



Ray Edwards Show, Episode 534 Read to Lead With Jeff Brown

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

Ray Edwards Show, episode 534. Read to Lead- With Jeff Brown.

Announcer ([00:10](#)):

The Ray Edwards Show. This is the podcast for prosperity, with purpose.

Ray Edwards ([00:21](#)):

I am so thrilled to have as my guest on the podcast today, a dear friend, we've known each other for quite some time, and I felt like this day had been coming for so long. Jeff Brown, welcome to the podcast.

Jeff Brown ([00:34](#)):

Thank you for having me. I'm delighted to be here. And, uh, I dreamed of this day and here it is. So I'm pretty excited.

Ray Edwards ([00:41](#)):

For many years, you've hosted a podcast called the Read to Lead podcast, and that's how we first got to know one another, I believe through the mutual acquaintance of Mr. Michael Hyatt,

Jeff Brown ([00:51](#)):

Quite possibly.

Ray Edwards ([00:52](#)):

And you've read and talked about so many books and about the importance of reading for leaders. And now you've got this book called appropriately enough *Read to Lead*. In today's world, why do you think it's important for us to read as leaders

Jeff Brown ([01:05](#)):

Ray, I think our aural, A U R A L brains sort of evolve to, um, a more, um, uh, sort of higher level cognitive function when it came to reading centuries ago, that's a fancy way of saying, I think we kind of realized that through books, we not just learn or change what we think about, but also how we, how we think and in books help us do that. And in these more bite-sized ways of consuming content here, as of late in the web generation, I think our brains are evolving the other direction. Our attention spans are quickly shrinking. I think books do still

matter for the sake of, of the brain is what I'm ultimately trying to say. And I think it's important not to forget that because in reality, a lot of us, uh, this may not apply to many listeners of your audience, but, but by and large, as a society, there are a couple of reasons we resist traditional books. And one of those is, uh, we don't want to learn. Ultimately learning requires acknowledging briefly that we, that we don't know something, which we're taught to avoid, and it's, it's easier not to learn and get back to work. And, and the other issue is we don't want to change our minds. If a book is going to help us get somewhere we're unable to get to on our own, or haven't been able to get to on our own, that means, uh, we have to be willing to change our minds about something. Both of those things make us uncomfortable. Uh, I learned a long time ago that, um, your comfort zone is not where the magic happens. It's only outside of it. And so I, I want to always be doing things that push me outside of my comfort zone. And for me, that definitely includes learning and changing my mind about things from time to time, you know, Ray, our, our, our brains interact with a physical book in a unique way. Spatially, there, there's a way our brain relates to books. There's a left-hand page and a right-hand page. There's the top of the page, middle and the bottom of the page. And as we read, and we're reminded of things the author wrote about earlier in the book, and we think back to that, we, we think about, okay, which side of the book was that on? Where on the page was that located? So there's this spatial relationship that is not existent in e-books and audio books.

Ray Edwards (03:17):

We're here to talk about this book that you wrote called *Read to Lead- The Simple Habit That Expands Your Influence and Boosts Your Career*. So if the arguments about brain health and being a good citizen and being a deep thinking, well-rounded person who's analyzed their philosophy of life and what it means to them, if that doesn't do it for you, how about this? This is how you get paid more and have more success. Talk about that, Jeff.

Jeff Brown (03:39):

Yeah. Well, and I have found this, Ray, from firsthand experience, uh, reading is going to increase your professional opportunities. It's going to do some of those other things you talked about. Improving your decision-making skills. It reduces your stress. The research says it helps with sleep. If that's something you struggle with, as a lot of people do. Going to improve, of course, your ability to lead, because you're going to be a more empathetic person. You're your listening skills and communication skills are going to increase. Your intellect of course, is going to increase. So all these things lend themselves to performing better in your work and in your job. I can remember, uh, about 20 years ago, uh, well into my radio career when I was looking to move up the ladder and looking to grow in my knowledge and the things I was skilled at, I was looking at coming off the air one day and doing things, you know, behind the scenes at a radio station related to marketing and programming and social media was starting to come on strong at this time. And so I began creating my own curriculum and reading books about social media and social media marketing, because I recognized that this, these tools are going to impact our industry, that we needed to learn how to leverage them, that maybe they could help us better connect with our listeners. And there was going to be some disruption involved because of these tools. And as I began to put this curriculum of books together and teach myself about these things, I began experimenting with what I was learning and putting into practice, what I was learning. And as I did that, the things that I tried that failed, uh, were interestingly quickly forgotten the things that I tried that worked got me noticed. As I got noticed, I got asked to do more things, and I got asked to do more things that included presenting what I had learned and the knowledge I'd gained to other factions within the company. To the entire nationwide sales team over here for the programming team nationwide over here. And as I began to be asked to do that, I thought, you know what, maybe I should also create a curriculum around public speaking because that's not something I've done a lot of up to that point. So let me read some public speaking books and create a

curriculum around that. And that can, you can get very granular with these topics. You know, public speaking sounds like a pretty specific topic, but I started with a presentation design and then I went to presentation structure and then presentation delivery. So you can really, you know, niche within the niche and create a very specific curriculum and move through those niches as you go. So, as I began to do that, the promotions began to follow. I think it was six over the course of 12 or 13 years. And that's continued on to, into my working for myself here in the last eight years. Uh, particularly as it has to do with, with mindset and increasing, uh, my confidence, uh, in what I'm capable of. I used to be the kind of person who before books, just resigned myself to thinking I would always be working for some, someone else. Not that there's anything wrong with that, but I, I had desires to, to go beyond that and for myself, but I didn't think that was possible for Jeff. And it was the books that I read that sort of expanded my mindset and took me outside that and made me realize that, that I could do even better for myself over here. Then I was able to do working for someone else.

Ray Edwards (06:30):

That is so important, and I think back on books that changed the course of my life. And there's so many of them. So there you say, there are five science-backed reasons reading helps build careers.

Jeff Brown (06:42):

You know, some of those we touched on earlier, and I probably got a little bit ahead of myself with this, but, but I mentioned, uh, professional opportunities. I mentioned decision-making skills, reducing stress, helping with sleep ability to lead increasing intellect and increasing creativity, uh, improving communication. There are more than five actually, um, and even fiction. Um, I think a lot of times we discount- folks in our position in leadership and business discount fiction. Fiction is great, as is non-fiction, for the soft skills, for empathy, for creativity. Uh, when you're reading about the characters in a book and the relationships and the people, you're going to, whether you realize it or not apply the things you learn in watching those characters interact in your mind to your work and your personal life. And you're going to be a more empathetic, oftentimes, person, a better able to communicate with other people different than you type of person. So those are just some of the reasons there are certainly many more, but, uh, but yeah, then

Ray Edwards (07:40):

So here's a, here's a challenge I've had. And I see other people I think have this. Um, there's so many books to read, and so little time. If we find a book that's important to us, how do we retain that, that knowledge that we get from the book- that wisdom?

Jeff Brown (07:53):

Yeah, I think there's a couple of things you can consider. And one of those is to, if you're going to take notes and I recommend that you do that, you dedicate a notebook to your book, take your book notes. one notebook, just for the task of taking notes from the books that you read and use it for nothing else and have it with you. And much like reading a physical book, I think is different than reading, uh, other types of books, audio, and eBooks, and other forms of content. As we talked about earlier, there's something magical that happens when you write your thoughts down by hand. So I highly recommend doing that if you want to type them up later. Great. But write them down by hand something I've found with regard to notes, Ray, that has helped me is I separate the reading time from the note-taking time. And this is what I mean back when I was a young writer, similar sort of situation, I was the kind of writer, maybe you identify with this, who was constantly editing as he wrote, rather than just getting it on the page and worrying about the editing process later. And I've, I've learned to manage that a little better as of late. Uh, and I find that when it comes to reading, I do better. I

retain more. I comprehend more when I set a timer for 25 or 50 minutes, a la the Pomodoro Technique, and I just read, and that's all I do. And the only note-taking or anything close to that, that happens during that 25 or 50 minute session is say an asterisk or star for something that I want to come back to and dig into more deeply. Cal Newport talks about some of this in his latest work. Maybe a, a question mark for something I'm not sure I understand or something I'm not even sure I agree with and just limit myself to those marketings. When the session is over, take a break, come back, set the timer again for 25 or 50 minutes. And now what I'm going to do is just take notes. I'm going to go back to those markings that I made and take notes. And I think when you do, it's important to recognize that take, you want to take notes as if you're taking them for someone else. So that someone else coming to these notes out of context can understand what they mean, because future you, who's going to come back to these notes at some point, presumably, is someone else. You've changed, you've grown, you've evolved, and so you need to be thinking about that, writing these notes that you're taking them ultimately for someone else. And when you do that, they're going to do the thing that you're- they're designed to do, and that's help you comprehend more help you retain more, ultimately,

Ray Edwards ([10:16](#)):

That is such great advice. I've developed a similar practice. And then I read a book recently that has been sort of life-changing for me, imagine that, thinking about the topic we're on. It's called *Taking Smart Notes* and it's by, um,

Jeff Brown ([10:32](#)):

Sönke Ahrens.

Ray Edwards ([10:33](#)):

Yeah, yeah. You know, the book.

Jeff Brown ([10:35](#)):

I'm reading it now as well,

Ray Edwards ([10:37](#)):

What a-what a fantastic book. And I've really, I haven't perfectly worked out my system for doing this, but I also took a, there's a guy named Tiago Forte who has, uh, an online course called *Building a Second Brain*, which is all about digital note taking and how to, how to link your notes, preserve your notes, how to, the biggest insight I got from that course was, um, doing something Tiago calls, progressive summarization. So like when I'm, when I'm in the note-taking phase of reading a book, now I don't just clip or highlight parts of the book that I want to quote. I rewrite the idea in my own words, in a finished sentence.

Jeff Brown ([11:16](#)):

Yeah.

Ray Edwards ([11:16](#)):

So I have complete notes that stand on their own, and that's been really helpful to me in terms of retaining. And then also if I want to go back and use that in a blog post or a podcast, I've got a really compact already well-written first draft of what I want to do in that publication or essay or what have you.

Jeff Brown (11:33):

And to that point, Ray, you know, writers often talk about sitting down to the blank page and how tough that is. When you take notes like that, you're never starting from a blank page. You're starting from your own notes.

Ray Edwards (11:43):

Yeah. I heard Tiago say on one of our calls, he said, I never start a writing project unless I'm already 80% finished. How do we know what to read? I mean, how, how do you, Jeff, I'm personalizing this. How do you decide what to read and what to skip?

Jeff Brown (12:01):

Well, a couple of things I do there, and one involves a bit of math, but I promise it's easy math. And that is to think about your life expectancy. And we've talked about this in the book, have a little fun with it and subtract your current age and determine, you know, how many years do you think you have left and multiply that number by the number of books you tend to read in a year. And that's going to give you the likely number of books you'll read between now and when you leave this earth. And I would recommend putting that number somewhere where you can see it, maybe on a whiteboard in your office or what have you. Uh, and as you read books, start subtracting from that number. And it won't be long before that number starts getting uncomfortably small. You start thinking long and hard.

Ray Edwards (12:44):

Mine, probably already is.

Jeff Brown (12:46):

Well, you can certainly think long and hard about what you're going to read next, when you realize, and that really can apply to a lot of things. And obviously not just, not just a book reading, but I often encourage people to begin with their own interests. I think it was James Clear in Atomic Habits that said something to the effect that, you know, when you read what interests you, you'll never be bored. And I used to think early in my, my radio career, that reading was somehow like goofing off. I remember walking into my boss's office, best boss I ever had. His name is Matt Austin, and he would be at his desk reading. And I used to think, why is he not concerned that, that I've just caught him goofing off? And he taught me that that's not what he was doing. That, that reading wasn't necessarily associated with goofing off. That reading could involve learning. I didn't know that, you know, to me that just, it didn't, it didn't compute. And I didn't realize what kind of books he was reading. He was reading Jim Collins. He was reading John Maxwell. He was reading Liz Weisman. He was reading Pat Lencioni and Seth Godin. He introduced me to Seth Godin and it was a Seth Godin book that sort of really lit a fire in me, my love for reading. And so, um, I started at that point with what interests me. For me that was marketing. And I read dozens of marketing books and reading those books, opened my eyes to new interests that I didn't even know I had. And then I shifted to books related to those interests. So you start with what interests you, whether that's a, a discipline, a subject or topic, a person, a time in history, uh, there will be books, multiple books written about whatever those things are you can think of. Begin there and then you'll do well.

Ray Edwards (14:17):

What about the people who say I don't, I don't have time to read, Jeff. I hardly have time to eat.

Jeff Brown (14:22):

Yeah. That's one of the biggest excuses along with I don't have the money. Uh, I don't like reading entire books. I don't know what I should read. We just talked about that. I think people who don't have time to read have just simply decided that that's not something important enough for them to make time for. I think, I think the things that are important to us, we make time for. Even though I am a lover of books, I love to read. Um, if I didn't schedule reading time, then I probably wouldn't do near the amount of reading that I would ultimately like to do. So, uh, a 'la Michael Hyatt, who's name you mentioned previously, I create an ideal week and I start with, well, what does the ideal look like? Do I ever hit the ideal? Uh, more often than not I don't, but as Michael says, unless you're willing to identify it, you're not going to get close, you know, good luck. And so for me, an ideal week includes, you know, a half a dozen hours or so throughout the week, spread spread among the week of reading. And so that might be a half an hour set aside every single morning, during my morning ritual and other, you know, half hour, usually or 50 minute points, uh, throughout the week that I've dedicated to reading. And I treat that time just like I would have an appointment with another person when somebody asks to meet with me, let's say out of the blue, if it conflicts the time they're asking for conflicts with my time to read, I've got a choice to make. I can acquiesce and say, okay, I'm going to read later and I can meet with you now. Let's do that. Or I can look at that time and decide it's worth protecting, and go back to that person and say, you know what? I have an appointment at that time. Can we do this at some other time? Often we default to yes. When people ask or demand things of us. And certainly there are plenty of, of, of moments where that's, that that's needed. And, and we, we should to do a what's being asked of us. But oftentimes we default to yes. And if we say, no, we feel like we have to defend the no to the other person. When I would love us love to see us get to a point where we default to no. And if we say yes, we understand the importance of defending the yes to ourselves. Um, and I think if we would learn to do that, we would spend more time on the things that matter most to us. Bronnie Ware, who uh, wrote a memoir called *The Five Regrets of The Dying*, which you may have heard of, um, talks about the number one regret being, gee, I wish I had lived a life true to myself rather than living the life everybody else wanted me to live. And the basic lesson of this book is when you get to the end of your life, you're likely going to have regrets, not for things you did, you wished you had done, but things you never tried you wish you had. Things you had participated in places you'd gone, uh, courses you'd taken, books you'd read, uh, experiments you had attempted. All those kinds of things you wish you had tried that you never did. So, um, for me, uh, that starts with learning that starts with reading. And when I read and when I learn my mind is expanded and I instantly want to go out and experiment and try, uh, the things that I've learned. And that is just one of several ways. I think we can lead far more fulfilling lives, such that when we get to the end of it, we have far fewer of those regrets for the things we wished we'd done. What

Ray Edwards (17:40):

What about programs that say they can teach you to read fast? Like you can read 2, 3, 4, 5 times faster.

Jeff Brown (17:46):

Yeah. One of the reasons I teamed up with a guy named Jesse Wisniewski on this book is because of his experience with this specifically. Speed reading. We've had a chapter on how to read a 200 page book in a couple of hours. And then that involves a technique called skimming, which I'll talk about in a moment, but a lot of people hear the term speed reading and think, well, you know, that's not real. That's not possible. It actually is. Jessie's a good example of that. Um, I just had an interview with somebody else today who tried some of the techniques in the book and reported that they measured their increased speed at about 33% over what it was before they tried some of the techniques. Uh, so some of this starts with

things like your environment and being purposeful about, uh, your focus while you're reading. So for me, I've got a reading chair behind me. So that's where I do most of my reading. I've got noise, canceling headphones I use. And by the way, always alert your spouse when you're wearing those. I've learned that the hard way. Uh, I'll I'll connect those to an app like focus at will or a favorite app of mine, Adagio, which allows you to select classical music based on mood. In other words, music that's, you know, not lyric based, certainly you don't want things to distract you music that helps you concentrate. And those things come together. My environment, a room where I can shut the door, uh, cut out all distractions and truly focus. Now from there, I'm using a pointer of some kind, whether it's my finger or a pencil or a pen, and as I'm reading, I'm moving that device far faster than I would normally be comfortable where I'm reading without it. I was just doing that before coming to this, to this interview, reading far, faster, and still comprehending what I'm reading as I'm moving that device along. So that's one really simple way. There's also a method called the hop method that I won't get into here. But another technique I like for reading books in a relatively short period of time is that skimming method that I referred to. I think it's important when you sit down to read, particularly a nonfiction book, Ray, is to decide what you want to get out of it. What is the goal of reading it? Stephen R Covey says begin with the end in mind. Why am I reading this book? And actually write that down. What's the answer to that question that I'm trying to get out of this book? And that's going to inform where you begin. With non-fiction we often don't have to start at the beginning of the book. If you've answered that question, what do I want to get out of this? And you look at the table of contents, you might realize that, well, three out of the 10 chapters of this book are really addressing my issue. Let me start with those three chapters. I think it's okay. If you've read the chapters from the book that gave you what you identified, what you wanted to get out of it, and you finish those chapters, you can go on good reads or whatever, and label that a book you've read, a book you've completed, a book you've finished because you met the goal. You've got out of what you said you were going to get out of it, even if that involved reading just a few chapters. So as far as skimming goes, you start at the beginning of the chapter and you read the headings and the subheadings from beginning to end and wrap your mind around the key insights and main ideas the author is trying to express in this particular chapter. And then again, with nonfiction, you go back to the beginning of the chapter and read the first sentence and the last sentence of each paragraph. And guess what, once you've done that, and it doesn't take nearly as long as it sounds, you will have, uh, drawn from that chapter on average, about 80% of the meat of that chapter, believe it or not. So that's one way to read a 200 plus page book and a couple of hours. In addition to the, to the speed reading, uh, method that we talked about.

Ray Edwards (21:20):

What about, um, how do you suggest people go about making, reading a habit for people who are, who haven't read a book since they got out of college, which is a lot of people I'm surprised at how many people.

Jeff Brown (21:31):

Yeah. The, the, the stats on this are somewhat disheartening and abysmal when you see how few people read with any regularity, I tell people, uh, something I learned from Dr. BJ Fogg, a book called *Tiny Habits* is not to be afraid to make your habit tiny. So if this whole idea of reading with intention and with consistency, overwhelmed you as it once did me, don't be afraid to start super tiny. So what do I mean by that? Well, uh, first I would pair any habit you're trying to start, and let's go with a reading for the sake of this conversation with something else you already do every day, without really thinking much about it, it's already habit. So something that goes great with reading for me is drinking coffee or your morning tea. And so if you're already having coffee every day, then decide that you're, a la Fogg, a habit recipe is going to be when I sit down to enjoy my morning coffee, I'm going to read one page, or I'm going to read one paragraph, or I'm going to read one sentence. Or even when I

sit down with my morning coffee, I'm going to just open the book and that can be the goal. And then I'm going to celebrate. I'm going to stand up and do a, you know, Tiger Woods style, fist pump, or I'm going to put my , over my head in a victory sign, or I'm going to look in the mirror as corny as it sounds and say, you're awesome. You know, and what we do over time is we train the brain that, well, this is good. This is something we like, let's- what can we do to have this kind of feeling more often? And, and to use Fogg's example, he talks about struggling with developing the habit of flossing, his teeth. He brushed his teeth like clockwork every day. And so his, his tiny habit began with, uh, when I brush my teeth, which goes well with flossing teeth, right? So it makes sense, when I brush my teeth or after I brush my teeth, I will floss one tooth and then he celebrated. And then the next day, the same thing, I will floss one tooth. Well, when you do this kind of thing, whether it's teeth or whether it's books, eventually your brain goes, "well, we're here anyway, why don't we just floss a second tooth? Or why don't we just read a little bit", right. And so you can ease into it like that. If, if, if the idea of this overwhelms you at all, if you're just not sure that you're going to be able to make this habit start tiny, connect it with, with an anchor, with something that you're already doing every day, make it really, really easy to achieve and then celebrate. And as you do that more and more, you're going to want to do it more and more.

Ray Edwards (24:03):

Yeah. Um, one of the things that's really been helpful for me for increasing the amount of material I'm able to read is something I learned from Tony Robbins, which he calls net time or no extra time. Um, uh, and that is read audio books. And by the way, I count that as reading, I do love physical books, but if I listened to a book and you tell me, I haven't read it, I'm going to want to slap you. The audio book that I read is much more read than the physical book you never picked up. So, um, so anyway, I listen, when I'm exercising, if I'm on the bike or the treadmill or I'm walking, uh, you can listen while you commute. And for me, it's not a substitute for other kinds of reading. It's a supplement where I can listen when I can't do anything else. But I mean, certainly if I'm in a long commute or I'm on a flying on a plane, um, if I'm going through my morning routine, instead of listening to talk radio, which God help you, I can help relieve your stress. Just don't listen to that stuff. Listen to a good book, even if it's an entertaining book, if it's a, just a lighthearted fiction or comedy, or essays, or it's just another way to read more.

Jeff Brown (25:24):

Um, I stopped listening to the radio about six years before I got out of radio. I supplemented my commute time with podcasts and audio books. I totally am a big believer in it.

Ray Edwards (25:35):

Um, so how do we read smarter?

Jeff Brown (25:39):

Yeah. Uh, this is a question I get asked a lot and, uh, one of the, the, the techniques that I use is one we've not touched on yet. And one that, that you've hinted at a little bit. And that's the audio book, uh, question and yes, I do believe that, uh, it's, it's far better than the book you've not read. I, I love that phrase. Um, but one of the ways I read smarter, and this, and when I, when I say smarter, um, uh, I'm, I'm, I'm relating that to retention and comprehension retention, being what you remember, comprehension, obviously being what you understand. And so one of the things that has been super helpful to me is combining two methods. It's combining two versions of the book. And so, and this is sort of a speed reading cheat. We talked about speed reading before. I first did this with Brendon Burchard's, um, *High-Performance Habits*. So I had the physical book. I've got it right behind me. Uh, and the audio

book of Brendan reading the book, and I would put Brendan on one and a half, 1.7, five speed however fast I could handle,

Ray Edwards (26:43):

Man, You can listen to Brendan at 1.75.

Jeff Brown (26:45):

Yes, yes. Uh, we can comprehend, uh, you know, far faster than we can often read ourselves. And so I sped Brendan up and then followed along in the physical version of his book. And by the way, doing that, I only have time to make those markings I was talking about before. Right. I don't have time to take notes in that session, but I just go through and listen and follow along and I have found that those, those two methods simultaneously reading it, seeing it with my eyes and hearing it with my ears, um, has helped me read, uh, smarter. And I don't do that with every book, but particularly, Ray, for the books that I know that when I've finished them, I'm going to have a to-do list afterward. I think it's okay to read for just how it impacts your thinking, which is something you alluded to earlier. And sometimes we'll read nonfiction books or fiction books for how they impact our thinking and that, that can, that can be it. Uh, but for a book you know you're going to read and want to implement and take action on, I think that sort of combo method, um, if you can justify it financially, uh, and I've been able to, at the times that I've done that, I think it's a great method for reading smarter and the authors love it because you buy two books.

Ray Edwards (27:54):

Yeah. I love That. And I, I do the same. If I'm going to study a book, this is how I think of it. I'm going to study it or put it into practice. I get the Kindle version, the audible version and the physical version I use all three. I also use a service called Readwise, which you can connect to your Kindle account. So if I highlight notes in my Kindle, they're neatly organized and Readwise, pops them into Evernote for me. So I've, I've got all the Kindle books I've read, all the notes and highlights are now neatly organized in Evernote.

Jeff Brown (28:27):

I love Readwise. I just discovered it. I think it's been around for a few years, but I just discovered it a few months ago and I've loved it so much I reached out to them, uh, and suggested they sponsor my podcast, which they said yes to. I think it's such a great app.

Ray Edwards (28:41):

That's so fantastic. So what's, what's like, I'm going to ask you for two books. What are- what's one of the books that's impacted you the most in your life?

Jeff Brown (28:53):

Uh, I would, it's hard to narrow it down to just one. For me, it's like trying to pick your favorite child.

Ray Edwards (28:58):

I didn't say your favorite book. I said one of the books that's influenced you the most.

Jeff Brown (29:01):

That's true. That's true. Um, I would say *Multipliers- How the Best Leaders Make Everyone Smarter* by Liz Weisman. This was a book that really helped me understand the difference between command and control type leadership and the type of leadership that appreciates, um, leveraging the collective brain power in the room. And I've, I've worked for both styles of

leaders and I've been, sadly, both styles of, of leaders and Liz by labeling those a multiplier versus a diminisher type leader really helped me wrap my brain around how to get out of the one to become the other.

Ray Edwards (29:39):

I have not read this book. It's going on my list. What are you reading right now that you're really captivated by or have read recently?

Jeff Brown (29:45):

I'm reading right now, a book by Roy Heintz a book called *Lead Like a Coach*, which I'm enjoying a great deal. I'm finding that, uh, uh, Roy and I are on the same wavelength about a lot of things. And that's, I'm reading for the show. It's someone I'm interviewing soon, but for pleasure right now, and I've always got two or three books going on at the same time that I dip my toes in, you know, every so often and, and take my time reading, maybe over the course of a month or two months, one is, *Do You Talk Funny* by David Nihill. A book about injecting humor into public speaking. I'm reading the Sönke Ahrens book that you mentioned earlier, *How to Take Smart Notes*. And I'm also reading a biography on George Lucas by Brian J. Jones. Who's a biography on theater of Geisel, Dr. Suess, I also thoroughly enjoyed. And I'm about to begin a biography of his on Jim Henson. I love reading biographies about creative people and how they think and how they got to, to wherever they are.

Ray Edwards (30:45):

Hmm, fascinating. I got a couple of suggestions there on my list. Now, the most, the weirdest book I'm reading right now, cause I also usually have four to five books going at one time is a book by Chris Offutt called get ready for this, *My Father, the Pornographer, A Memoir*.

Jeff Brown (31:06):

I don't know that one.

Ray Edwards (31:08):

This is a, I found this book through, um, Austin Kleon. I've been doing a lot of research into how people collect and index their notes and thoughts into a system. They can use to recall them and use them in their writing. Started with building a second brain course. And I got into this concept called Zettel casting.

Jeff Brown (31:27):

I was just going to mention that.

Ray Edwards (31:29):

The book is not, it doesn't get into this content. It's about the fact that the father dies and the son comes to the estate and begins discovering this career that his father had that most people didn't know about, which was writing these erotic novels back in the days of Pulp Fiction. And he's written all these many hundreds of these formulaic books. And it's the books really about the relationship between the son and the now deceased father and the family. But it's just, it's an interesting quirky read, not as controversial as a title may make it sound. Although I was like, I don't know if I want this. To show up on my good reads account or not.

Jeff Brown (32:06):

You know, I think I recall now that you've mentioned that I think he has a podcast if I'm not mistaken, because I think I've heard some folks discussing this, uh, first person account on a podcast, a it's coming back to me now that you, now that you mentioned it.

Ray Edwards (32:24):

Interesting. So there's so much good stuff to read. Um, and I'm, I'm so glad that one of the new things to read is a book called *Read to Lead*. This book you need to have, you need to read this book. You need to put it into action. To me, this is one of the pivotal books you need to have. There's lots of books I can recommend tactically for like things you could do to improve your health, things you can do to improve your productivity. This is a book that I classify as one of those sharpening the saw books where it's, it's basic, it's a principle book. It's not a tactical recommendation. It's a strategy for how to become a better leader in your business, in your home, in your life. Read to Lead.

Jeff Brown (33:04):

Can I type that out?

Ray Edwards (33:05):

Yes, totally. Totally. Jeff Brown. You're my hero.

Jeff Brown (33:10):

Dude, back at ya, back at ya. I appreciate that so much and the kind words. And thank you for inviting me to do this. Uh, yours is a podcast I've looked up to for years. I remember hearing you play a clip of my show on your show back when you asked for submissions and I about drove my car off the road. When I heard Ray Edwards talking about my podcast, which was in its infancy. And, uh, I became, I was already a fan of yours, but I became the president of the fan club that day and have been ever since.

Ray Edwards (33:44):

I'm so glad I wasn't responsible for you driving off the road. Seriously, get this book, read it. And, um, I, you know, we didn't talk about this. Um, so I'm, now I'm gonna mess up the whole graceful exit I had created for us. And this is something I wanted to ask you about you, in the book, explain how to start a book club. I've never been part of a book club, but this intrigued me enough that I wanted to ask you about it when we were talking. What are the benefits of starting a book club? And are you part of a book club and what do you have to share about that?

Jeff Brown (34:17):

Yeah, and it was a book club that helped reignite my love for reading. It was a book club where I got introduced to Seth Godin and then John Maxwell and Jim Collins and Liz Weisman and Pat Lencioni and those folks, and it was very serendipitous for me. It was the stars and planets aligning and all of it coming together just at a time when I truly was ready for it, hungry for it and needed it. I find that a lot of leaders, uh, start or attempt to start book clubs and end up failing. Uh, it's, it's the leader saying, this is something we should do. And people sort of taken a obligatory approach to it, and all we're reading the same book at the same time, and this is a book I don't want to read. And, and, and that's a mistake. I think you need to start from a standpoint of, uh, and I alluded to this earlier, allowing yourself to be caught reading, um, let your staff catch you in the act of doing that and make sure they understand that that's something that you value. Come to meetings, sharing ideas, uh, to help solve the problems you're facing as an organization from the books that you've read and let others hear you say, I don't have all the answers and here's what I'm doing to find answers. I'm reading books. When you start there, then when you come with the idea of a reading or a book club, it's going to be more, well-received more, more likely to have people, uh, rally around it. Maybe there's somebody on your staff who has taken to that habit that you cherish and is following your footsteps and has become an evangelist themselves. Maybe they're ripe for starting it on your company's behalf, versus it being something that's that's coming from

you. And I would also say lastly, that, um, book clubs don't have to be run the traditional way. Um, it can be, uh, everybody reading a different book. I think you need to, at the end of the day, incentivize reading and that might mean offering paid time off or a gift card every quarter for books read, assuming that you're going to institute methods to hold people accountable to that, maybe that's just a one or two page report on the book that they read or something along those lines. But, but, but if a traditional book club won't fit the bill understand that just reading in general is something that could be encouraged and there's ways to do that. And it doesn't necessarily have to mean everybody's reading the same book at the same time.

Ray Edwards ([36:31](#)):

Such good advice. Well, thank you, my friend, it's been too long. We need to have you back on a more regular basis so we can talk about books.

Jeff Brown ([36:39](#)):

Thanks for having me.

Kris Edwards ([36:40](#)):

For the complete shownotes, links and everything else related to this podcast visit rayedwards.com/534

Announcer ([36:41](#)):

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