time for guys like you. And I, because we're not videographers were, I mean, you're way more videographer than I am, but it's probably not a direct monetization channel the way the other ones are.

Ray Edwards [00:07:32]

Right.

Mike Kim [00:07:33]

I just, I just kind of feel like what would happen if I, you know, got really sick and I couldn't work the way that I do right now.

Ray Edwards [00:07:39]

I can tell you

Mike Kim [00:07:40]

what yeah, exactly.

Ray Edwards [00:07:43]

You can, you can get- you're screwed. That's what happens unless you've set things up in the meantime, before that happens, unless you've set things up so that you're taken care of. And I mean, what we're really talking about is, I mean, you are the brand.

Mike Kim [00:07:57]

Yeah. And you have to find ways to all right. So this kind of a meta thing, cause a lot of people are asking me, why'd you write the book? And I'm like, that's like asking a poet why they write poems. Like I didn't, yeah. I didn't do it as a business tactic. [00:08:16] I wrote it because I would not respect the guy I see in the mirror every morning. If he didn't write a book, at least one in this lifetime, because I knew I had it in me. I'd created eight years of content. And also though, I'm like, if I write a book and it does well, and it's a good book. This will help generate a lot of leads for me for the rest of my life.

Ray Edwards [00:08:39]

Yeah.

Mike Kim [00:08:39]

Like I know there are people that are reading your books now, five plus years after the fact of you publishing it. So when I looked at how would I systemize a thought leadership business I've never looked at and I've worked with a lot of thought leaders over the years, I've never seen a single successful thought leader, not have a book.

Ray Edwards [00:08:59]

Ya. Let's be clear. I mean, I've read your book, I've read it twice now. And it's, it's not one of those. Okay. I got to crank out a top of funnel piece so I can get people into my gigantic upsell hell machinery and chew up all their credit card. All the room that's left on their credit cards so I can get the 15 to \$20,000 they have left to their name. It's not one of those deals. This is a book that will stand the test of time. I think people will still be able to read this 50 years from now, and it'll still "work", and I love that about what you've done here.

Mike Kim [00:09:31]

Thank you. That's the way That I wrote it. And there was this one section where I wrote, um, my LinkedIn bio and I said, if LinkedIn is still around, by the time you read this, and my editor was like, why are you -Why are you writing that? I said, cause LinkedIn may be gone in 10 years. I don't know. Yeah. You know, and I, and I really intentionally wrote it that way. I took out a lot of references to anything that was, you know, time-bound as much as I could, uh, I didn't mention a lot of social media channels in the book. Um, my God, Ray, Instagram basically didn't exist seven years ago to me, you know, you don't know when something's going to change. TikTok didn't exist a couple of years ago. So, um, I really sent her the book on stories of and I answered these. I tried to answer these two questions in every chapter of the book. And this is how it came up with a lot of the stories. How did you learn that and how did you make that happen for yourself? Cause none of us went to school and got a degree in personal branding. None of us ever said, I went and got a graduate degree on how to start an internet based coaching business. They don't exist as far as I know. So when I asked myself, how did you learn this? That's when the stories in my mind started to come out. [00:10:43] So if someone's like, okay, if I tell people you got to write personal stories, I don't care what anyone says. If you're a personal brand, you have to write personal stories. Well, how'd you learn that? I asked myself that question. So how did I learn that? Let me think about this for a moment. Oh yeah. People have been trying to look good on the internet since the beginning of time. When was the beginning of time for me on the internet, it was in high school. What happened when you were in high school? On the internet? I created an instant messenger screen. And I was paralyzed by the prospect of writing or creating a screen name. Cause I wanted it to look good. And this is the opening chapter of the book and it was. I'm going to create this cool screen name, a play on my name. It's going to sound manly. All the girls will want to like me. And the name is Mikeovich and that, I mean if anyone's watching a video right now, Ray's laughing because...

Ray Edwards [00:11:40]

Like what, you're some, you're some Russian arms dealer now. What is the deal?

Mike Kim [00:11:45]

That's exactly what all my friends said, it totally backfired. And then there was this girl who I liked. I'm going to go on record, this is the only show that I've said this on, her name was Cindy. Okay. I like she knew it. She got, oh, I got a good screen name for you, Mike-o-bitch. Oh bro. What?

Ray Edwards [00:12:05] Ouch!

Mike Kim [00:12:05]

What? People have sucked on the internet since the beginning of the internet too. They didn't just start sucking now. They're haters on the internet since the beginning of the internet, you know, it's all good. It's all good. We're adults, you know, she probably lives in a miserable. No, I'm just kidding. But, but

Ray Edwards [00:12:22]

If there is justice in the universe.

Mike Kim [00:12:24] Ya, if there's, if there's justice, but that's how I came up with these stories. I came, I say that story hit me the night before the manuscript was due. Cause I couldn't figure out how to open the book. I had all these things, like content that I want to say, but what really helped me was to figure out how did I learn this? And so you mentioned this whole rat race that we're on for creating content and stuff like that. I just asked myself those two questions. Now, when I, when I S when I say something that I believe I asked myself, how did I learn that? There's a story? How did I make that happen for myself? There's another story. That's really how I wrote the entire book. If I say to somebody, personal brand is really important. You need to do this. Well, how did I learn that? That's what the entire is about. And it just sort of fell into place that way. It made it made, creating the content a little bit easier. Now I didn't really think about those questions until I was like three quarters of the way done with a book. So it was really lousy writing the first three quarters, but the last last quarter of the book was much easier to write. When I started thinking through the lenses of those questions.

Ray Edwards [00:13:24]

Somehow, I never would've guessed that. Somehow, you're able in your communication, through your emails and you're on your podcasts and your social media, you convey, I don't think, I don't think you're trying to, falsify anything. It's just how you flow. [00:13:39] It feels like you always know exactly what you're doing next. And you're very clear on that and it, and there's somehow. You have this way of building this core of content that over time looks very rock solid, steady. And I know you do a lot of other stuff that kind of falls by the wayside, but none of it sticks to you and I'm like, how does he do that?

Mike Kim [00:14:02]

I think the simpler your tools, the more likely you're going to use them. If I can't remember what I'm going to say in a 45 minute keynote and I need notes. Like something's wrong. Like if I need 10 pages of notes to share something for 40 minutes, something's wrong, there's too much in there. How am I going to expect these people to remember everything if I can't even remember everything.

Ray Edwards [00:14:34]

And, and the audience knows this, because think about the reaction you have when some guy walks up on the stage with a binder.

Mike Kim [00:14:41]

Especially if you're a pastor or a preacher. Good Lord. He walking up with three Bibles and, and an Ipad.

Ray Edwards [00:14:47]

And a binder and a big gallon of water

Mike Kim [00:14:51]

and props like good God. What he did is he just brought half your office out here. We're dead. You know? So I just try to keep things simple. I have this saying the framework frames the work. And if you have a solid framework, it gives people the creative space to find their own way in. It doesn't handcuff them. It doesn't formulize everything. It doesn't, you know, over process everything. It just gives them something simple to remember. Um, and the framework frames the work now, beyond that, if your framework's a little bit long and by long, I mean, probably more than three or five steps. Mines eight in the book, I'm not going to expect people to remember the framework. So what I try to do is paint analogies, because analogies are easy to remember. And that's what I actually worked a lot on, you know, in, in the content was coming up with analogies that could stick with people. So now I've got a list of analogies that I could pull from any time. I've got stories that I can pull. And if someone really wants the whole enchilada, I got this framework. But that's just how I've done it. Just try to keep it simple. I can remember all of them. I don't need notes and it's easy for people to remember, I think. Yeah. And it's very usable. I mean, you're, anytime I've seen you present or speak, or anytime you've been on a podcast or part of somebody's panel discussions, I mean, you are always the guy, people are walking away saying that Mike Kim, I can actually use what he had to say. I can take that and put it to work right now. That is. That's like a super power that people could decide to have, right? They could think, what can I give people they can use today? I think it is something that you need to develop. I think so many of us, we tend to think that more is better in reality, less is better, less, but better is better, less, but best is best. That's really it, the human brain does not have enough space nor the energy to process things. People don't want to think, believe it or not. Most people do not actually want to use their brain. They would rather just be kind of told what to believe and then repeat that over and over again. It's just human psychology. We just, it's just too hard.

Ray Edwards [00:17:09]

Yeah. Um, I'm biting my tongue because there's so much, I want to- so many quips I want to make about the last year and a half- people wanting to be told what to believe. Okay. Here's here's I want to, I want to go a different direction. I've been paying attention. People love it

when you speak, when we had you speak at our event, you've done it. You've spoken there several times. People- that's always their favorite session. And I've seen when you speak at social media marketing world, you've spoken at many other events. People always love your talks and you have this methodology you use in your speaking that I've never seen anybody else teach, but it's like 100% brilliant. Do you know what I'm talking about? [

Mike Kim [00:17:51]

I think so. And if I don't, I'll just, I'll just make one up.

Ray Edwards [00:17:55]

If you don't, we'll just edit this out

Mike Kim [00:17:56]

and not make me- not make me seem like, I didn't know what I'm talking about,

Ray Edwards [00:18:01]

I think you know what it is.

Mike Kim [00:18:02]

Yeah. Um, uh, so first of all, when I'm like in the process of preparing for a talk, right, I know that [00:18:12] a talk will maybe be 30 or 40 minutes. And here's one thing I've learned from podcasting. So if you are a podcaster listening or you've been interviewed on a lot of podcasts, Ray, we all realize 30 minutes of content can go really fast and you can't actually cover as much as you think you can in 30 minutes on a podcast.

Ray Edwards [00:18:35]

Yep.

Mike Kim [00:18:36]

Now take into consideration. Now you're not behind a microphone and measuring every word you're onstage, and you're probably adding a bunch of ums and pauses and gestures and talking to the sound booth and welcome everybody. Thank you for being here. You're burning up time. So when I look at a, a live talk, I say to myself, I can actually only say half of what I'd normally say in a, in a regular podcast episode. I can only put half of the content there. And so when I craft a new keynote from scratch, I'm looking at it this way. I talk about this in the book a little bit. What's the big idea? What's the main story that's going to anchor the idea? And what's the solution I want to give them? So if the big idea is that marketing isn't about closing a sale, it's about opening a relationship. Well, how did I learn that? How did I make that happen for myself? Right. What's the story? And I can talk about X number of stories where doors have been open to me. Not because I marketed well, but because I built good relationships. I mean, you're one of those people. You're one of those people. Um, other other folks in our midst are Pat Flynn, mutual friend of ours. Another one of those people. I never did a great ad campaign to try to get your attention and try to make me your friend. We just built friendships over time. And then you would say, come on my podcast. Or let me have you speak at the conference. And how did Mike get on those stages? He must have had some incredible email copy that he sent out in order to land that speaking. No, it's just, we were friends. And I can tell that story on the stage and then here's the solution. Right. And I will

put that into some semblance of order. Now, when I talk about actually sitting down for the crafting of the talk, those are my conceptual ideas. The first thing I do is determine what the call to action is at the end of the keynote, because if you don't know where you want to land the plane, you're not, you're just going to crash and burn. How do I want to end the talk? Am I allowed to give a call to action, to download my slides? Is it to follow me on a social media channel? Is it to whatever it is depending on the event coordinator, I'm going to determine what the call to action. And if I'm not allowed to promote anything, I will literally tell them here's what I want you to do next. The one thing I want you to do next after this talk, I want you to change your headshot to the same photo on all your social media. It can be that simple. There's always a call to action. Now, when I'm crafting the actual content of what I'm going to say, I will always write quotables or tweetables slash one-liners. I learned this years and years and years ago, um, from Lisa TerKeurst, I didn't, I know that we were all at Mike Hyatt's for like first or second platform conference. You were there. That's where we first met.

Ray Edwards [00:21:27]

Yep.

Mike Kim [00:21:28]

2013. And I still have, I had no idea who she was, but I remembered her presentation because she said, when I write a book, this is what I realized. When people stop highlighting, they stop reading, you know, I was like, Dang. That's good. I've never forgotten that eight years later. So when I wrote my book, You Are the Brand, you might think this is funny, but this is exactly what I did. I had a whole list of one liners. That I didn't write into the manuscript. My second revision, my whole job was to stuff the manuscript with those one-liners. I was like this one, where do I find the place to put this one liner, this one liner, this one line. That's why a lot of folks are saying like, Hey, the book is easy to remember. There are a lot of things in here. There are so much in, well, yeah, I put like 57 one-liners in here from my notes and my tweets and my Instagram posts that people have resonated with. So in a keynote talk, you can just imagine I stuff it with quotables and tweetables, and I can almost now to a T tell you when people are going to take out their phone and take a picture of the slide deck. And I'm like, that's what I want them to take a picture of. I want that quotable or tweetable. Then third, I gather or break down the story that's going to reinforce that one liner, right? So every one-liner has a story or there's, there's a general concept I follow never tell a story without making a point and never make a point without telling a story. The fourth is I create really minimalistic slides. Like if you need to squint, when you're in the front row to read the entire slide deck, something's wrong with you. We're not working at the NSA. We are not NASA. We are business speakers, you know, so I basically put one thing on a slide, especially if it's a keynote in a live presentation on webinars, you can get away with a little bit more cause people are right looking at the screen, but on a keynote stage, I just want one thing per slide. I don't overdress the slides. Most of my slides are just texts with a white or very slightly tinted background. That's it. And then the last thing is I dress the way that I want to be photographed because everyone's got a camera of some sort. Um, so it's those things that I do. I, I think that's what you're referring to.

Ray Edwards [00:23:51]

Yep.

Mike Kim [00:23:51]

But yeah, that's how I do it.

Ray Edwards [00:23:53]

That right there, folks is, uh, just in case you're wondering that's like a \$10,000, um, how to succeed as a personal brand when you're speaking, how to get noticed, how to get people, to remember you, how to get them to retweet you, quote you, and want to book you for their event to speak all wrapped up in the last 15 minutes or so. Somebody tell me I'm wrong. I've been to events where I paid \$10,000 for three or four days of training, and didn't get that much actionable stuff I could use that I'll still be using five or 10 years from now. So your book is called the *You're the brand*. *You Are the Brand*, um, I'm shortening it. I'm changing the title. *You're the brand*.

Mike Kim [00:24:34]

You the Brand

Ray Edwards [00:24:35]

You 'da Brand -The Eight-Step Blueprint to Showcase Your Unique Expertise and Build a Highly Profitable Personally Fulfilling Business. And my friend, this could not have come at a more appropriate time because I was just looking. This just came out two days ago, they're calling this the great resignation. 4 million people, or 2.7% of US workers quit their jobs in April. That's a record going back to 2000 in all 41% of workers globally are considering leaving their current employer this year. People are making big changes, and right now, if there's ever been a time, you need to think about your personal brand, It's a now. And you make a point in your book. I think it's really important. We all already have a personal brand. Yes.

Mike Kim: [00:25:25]

Yeah. Yeah. So you might as well be a better one. Now, when we hear this phrase, personal branding, this phrase has been around now in corporate America for the last couple of years. That's how you know, it's prevalent because corporate America is always five, six years behind, you know, the entrepreneurial curve, right. And I've actually been booked or had booking inquiries to come speak at these huge corporations, like Deloitte consulting, M and T bank. And I kindly messaged them. I'm like, are you sure I'm the right guy for this? Cause I'm going to tell all your people to quit their day job and start this. I don't think that's the kind of personal branding you want me to come in and talk about. What they mean is reputation. What I mean by personal branding, now, this is not, it's not just your reputation. It's a confluence of your ideas, your expertise, your personality, and your reputation. It's all of those things. There are things that I teach that other people out there on the internet teach in their own way, but essentially it's marketing and branding and all things being equal, they will choose me or choose that person just because they liked me better. Or they liked that person better. That's personality. Being the best doesn't make you everyone's number one choice. Cause being the best is also relative. I mean, it's why there are folks who like basketball players, other than LeBron James. He is the best player, but he doesn't have a hundred percent fan base and what's that have to do with? His personality, just there's all these intangibles around him. So yeah, I think the book is coming out at an opportune time. It's going to be the wild west out there with everyone kind of starting their own thing up, but I think that this actually makes the world a better place, because I think that when we are sharing from our core and sharing our stories and sharing our expertise, and we're happy about what we're doing for a living, this is a good thing.

Ray Edwards [00:27:22]

So I'm thinking through what you just said. What kinds of businesses does this not work for?

Mike Kim [00:27:28]

I would phrase it this way. There are some businesses it doesn't have to work for, and there are other businesses that it absolutely has to work for. And then there are some who are in between. So let me give a few examples. I have a friend in the DC area. He owns a number of car dealerships. Nobody knows who he is. The problem he solves is he sells cars. That's it. He's - he's very successful. Uh, he makes a lot of money. The business is doing well. A says a bunch of cars. Now, if he were to leverage his personal brand in the advertising of his car dealerships, he could do that. And I've seen some people do that very, very well. But if you're in a space or in a type of business that sell something that people need, no matter what, you don't necessarily need to have the personal brand upfront and drive it.. Right. You're selling Q-tips people don't need to know who you are. Right. They don't really need to know that, they just need Q-tips and toilet paper. Okay. And cars. Now we look at somebody who's in the middle of the spectrum, Sara Blakely. She's a great example of this. She's the founder of Spanx, a clothing line for women- athletic wear and all this sort of stuff. Her customers love her products and they love Sara. They know her, but she's selling pants. She's selling yoga pants, leggings, you know, all this sort of stuff. She's just selling clothes, but they know her and they love her. She has become and used the personal brand to drive sales of this. But here's why that's important in her business and not the Gap or Banana Republic or any other clothing line because her clothing line isn't about clothing. Her clothing line is about empowering women to feel a certain way in their own skin. If you listen her Sarah Blakely story, the reason she started these clothes was because she was buying other athletic wear, what not, casual wear and it didn't fit. So she took some scissors and cut it all up until it was comfortable for her. That's the story that she tells. It's a personal story. That's why she's created. So now what's happening in her buyers- yeah. You know what I'm part of those leggings from that other company didn't fit me right, either. Or, I have a similar body type to Sara Blakely. I that's, I totally resonate with what she's saying. I don't feel comfortable in these clothes or I want something that fits my body. It's not clothing that she's selling to people. It's empowerment. It's that security. It's that identity. Now, I know I'm getting super meta psychological here, but that's exactly what's happening. Oh, that's just for women, Mike. No, it's not. There are entire brands for men that are out there that do that. The way a t-shirt fits the way that you know, uh, I'm seeing all these ads online right now for boxy t-shirts stopped wearing boxy T-shirts. They make you feel fat.

Ray Edwards (00:30:30):

Yeah.

Mike Kim (00:30:31):

Right? It's not about the actual shirt. It's about how we feel in the shirt. So that's aspirational in nature. So we need the personal brand, if we are in a business that is aspirational in any way, shape or form. You need that. Now on the extreme example where you actually need a personal brand are folks who are selling empowerment and selling personal development and selling growth and selling that kind of wealth or selling even the lifestyle kind of business. You need that because if, if we weren't doing that, if we were just selling information, there's no authority behind it.

So a few more examples, and I'm glad we're talking about this cause this is, this is extra. This is not in the book. Right. Um, have you noticed how every great business author who had written a great book 10 years or older, I'll give you a few examples. *The Go-Giver* by Bob Burg

Influenced by Cialdini, right? *The Fred Factor*, Mark Sanborn. Like all these guys who have written a classic business book, Gay Hendricks, and *The Big Leap*, you know what they're all doing right now? They're all podcasting their butts off. They're all creating YouTube videos. They are retroactively building a personal brand around their cornerstone stuff from years ago. If that doesn't tell you that if you're in the idea expert space that you need a personal brand. I don't know what else to tell you. Sure. We see the guys like Tony Robbins or John Maxwell who are out there who have had brands for a long time. You used to be able to hide behind your work only. That day's gone. Cialdini was a college professor. He wrote that book *Influence* like 30 something probably like 30 years ago around there, marketers hijacked it to use it, to teach marketing. Guess what he's doing? He's not sitting around- he's oh my book's a classic. People will read it. It'll feel- Nope. He's speaking at conferences. He's teaching marketing. He's doing all the things that you and I are doing now.

Ray Edwards (00:32:41):

Yeah. And to your point, uh, if you, if you pay attention, Jim Roan and Zig Ziglar are both running personal brands right now, they're doing Instagram. They're doing reels. They're doing YouTube. They're doing YouTube shorts. And you might ask, well, how are they doing that? Since they're both dead? Well, they're the business, the legacy of content they left behind the books, the trainings, their families, or the companies that survive them are now retroactively going back and grabbing those, all that audio and video and mixing it all together, remixing it and using it to keep the personal brand alive. That's why people today who did not grow up, seeing Zig Ziglar speak at every sales conference know who Zig Ziglar is because of his personal brand. I'm not even sure he was conscious of having one. So if you feel like maybe you feel like, well, maybe it's too late for me. I've already written my books. I've already created my training programs. No, it's time to giddy up, breathe new life into your business,

Mike Kim (00:33:50):

Take it off the shelf. Learn the things that you need to learn in terms of the channel that you want to share them on. Get really good at that because you've got the content probly. Here's the thing, Ray, You and I've seen this countless times with the people that we coach, they don't know what they want to say. If you already know what you want to say, you're ahead of the game. You're ahead of the game, a friend. So get focused on the right thing, which is learning how to say it in the medium that you need to say it, it it's podcasting, YouTube, Instagram, whatever it is, publish that content. Well, how am I going to stand out? How am I going to, well, we talk about that in the book. And we talked about that a little bit here in today's interview, but you've got to put context around it with stories. We know the stories of dead men. I know who Jim Rohn's mentor was Jim Rohn's. dead longer than like 30 years. I know his stories. Yes, Earl Shoaff Mr. Shoaff when Jim Rohn was 25 years old, I know all these stories because I listened to the guy's content.

Ray Edwards (00:34:49):

And when that girl scout rang my doorbell

Mike Kim (00:34:52):

Exactly every day, I'm listening to his stuff.

Ray Edwards (00:34:56):

What's really cool about your book that I wanted to be sure and express while we're talking about your book, because from this day forward there will be a charge every time I mention your book- no I'm kidding. I, you know, I hired you two years back to come consult with me on my brand. I needed an outside pair of eyes to look at what I was doing and say, here's the things you could do better, Ray. Here's the things you're missing. And that's, that's something

to take note of. You always need somebody else outside of your particular frame. Outside of your picture particular picture frame to look at your business or your endeavors and give you that perspective. Because as the saying is you can't see the picture when you're inside the frame. And I remember us going over things that I, as I was reading your book, I'm like, oh, I remember when we talked about that at the boardroom, at the Davenport hotel, when Mike came in for our consult. So you're really getting like the best ideas, the big picture frameworks that you use when you're working with top level executives and entrepreneurs, now, that you've put these in this book. And if you can, if you can fathom taking 20 bucks, I'm not sure how much is the book?

Mike Kim (00:36:11):

Yeah. It's like 20 bucks, whatever Amazon says,

Ray Edwards (00:36:15):

Investing \$20 to get these extraordinarily valuable insights. You've got the blueprint you need to start building or rebuilding or reformulating your own personal brand.

Mike Kim (00:36:27):

Thank you. And here's the thing. I've heard that from a lot of folks, you can, you put so much stuff in this book. Oh my gosh, are you giving away too much for, you know, 20 bucks? And here's the thing. My responsibility is to give people the tools that can help them. Actually, I learned this from you years ago. I don't know if you remember saying this, but here we go on record again. You're responsible to your clients, not for them. And if you are in this expert, industry, I learned that directly from Ray. I remember you saying that when one of our masterminds in Phoenix, I have it in my notes and that took all the pressure off because the pressure off of trying to get people to drag them across the finish line and also the pressure to like hide the stuff that I know. Because if I tell people what I know that doesn't automatically mean they're going to cross the finish line. So there's no difference. I'm just giving it away. If you're a thought leader and you never share your thoughts, you have no marketing. I don't know what else people can read your mind.

Ray Edwards (00:37:30):

Right?

Mike Kim (00:37:31):

So the book is a way for people to read my mind, to see exactly how I think to see what I know. But just because they have, it doesn't mean that they're going to do it. You still need to get into the gym. I don't care if you know how to do a bench press with perfect form. Unless you go to the gym, you're not gonna get any stronger. So the way that I see my business, and you mentioned before, we're all freelancers. Yeah, I absolutely agree. I love coaching people. I still love, I love doing webinars. I love coaching calls and I love running mastermind groups. I do not, contrary to popular belief, I think a lot of people think I just sit there on the internet, or behind a laptop and publish content and just sell online courses 24 7. I don't do that. I have a few products that are like that.

Ray Edwards (00:38:16):

I know, I know this to be true. You you're speaking 100% truth right now And sorry to interrupt your flow. But I just, I was smiling Cause as you were saying that, I realize that it's true. You spend a lot of time coaching and teaching for other people. Like other people ask you, can you come teach my mastermind group this and you go all over the world and do that. Which you've been doing over the course of the last year and half or so much to my chagrin. I would,

I'm locked down by my munificent governor. And you're in Florida on the beach. I'm like, what is wrong with this picture?

Mike Kim (00:38:51):

Well, I think you have to be willing to get in the dirt with people, right? And that's actually where you learn the best stuff, the best ideas in this book, in anything ever I've ever created. Were in the context of interviews like this conversations like this masterminds coaching programs, the whole illustration of the path that I drew in the book, the path, the person was literally on a whiteboard at a workshop in new Orleans. I still have the photo. It's horrific. It looks terrible. It's just a bunch of stick figures with scribbles on them. And I hired my designer, friend, Jason to doll it up a little bit. I never would have come up with that sitting around in my desk after recording two podcast interviews by myself. One of the analogies I use in the book is, and you know, I'll pick a fight here. This is where a lot of people, you know, get this wrong. I want to create an online course and sit back and watch the cash roll in. Well, guess what? You don't have the skills to produce a really good online course. There are five plays in the personal brand, correct me if I'm wrong, but every successful course creed or where people have said this course was good. Not just bought it, but said, this was good. Has either been great at coaching, speaking, writing, or consulting. You have to be great at one of those four things. At least. Tony Robbins is a great speaker. John Maxwell is a great speaker and coach. Jeff Walker is a great consultant and coach. These guys are great at what they do. And so many of us, so many people in the marketplace, they just want to launch an online course, and they don't realize that they're like trying to, it's like, they're trying to make the NBA by practicing a LeBron James highlight.

Ray Edwards (00:40:39):

Yeah,

Mike Kim (00:40:39):

That would be so silly. They can't run. They can't pass the dude. If I just make this one, play, this one, highlight that I saw on ESPN. I can make the NBA. This is ludicrous. But, but that's what we see in this space. They haven't done the work of becoming really good at one of those four things. And then there are those, those people can do all of those things pretty well. But if you take those four things, speaking, coaching, writing, consulting, what am I particularly the best at? Writing and consulting? I think speaking is a by-product of a lot of things that I've done. I think coaching is something that I had to learn because I don't like to ask people questions. I just want to tell them what to do. That makes me more of a consultant.

Ray Edwards (00:41:22):

Yeah.

Mike Kim (00:41:23):

But I've learned how to channel those skills into speaking and into coaching where I can do that. Now at scale over the 10, 12, 15 years. You know, I, I came from a ministry background, you know, that all I did was speak and coach and mentor people. So we look at that now and it's like, where are the skills where you focusing on? If you're listening and you're like, I've thought about doing Ray's copywriting program. Well, then go do it and get really good at writing. Learn that one thing that's going to give you the edge over everybody else. And the other skills will fall into place.

Ray Edwards (00:42:05):

Yeah and lest anybody think that you have to be a teacher and build online courses and that kind of stuff in order to build a personal brand. I know that's not what you're saying. Cause

this, this building a personal brand, I think right now is the most important thing you could do. If you're an orthodontist. If you own a nail salon, if you have a bookstore, it doesn't matter. I don't think whatever business you're in, whatever you do. This is where I think the opportunity is for people like the ones I just mentioned and 10,000 other businesses. The way you win over your competition and you get more customers or more loyal and spend more money with you and your business grows over time. And it survives through something like a pandemic. If you own a restaurant or a bar is you, are you start building your personal brand around what you do. You don't have to sell courses online for this to work. Am I right?

Mike Kim (00:42:58):

Absolutely. Absolutely. How many, how many people go to a restaurant because they know who the chef is. That's a thing. People do this. They get onto a Netflix special and see Jose Andres has a new restaurant in, in DC. We got to go. I've literally heard my friend say that, you know? Um, oh, she, she started a new hair salon in the next town over. You got to go, I've walked into restaurants in Florida, well it will have, this is a Ray Edwards restaurant. Yeah. And then I go, who's that guy? And I look him up on Instagram. Like the food here was good. Let me go to one of the other places. We're seeing this everywhere. It's all about identity.

Ray Edwards (00:43:40):

We just had a cycling workout facility open up here called CycleBar. And um, I noticed they started this new Instagram account and it's mostly young ladies who teach these classes to other young women. And they've got tons of video and pictures and it's all the different instructors. And they're, they're like competing with one another saying, well, Missy's got a class tonight, but I've got one at 5:00 AM tomorrow. If you want to wake up and really get your adrenaline flowing before you start the Workday meet me tomorrow morning at five at CycleBar south. And they've done an incredible job of building this, this online, social media, personal branded presence, not just for one person, but for like all their instructors. It's I mean, it's really been a textbook example for me to show to other people say, look, this is how you do this. When you don't sell courses or teach people how to get rich on the internet. This is how you build an actual business using personal branding.

Mike Kim (00:44:34):

Think about the last time you moved, like to a completely new city or state- one. Where's the doctor.

Ray Edwards (00:44:44):

Yeah. Where is the doctor, where's where's my attorney, where's the hairdresser where's where am I gonna go exercise? Where am I going to work out? Where am I going to play golf? Where's my kid going to go to school? Where are we going to do our shopping? Where's the, the local bookstore, that's cool. It's not like the big national chain, but the local bookstore. There's all these questions that are in your mind. And the best way to be known for that is to be known for it.

Mike Kim (00:45:09):

I've asked my misuse in the DC area, give me your number. Because if you ever leave this particular business, I'm going to where you are. I mean, it doesn't get much more personal than the lady kneading knots out of my shoulders every week. You know? And if you are giving your content, you're sharing your tips online. Like this is what you do. I mean, people can take you everywhere and anywhere cause they have you on their phone, you know, unless they break up with their phone for a week like I did, but I still came back. Still came back to you'll always come back. Let's face it. You always come back. Like I'm like a moth to a flame

with like a bad relationships. Keep coming back. Ray. This is my dating life. You know, I just keep going back.

Ray Edwards (00:45:53):

Now You've made me think of the Norm MacDonald moth story.

Mike Kim (00:45:57):

Yeah. If you go down that rabbit hole.

Ray Edwards (00:45:58):

it's too long, just Google Norm McDonald moth story,

Mike Kim (00:46:02):

moth story.

Ray Edwards (00:46:03):

It'll be. And don't don't fast forward. Watch the whole thing.

Mike Kim (00:46:06):

Yeah. It's, it's incredible because there's are so many people and I get this as well. Like, uh, I'm gonna to go meta here for, for a moment. People ask me all the time where they say I'm, I'm not sure what to share on social. I don't want to come across as arrogant. I don't want to come across as somebody who's like self-aggrandizing. And so I say this, um, in the book, and this is a very minor point. I'm going to touch on that in a second. That became a major point that I didn't know would become a major point of the book. So I say on one hand, there are people who present a false version of themselves, right? They like rent an Airbnb stage of photo-shoot and imply that it's their house and this is not the way to do it. You know, these people feel like they are owed this attention rather than they're trying to earn it. Then you have these folks on the other side, who overshare in the name of authenticity. That's a big word these days, right? Authenticity. We're gonna just be real. And they don't actually sell solutions. They're selling their struggles. And then they wonder why they can't grow a business. And I'm like, you're like a car wreck on the interstate. You get a lot of attention when you post these things, but nobody wants to hang around your negative energy.

Ray Edwards (00:47:09):

Yeah.

Mike Kim (00:47:10):

Right? You know, these posts were like, well-known gurus, shame, haters. Like it doesn't, you can't build a community around shaming haters. You know, I just don't do it. I get, I get my fair share of stupid messages from people on the internet. Yeah. But you can't build a community around that,

Ray Edwards (00:47:29):

especially.

Mike Kim (00:47:30):

what do you do?

Ray Edwards (00:47:30):

especially if you've got a big following and then you're taking some poor.

Mike Kim (00:47:34):

petty,

Ray Edwards (00:47:34):

poor private citizen who shared an opinion with you and you hang them out to shame them.

Mike Kim (00:47:39):

Yeah. I saw that. Yeah. I saw a well known author do that the other day on Facebook with a bookstore that he owns and I'm like, come on now. You don't really need to do that. So the big question becomes, then here's how you figure out what you want to build your brand around the things that you're sharing. Can you build a campfire around it? Can you build a camp- by that I mean, is it warm? Is it inviting? Is it inclusive? Is it a light in a dark place? Is it a place where people can share stories and, like campfires, build a community around? Because last time I checked, you can go to Jose Andres restaurant in DC, very fancy. And they have fake campfires. Cause people like to gather around fires. And that's why the cover of the book is orange. Right? It was, I wanted to communicate that warmth.

Ray Edwards (00:48:25):

Oh, I thought it was because you're a Denver Broncos fan.

Mike Kim (00:48:28):

No, definitely not. Definitely not a Denver Bronco fan, you know? And, but you know, I don't hate them. I don't hate them like the Patriots. But, um, so, but that becomes the leading question. Like how do you build a campfire around it? And what's funny is that as soon as I started to share that one little thing from the book, even before we designed the cover, it just resonated with a ton of people. And what I realized is that, I said this earlier, you know, I have this eight step framework. I know nobody can remember the eight step framework, but they're going to remember that analogy. They always say that I love that analogy. I love the analogy. And what's interesting is that once you can communicate your content and your ideas, your expertise in these little analogies or pictures, or one-liners like we've been talking about all day today, it actually becomes the talking point for the content.

A great example of this is Malcolm Gladwell's 10,000 hours. You know, that's a really minor point in his book. It's not even a chapter title from what I remember, but that's what everyone talks about is become a little campfire for people to build a community around and discuss. Do you really need 10,000 X hours in something to become an expert? Or do you not? There are entire YouTube videos that fight over this topic, then what happens? Everyone goes, buys the book. Everyone knows who he is. So as much as we try to create the perfect brand and the perfect script and the perfect framework, you never really know what's going to stick home until you get out there in the field and share it. So, um, you're the first I've ever person I've talked to about this publicly, but we're going to design t-shirts around this little campfire drawing.

That's inside the book, you know, on the front of the chapter, we're going to design a little t-shirts, you know, and it's, and that's why the tone of my Instagram posts for the last two months has been a little bit of an orange hue on my photos. Like I've taken photos, regular photos and overlaid, sort of a warmer tone. And it's why I'm getting away from like the blue and stuff like that. That I've used for years. I'm going to change the name of my podcast to You Are the Brand, because I want people to feel that and have that soak in and that's a meta

thing. But another meta thing is like, well, Mike, do I always have to share content that educates and teaches people? Ray, you and I both know this, we don't do this all the time. You share the coffee shop, you share things in life.

You wouldn't believe the response I got from sharing the video of me showing my mom, the book, my book, she hates being recorded.

Ray Edwards (00:51:16):

Yeah.

Mike Kim (00:51:17):

I caught her in the middle of, you know, her making lunch or something. I came over for the day. And you know, it was one of those cases where it's better to ask for forgiveness than permission. There was no call to action necessarily in the book. You know, I told people where they can get the book. I didn't say buy now, buy. Now, this book will change your life. So many people resonated with it because that's a campfire moment who can't sit around a campfire and tell heartwarming stories about their mom or a mom telling you heartwarming stories about their kid who, you know, nearly failed out of high school and actually wrote a book. She's going to tell that story, the rest of her life. That's why that works. But strangely enough, people learn a lot about me from a post like that. I mean, if you want to get really meta? Mike's. Wow. Mike's, he's pretty good at marketing, but he's a family man. That's good. Oh, he has a good relationship with his mom. How nice? Oh, I learned that he didn't really do so well in school, but his mom said he was smart. That's all branding, dude. There are people that said, literally I like you more after seeing this video, that wasn't my plan. that's what happened.

Ray Edwards (00:52:18):

It's this stuff that makes you unduplicatable. And I think probably that's maybe one of the top things on people's minds right now, as they think about building an online business or promoting their business online and being a personal brand, is they probably are thinking, well, you know, I'm not going to be the only tax attorney on Instagram. So I don't know how I can build a brand around that. Well, you don't build a brand around that. You build the brand around you. That's that's why.

Mike Kim (00:52:46):

You Are the Brand.

Ray Edwards (00:52:46):

Yeah. That's why the book's called *You Are the Brand*. Right. So if so, if they, uh, if we buy the book, we get more than just the book, right?

Mike Kim (00:52:55):

Yes. We get a, you get all these bonuses and these bonus bonuses are in perpetuity. Okay. You get them forever. Um, the first is a Founder's magazine, featuring stories of people who have made the leap full-time into a personal brand. Ray of course I gave you top billing in the magazine.

Ray Edwards (00:53:11):

This is the best thing of all the things you're getting is this, this Founder's magazine it's it's awesome.

Mike Kim (00:53:17):

It's really cool because I took examples from people who are in the online space, but also from other industries. One of the guys that's in there right in the beginning, a gentleman named Alex, you, Alex is one of the top performing real estate agents in the country, very competitive market, Orange County, California. He leverages his personal brain as a realtor like no one I've ever seen. Um, Steven Thrasher, who's an intellectual property attorney that you and I both know he has leveraged his personal stories to grow his practice. I mean, it's incredible. So we have entire stories there because my story is not everyone's story, right? Your story is not everyone's story. Every, every person's path is different. But the worst thing to feel is that you are alone and that you're some loser or some crazy person who's trying to start this new endeavor. So get these stories. Then we have some stuff on how to build brand guidelines and how to wire frame your website. And Steven put something together on how to protect your intellectual property. We have some stuff on workflows and the systems I use to run a business like this one, but that Founder's magazine is, is gold because you need to get around people. I bet you, most people don't know. Pat Flynn, our mutual friend was, he was an architect and he got fired from his job.

Ray Edwards (00:54:32):

Right?

Mike Kim (00:54:33):

Most people don't know that

Ray Edwards (00:54:34):

This is a great, I love what you did with this magazine and the way you told the backstories of the people that are featured in it and how they started off. And, um, of course, you know, I knew Pat was an architect. I found out it was, I knew him for some time before I found out he actually was the guy who drew the plans for the PF Chang's I like to eat downtown Spokane. That was like, Pat's last architectural project that he did before he was fired. So I love this, this magazine and all the different people that you have in it, different industries. If you're looking for like inspiration about how different people approach this, you definitely need to get this and check it out. And so you get that with the book and you get all the other stuff you're talking about, where is the best place to go pick up the book?

Mike Kim (00:55:16):

Youarethebrandbook.com.

Ray Edwards (00:55:19):

Clever!

Mike Kim (00:55:19):

Whether you get the- yup. Whether you get it on Amazon, Barnes and noble, anywhere you want to go to Youarethebrandbook.com send in your receipt. It's just a simple screenshot. We don't need the paper or anything like that. Just let us know you bought the book and then you can boom, grab all of these bonuses. It includes all the templates that are inside the book as well, the copywriting templates and stuff like that, that are all inside the book. And you know, if you're a Ray Edwards fan, he's in the book like nonstop. So there you go. You'll hear a lot about how Ray and I and our, our relationship started. And, um, it's a really cool thing, man. So thank you for having me on today. It's kind of surreal to see all this come full circle all these years later, since 2013.

Ray Edwards (00:56:02):

When I, when I think about how we first met, I mean, I didn't didn't see this coming, but it's been a natural evolution. I can now it's like, well, of course, this is how it would have happened because this is how it should have happened. And it did. And I want to alert you to the secret scheme that Mike has. What he's up to right now by getting you to get by this book and, and enroll, get all the free bonuses he's going to help you a whole lot. So that you'll think that Mike guy is pretty helpful. And then if someday you need something that he's got for sale, you might go back and invest in it, or you might not. But his, I mean, this is it. His secret agenda is to help you by helping you.

Mike Kim (00:56:41):

That's all I want to do. Yeah. It's funny. I, uh, you know what? I came across on a, I want to say this before we sign off, um, I found the video that I sent you in 2013.

Ray Edwards (00:56:57):

You did not.

Mike Kim (00:56:58):

I did. I did. Um, I'm going to use this for some, we're going to have to cut it up into some sort of video to see like how we started, right? So everyone listening to this, this is how this all happened with Ray. He put out an email and I still remember the subject line. May I promote you? So of course I opened the email and it was this email that, you know, Ray was doing this promotion at the time. And he wanted people to give a testimony about his programs, shared on YouTube tag him, share on their Facebook page, tag him, share it on all the other social media channels and tag him. You send in a video and talk about it. Now this video was so bad. So those of you watching on YouTube, you're going to see this better than the ones who are listening on the podcast, but I'm gonna explain it to you. I was sitting in the boardroom of the company that I was working at as the CMO at the time I had no microphones. I didn't understand anything. I didn't even start my podcast then. So I didn't have any of this gear. I talked into the laptop speakers in this cavernous boardroom. Bro, You would've thought that we were like in the grand canyon or something with the echo there. And Ray for good measure, Uh, I didn't, I didn't change. I didn't try to dress up or anything like that as I was wearing what I wore to work that day. And I shot the video like this, and I was looking to the upper left of the camera and you have this horribly unflattering angle of my ear and my jaw. And of course, you know, the neck flab, that's going back and forth. And I found this video and it's awful and terrifying and hilarious, but I took a step and responded to an invitation and little did I know I was the only person who sent in a video.

Ray Edwards (00:58:49):

Yup.

Mike Kim (00:58:50):

And when we met at Michael's conference, I think the first or second thing you said to him, I said, Hey Ray, I'm Mike Kim. And you said, you're the one who sent me the video.

Ray Edwards (00:59:00):

Yep.

Ray Edwards (00:59:01):

I remember that. Well, I thought that was such a brilliant idea for a contest. I didn't realize I had made it so complex that nobody would complete all the steps except you.

Mike Kim ([00:59:11](#)):

And here we are because you knew who I was before I got to the conference because I created a piece of content. It wasn't very good content, but you at least knew who I was, I wasn't one of the other 150 strangers or fan boys that were there. That would say, Hi Ray, I read, I love your stuff. Like you knew me, you knew my face. You knew my name. And it was just a piece of content that really changed the trajectory of everything. So thank you for hosting that contest.

Ray Edwards ([00:59:37](#)):

Ya, we hung out together. We talked, we became friends and just over time, things unfolded the way they did.

Kris Edwards ([00:59:46](#)):

I got to tell you, I ordered Mike's book. As soon as I was done editing the interview that you just heard, I suggest you do the same thing. We'll have all the links in the show notes at rayedwards.com/527. [Rayedwards.com/527](http://rayedwards.com/527). And as Ray would say, and also a famous copyrighted character live long and prosper. See ya.

Announcer ([01:00:13](#)):

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