



Ray Edwards Show, Episode 535

This Might Be My Biggest Mistake Ever

Ray Edwards: [00:00:00]

Well, hello. My friends, Ray Edwards here with episode 535 of the podcast. This Might Be My Biggest Mistake Ever. And this is not hyperbole. I'm going to tell you some things on today's episode that might make you uncomfortable. It'll be worth listening. I'll promise you this. I believe this will be fruitful for you to hear, but first it may be difficult for you to hear.

About once a week, I get a call or an email or a message from someone who wants to give up. They want to give up on their business. They want to give up on their marriage. They want to give up maybe on living and they're calling me or messaging me, I think either for confirmation or correction and it's usually business or personal.

Sometimes they know that it's both. But how do I answer people like this? This is a huge responsibility, especially for somebody who did not really sign up to be that kind of advisor or counselor. These are important matters that don't seem to fall under the title of copywriting coach, marketing consultant or communication strategist, and yet this happens with startling regularity. So how do I answer them? Well, let's start from here.

Let's just be real together. Shall we? Let's let's get bare knuckles honest. These last couple of years have been very difficult for most of us. Think of all the crazy stuff that has happened. There's a really good chance. You did not see everything coming that was on its way. I certainly did not. And in this podcast today, I'm getting gut level real with you.

First of all, many of my clients and my friends in the world of online business, coaching authors, speakers, podcasters, YouTubers. I mean, these are the people

that I spend my time with. These are the people who are my colleagues, my mastermind partners, my friends, and many of them really did have their best year ever in 2020.

In the pandemic year. And for many of them, things are looking even better as we round out 2021. It seems for a lot of the people that I know the best whose businesses I know inside and out very minutely, it seems like the last couple of years have sort of been charmed for them. They've just had such a glorious time.

No wonder they are so happy. Everything went their way. It's easy to celebrate and to feel a certain sense of victory when victory has fallen into your lap. Now it might seem that I'm begrudging them those circumstances. I'm not. I celebrate that for them. However, it was not that way for me, without going too deep into detail, that wouldn't help you.

It might just serve to depress you. Behind the scenes. My life in the last couple of years was turned upside down. And you may or may not be concerned about that, but I think by sharing this, I can give you a perspective that will help you get what you're looking for in your own life. And in your own business.

I had, it was sort of the perfect storm that was brewing. a storm that was gathering in different areas of life and business. My health in 2019 was declining as the symptoms of Parkinson's disease progressed. And we were on a huge growth curve with my company. We had the biggest staff we'd ever had. The most people employed full-time we were paying very competitive salaries, the best in the field, as far as I'm aware. We had extraordinary benefits. Still do.

And our business was based on. live events, seminars, workshops. I would go and find business by speaking at large events and finding new customers there, new contacts. I made money for our company by putting on live in person workshops and seminars. And as you probably are aware, the first part of 2020, that all ground to a screeching halt. There suddenly were no more live events.

There were no more live seminars. That stuff simply wasn't happening. And so a lot of, well, practically all of our revenue also came to a screeching halt. Additive to that, I was in incredible pain because I had ripped every muscle in my right rotator cuff, my shoulder, including having severed my right biceps tendon.

I had major surgery. I was in a world of pain. So think about it. I mean, I was in a place where the world had stopped because of the pandemic. We could do nothing about that. I was in so much pain that I could barely function. Then I

had a surgery that put me in so much more pain. I just couldn't function. And the world was looking very dark to me, indeed. It was a scary time. There were a few moments as I sat in the recliner that I spent about 12 weeks of my life in after that surgery. Unable to work, barely able to think, let alone take care of my most basic needs. There were a few times in the dark wee hours of the night that I looked at the bottle [00:06:00] of Oxycontin on the table beside me and thought that could be the easy way out.

That is very difficult for me to admit, but it happened. I did not make that attempt.

I simply couldn't bear to put people I loved through that kind of pain, but I did see it as a possible escape from my own pain. And I asked myself in those moments, what is going on, it would, how could it seem so painful that there was no hope that I'd be willing to just cut off the rest of my life to get out of this pain?

Well, it seemed there was no hope. That's where I found myself. And I know this is very hard to talk about. This may be triggering for some of you. I apologize if that's the case, let me share that I feel it's important that we do talk about it. Otherwise I'm not being honest with you. And as someone who represents telling you the truth about how to start, run, and grow a business about how to communicate in a way that's powerful, impactful, and persuasive.

The first person you've got to communicate with is yourself. And in that regard, I think the reason I get these calls from people is because whether I intended this to be the case or not, I have become in some ways a leader for those people. And I accept that. So sometimes I've got to talk with you about things that are hard to talk about.

Otherwise, if I don't talk to you about these really hard things. If I pretend they didn't happen. If I pretend I didn't have these challenges, if I don't share with you how I walked through that, then I'm not being honest with you. And this is important, especially if you are a leader of any kind, when you stop being honest, you stop being a leader and you become something else.

In this time that I'm talking of, as I began picking up the pieces and pulling myself together and getting back to work, I really did not feel like doing that. I did not want to do it, but as time, or fate, or the universe, or God intended, other events in my life conspired to do me good. Such as, I received a contract and an advance to write a book from a major traditional publisher.

It was a rather generous advance for a beginning author. I mean, I've written books before, but never published traditionally through a New York publishing house. And this is a big publisher. So the advance was rather large, which made the deal attractive. And the book was a book I cared deeply about writing. It was about how we form the beliefs we have about life and what we do when we find they're not working.

And when I originally submitted the book proposal before the pandemic, before all these things happened that I'm telling you about right now, before I went into this dark place, I had written a book proposal that painted a picture of a book that seemed to say that I had it all figured out that I knew how to manipulate my own beliefs to me, any circumstance I came up against in life and turn it for my good.

And when I wrote that proposal, I believe that was true. At the time I was supposed to be writing this book, which was right smack dab in the middle of 2020. I wasn't sure I believed any of that. What a dilemma. It turned out as divine Providence would have it. This was exactly what I needed

[00:10:00] because it gave me a way to test the ideas in this book. To find out, did I really have an answer that I had discovered? Or was this just a cotton candy, sugary junk-food self-help book? As it turns out, it is not that. It is a real set of tools for getting hold of our beliefs, to figure out if they're serving us.

And if they're not for changing them so we can improve our lives, maybe even save our lives. So I came to this place where I realized I really had three options about what to do about this dark period in which I found myself. One, I could simply give up. I could swallow those pills. I could check out, die, abandoned all my hope.

Just pull my victim blanket up around my shoulders and go down gladly. Or two, I could become bitter and operate as if this were the result of discipline of sowing and reaping. And what I found myself saying to myself during many weeks of 2020 was, well, this is the situation you got yourself into. You deserve what's happening.

You deserve it. You reap what you sow, Ray. You're paying the price. There is a useful time to have a thought of that nature. And it should be a very short period of time, I believe. We need to figure out what is not working in our life and change our behavior to get the result we want. So I began to see that as I analyzed my own beliefs that had led me into this dark corner. I asked myself what if I choose how I frame what's happening to me? Because at any given

point in our lives, how we describe our life is a story. Think about it. If I ask you to tell me the story of your life, you know how to tell that story. You may have lots more detail to share than I want, or you may have less detail than I want, but you know what the story of your life is as you see it, or as you want others to see it, don't you?

Back when I was writing copy for Jack Canfield, he had this seminar, he hosted called Breakthrough to Success. It was a seven day seminar. It was a fantastic experience. I wrote the copy for that. And as part of writing the copy, I went to the event and attended it and participated in it because I wanted to know what the experience of going through that program was like and there was an exercise Jack had us do that I found incredibly powerful. He said, I'd like you to write the story of your life, but here are the conditions of how you write it. You're going to write it in one page. You can only relay things in the story that are true, and you must tell it as if it is a tragedy. Only show the tragic things that have happened in your life.

Go. And we had a certain amount of time to write that story and we could all do it. And then he had us pause, take a deep breath. And then he said, now turn to the next page and write the story of your life. And here are the conditions. It has to be one page. Everything you tell in this story must be true.

And you must tell this story as if it were a total life of triumph and victory and everything worked out exactly right. Go. And so we wrote the story. And it was interesting because as we wrote that second version of our life, the triumphant victorious version of our life, people began chuckling and laughing.

You could see the emotional temperature of the room changing. And by the time we got finished, most everyone had a smile on their face. And Jack asked the question now, which version of your life is true? And we all answered, "They both are." And his question for us next was the one that still sticks with me to this day.

[00:15:00] Which one do you choose as the dominant story of your life as you hear it in your head? And I realized at that time, really, it was the tragic version. That's a horrifying realization to have. But it's also an illuminating one to have. It illuminated for me that I had the choice.

And I remembered that in this moment in 2020, when I realized, well, I can choose. I need to remember it's possible for me to choose how I frame this narrative, the story of my life, the story of 2020 and 2021. And so I started with

what kind of story did I want to tell about my life? It has to be true, but what kind of story do I want it to be?

I want it to be that story of victory, of triumph, of joy, of happiness, of peace, of prosperity. And what kind of character would I need to be in that story to have it turn out that way. And as I began writing that story, everything in my life began to change. Now, the external circumstances did not change. I still was in pain, I still was recovering from surgery, I still had Parkinson's disease. The symptoms were still ramping up, increasing, getting worse. I still had increasing financial pressure. We still had to lay people off to stay within our operating budget. We still had huge expenses and we had to replace events that have been canceled and customers who are unable to pay their bills.

All those things remained the same and we had to deal with them. But the story I was living completely became a different story. It became a story of triumph and victory instead of a story of darkness, bitterness and utter despair. And if you don't think that makes a difference, just try switching up the story for a week or two and see if it doesn't make a difference for you.

It will. I promise, it will. Now here's a distinction I'd like to make that I think is incredibly important. When people call me, or write me, or email me, or message me and they want help deciding what to do with their life. They usually call me about their business life or their personal life, missing the distinction that there is only one life.

Every business disaster is preceded internally by a personal disaster of some kind. Every problem or challenge in business is actually personal first. And the reverse is also true. You only have one life. There's only one you. These artificial categories we make are just not real. They're constructs in our minds.

You're one person. You simply can't turn the business around until you turn its leader around. As a leader, if you're the owner, the creator, is you. it starts with you.

Right now we're about to start the fourth quarter of this year, 2021. Fourth quarter will start with October and there are 12 precious weeks that you and I can use as an excuse, a reason to turn our lives and our businesses completely around. If we want to do that, if things are going great for you now, this is a way to turn up the volume on that greatness. to an all new level of enjoyment, contribution, reward, and profit. That's the track I'm running on for the last 12 weeks of the year. And I would love to have you run on that track with me. If

you'd like to, we can stand together and make more progress in the next 12 weeks than most people will make

in the next 12 years. I invite you to join us. We're having a live workshop happening Tuesday, September 14th, 2021, starting at 9:00 AM Pacific time, noon Eastern. In this workshop, I'm going to give you everything you need to do this 12 week sprint. I'm not holding something back. I don't have any [00:19:00] secrets that you need to pay for.

This is 100% free. It's going to be a powerful training. We've got a killer workbook we've created for you. Once you fill it out, you'll have your own personal 12 week million-dollar business blueprint. That's for you and you alone for your business And your business alone. It's a plan you can use to make things happen, like never before.

So go right now and sign up for the free workshop at Rayedwards.com/million.
Rayedwards.com/million.

Now, to get back to my story about the dark time in my life and how tough the last couple of years have been. There's much more to tell of course, because we always have more juicy details to share, but I think I've shared enough. I told you as dark as it got, and even after telling you all the tough things I've shared, I can also tell you this. It's been the best two years of my life.

And I say that without any hesitation, I'm so

[00:20:00] thankful for every experience. For everything that has happened and how these things have conspired to grow and expand my consciousness, my behavior, my spirit, my joy, my happiness, my connection with my wife, Lynn was my son, Sean, with my friends, with my colleagues, my students.

I have no condemnation for myself. I don't punish myself for bad decisions I've made in the past. I have no guilt or shame or fear. I have only joy, peace and trust that everything is unfolding exactly the way it is meant to unfold. That everything is happening as it needs to happen for me to become the person I was designed to become. This is my life as it is happening so that I can become that man that I'm capable of being.

And that's true for you too. If you can see that truth, if you can grasp onto it, you can get free and you can enjoy your life. Even the parts that are not so much fun in the moment, because I'm not denying they're uncomfortable moments. Sometimes they're supremely uncomfortable. I welcome all the feelings.

I welcome all the things. I'd like to invite you to live in the same place with me. Then, no matter what happens to us on the outside, no matter what circumstances befall us, no matter what storm winds blow, you and I will be anchored on a rock that will not be moved. Not on shifting sand that can be whisked out from under us with a slight breeze or a flood. We're anchored to the rock.

Are you in, are you with me? Let's do this together. I hope you join us for our free workshop. Again, get registered for that right now at Rayedwards.com/million. That's Rayedwards.com/million. And let's take on this last quarter of the year of these 12 weeks and turn your life and your business around. I think you'll be glad you did. Join us today at Rayedwards.com/million.

Until next time may God bless you. May you prosper like crazy in all areas of life and health and wealth and wisdom, peace to you, peace to your house. Live long and prosper, my friends.