



Ray Edwards Show, Episode 569 My \$150,000 Book Deal

Announcer 00:00

Ray Edwards Show, episode 569. My \$150,000 Book Deal.

Announcer 00:11

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

Ray Edwards 00:20

On today's episode, you're going to discover how I was able to come up with an idea for a book, create an outline or a proposal for that book, and then get a publisher to pay me a \$150,000 advance. And my guide in this whole journey was today's guest, Jeff Goins. Jeff is the author of some of my favorite books, including *The Art of Work*, and *Real Artists Don't Starve*. And he helps creative people succeed through his best-selling books, his courses, coaching, speeches, he shares this ongoing journey of transformation, inspiring creators like you and me to discover your voice, and share it with the world. He's also the founder of Fresh Complaint, a creative agency that helps thought leaders turn good ideas into big ideas and books. Coming up on today's show:

Jeff Goins 01:09

zlf an author says I don't want to market, well, you're crazy because a book is a sales letter, a book, a nonfiction book, is a persuasive piece of material trying to persuade somebody that you're right. So what do you need, if you want to sell something? You've got to get into the mechanics of the thing. And the number one ingredient for creating a best-selling book, a book that hits the bestseller list and keep selling afterwards. It's not all hype. But what makes a book enduringly great is there's some substance and it all begins with an interesting idea.

Ray Edwards 01:46

Let's jump into the DeLorean and go back in time. And talk about the question that may be on your mind, which is, how do you get, Ray, \$150,000 advance for a book proposal? It all starts with, as Jeff would say, an interesting idea. And of course, there's more to it than that. So it started over coffee, as I remembered, and Jeff and I were talking and he was asking me lots of questions about my work, about life, about lessons I was learning in the school of adversity. And one particular phrase rolled off my lips in a stream of consciousness rant. And Jeff interrupted.

And he said, Wait, that's an interesting idea. Tell me more about that. And months later, a book proposal, Jeff helped me write, he basically wrote it for me, got me a literary agent, and then the book deal with a \$150,000 advance. And now we're in the process of collaboratively writing that book. And at the time, though, I only had one real question for Jeff, after we got to deal and signed the contract. How did you just do that? And his answer was typical Jeff Goins, who was terse and profound. He said, Ray, you're good at launching products and marketing. With books, it's a little bit different. Before you launch and have a best-seller, you have to write a best seller. And to write a best-seller, you have to plan one, I'm pretty good at planning them, and knowing what's going to work. There's a more detailed version of just how he does this. We got that in a separate interview. But today, I want you to pay attention to what you're about to hear because what I want you to get from this interview is the way Jeff thinks about creativity, the way he thinks about books about how he defines a best seller and what is the best seller and what isn't? And what do best-selling numbers mean? How many books do you have to sell to get a best seller? And is it important anyway? Is it important to be a New York Times bestselling author? All aspiring authors seem to think that being on the New York Times bestsellers list is the key to big bucks and big speaking engagements and television and media exposure? And is it really? Well maybe. Keep listening to find out more. This interview is fascinating. And Jeff talks about things I've never heard him talk about anywhere else. I think it's super valuable. I don't do much talking because Jeff's got a lot to say. And I recommend you listen closely. So Jeff, let's start with this. People who are paying attention to you over the last year or two know you've been going through a transition of sorts. Some people have called it a reinvention. How do you respond to that kind of comment?

Jeff Goins 04:06

I don't think of that as reinvention. I mean, I it's it's, a it's an apt word, it is an adequate word. But I feel more like myself than I've ever been. And I think true reinvention is more like a coming home, a meeting of oneself again for the very first time. And I think what I'm experiencing right now is I believed that I had to be a certain person to the world in order for them to accept me and my whole life has been a performance in the sense that I'm good at making things and sharing them with the world. And a certain group of people like those things. And I'm pretty good at knowing what's gonna work and what's not gonna work, which is incredibly anxiety-producing. I think that's what marketing is, right? It's Um, it's kind of like a disregulated nervous system, that's pretty anxious. That goes, people might not like me. And so I'll change, you know, mid-stride, right? Like, one of the best and hardest parts about, say, speaking in front of a live audience is I can watch people's eyes. You know, when I was a kid, we had a very chaotic environment growing up. And so I got trained, I think my nervous system got trained to detect any sort of like, the eyes, the facial gestures, is somebody gonna get mad is something scary going to happen? I'll fix it, fix it, right. And so performance for me is being able to fix it in front of like, Oh, you don't like me? You don't like this? It's not, you know, it's not funny. It's not interesting. It's not entertaining. I'll tweak it right. And you can do this when you're telling a story. I know that you know this, because every good marketer struggles with honesty. Because they know

Ray Edwards 06:01

What? what are you saying?

Jeff Goins 06:06

What is I think it's Dickinson, Emily Dickens, who is it tell the truth, but tell it slant. That might be Flannery O'Connor, a good marketer. A bad marketer lies. And if you lie, people find out people know, like,

Ray Edwards 06:18

and you go to jail,

Jeff Goins 06:19

you just, you can't, Yeah, you go to jail, you can't build a successful long-term career lying. You also can't necessarily build something just by telling the truth, because people don't want the truth. They want the truth that they want to hear the truth that they're willing to accept right now, and marketing is the arts of telling people the stuff that they're ready to hear right now. And that can be a really wonderful, virtuous thing, or not, right? And we all have to kind of make those decisions on what we're willing to tell the world. All that to say, I never knew that I was a natural marketer. Marketers get branded as liars, or as dishonest people. It's similar to lawyers. But what they know what lawyers and marketers because they're basically the same thing. What lawyers and marketers know, is, people only accept what they're willing to hear in the moment. They understand how the system works. And so as a marketer, you know, you can tell people two truths and a beautiful lie, two hard truths and a beautiful lie. And all they'll remember is the lie. The hard part of being a quote, unquote, ethical marketer is you see the gameplay, it's not you see the gameplay out in front of you. It's not that you aren't telling the truth, you're telling the truth. But then you say this other thing that may be might be true. And everybody's I like, I like that thing. So all that to say, I kind of fell into marketing because I got good at telling stories and sharing art with people that they wanted to hear that is performance marketing as a performance art. art for art's sake is I'm gonna go make something over here, and I don't really care who reads it or looks at it or interacts with it. And almost no art is actually art for art's sake, even avant-garde, especially avant-garde art is meant to antagonize and, and get the audience into the experience of the art itself. So I got good at making stuff and sharing it with people. And I saw when people had a reaction to that, you know, whether it was a song that I was playing, or a drawing that I drew, or a poem that I wrote, I liked the experience of making something and seeing a reaction more than making something and not seeing a reaction. And totally unconsciously, I started to do that with myself. And it really started in high school, I started to create, I started to perform, I started to create a character that I knew I was gonna get a reaction. And it started on stages. It started acting in plays in high school, and then it I started a band called Decaf. And then I went to college and became a Christian and we went, and we started performing worship music, which is very emotional, very charged, lots of reaction, hands in the air sometimes, you know, depending on your tradition, sometimes people falling down, you know, I'd seen it all crying,

Ray Edwards 06:39

Weeping, crying. Yeah,

Jeff Goins 09:14

Very few rock stars and some do but very few rock stars have experienced the emotionalism, I don't know if that's a word, emotionalism of a performance like a worship ceremony, they call it a ceremony you know, it's a, it is a sacred ritual. There's a lot of emotion there. And you know,

that's all marketing or maybe all marketing is worship, you know like they are similar crafts and expressions. But I knew like as I was seeing this play out, it started on the stage, but I got made fun of a lot in high school, I was a fat kid. Even when I lost a bunch of weight, I still felt like a fat kid, which is true of every fat kid I've ever known. There's still the self-loathing, the shame, whatever. And I based I saw how the game was played. And so I was like, Screw you guys, I'm gonna make you like me. Because it's not that hard. It's not that hard to entertain you. All I have to do is see what you're willing to accept and give it to you. And that's what I did. And I did that in a variety of contexts. And eventually, I did it with a blog and a persona called Jeff Goins writer. And it was fine. It was, it was it felt like love, right, kinda. And it's like, soy, it sort of it. It tastes like meat, sorta.

Jeff Goins 10:51

But it ain't a steak. It's not bacon. And after years and years of doing that, and after losing enough things, I thought, well, what the hell do I have to lose? I might as well try to be myself, or a version of myself. That feels truer to me. And I didn't actually know how to do that. I don't think the choice to be yourself is binary. It's like, fake it or be it. It's like, No, I've got 40 years of layers of masks on me. What happens if I take off 1? Am I still here? Did everybody run away? No, maybe I'll take off another and my journey over these past few years has been begrudgingly and hesitantly removing masks.

Ray Edwards 11:35

Do you find people become upset with you when you take off the mask that they thought you really were?

Jeff Goins 11:41

Yes. And those people are a minority. If I think 100 people are going to be mad at me, one or two actually gets mad.

Ray Edwards 11:48

How many layers of the onion have you peeled? Is there more?

Jeff Goins 11:50

I actually think there's always more. I thought it was like, you know, Michelangelo said about sculpting- the art of sculpture. He said, You know the angel, the form is waiting inside the block of marble, he actually felt like he could see the form inside the block of marble, and he had to chip away to get at it. And I kind of thought of it like that. Eventually, I'm gonna get to the true self. That's not been my experience. My experience has been like, I was a pot of water. Not a great analogy, but I'm making it up in the moment, we'll see how it plays out. I was a pot of water. And I was in the crucible of life. Like I wasn't I didn't necessarily choose this, it was happening to me, you know, and the heat got turned up and you boil a pot of water all the way down. There's nothing left or so it seems. What has happened? The water has evaporated and expanded into the air. It's now everywhere. And so my process has been one of sort of evaporation, the distillation and boiling of the things that I thought I was because those were a part of me too. They weren't, it would be false for me to reject the false parts of myself. Because they were they were the best that I knew how to do. You know, I look back on you know, 32-year-old Jeff with the swoopy hair and the gingham shirt with the blazer trying to be Michael Hyatt. That was 100% what I was trying to do, I was pretending to not be trying to do that. But

that's what I was trying to do. And I look at that young man and I go, he was trying so hard and was doing it so earnestly, and that was what I knew to do, to feel safe and accepted. And it was my best attempt at getting love. And it was, it was good. It was a good thing. And when that stopped working for me in the sense that I just I was like, Ah, this isn't me anymore. And you know, it's like, you know, the scene from The Incredibles you know, we're old fat retired dad is putting on the superhero suit. You know, like you get older and the superhero suit doesn't fit as well. You've outgrown it, and in your case you're too skinny for it now, Ray, too muscular, but no I just didn't like it was harder and harder to put that personality on. And as I let go of layers of the onion, as it were, I didn't get smaller and smaller, I actually became more and more. Freer and freer.

Jeff Goins 12:02

If you strike me down, I should only become more powerful than you can possibly imagine.

Jeff Goins 14:23

And what happens? He vanishes.

Ray Edwards 14:26

Yes, yes.

Jeff Goins 14:27

He Expands, he becomes more a part of everything. And I do think at a practical level, if you let go of your attachment to money, fame, success, there is a perspective there's a there's a way of looking at the world where you go, that's everything. I lost everything, you know, but when you lose that stuff, and you get like in, in place of status and yeah, status really was what I was not accepted as a kid and I became popular and successful so people thought I was cool when you lose that. But you get like in replace of that you get like a really good day. You know, like, if you've ever had a really good day, you're like, This is so much better than people thinking, I'm a big deal. And I'm walking around feeling like a fake. Feeling like I'm feeling broken inside, you know, there are hundreds of stages, I stepped off where hundreds or 1000s of people were applauding me. And as soon as I stepped off that stage, I felt I felt like nobody again, and I'd step on another stage to feel like I was somebody. And now I get on the stage and I'm me, for the most part, as far as I can tell. And I step off the stage and, and in some cases, it's a relief. You know, I'm like, Oh, I get to go back to being me again. You know, it's, it's really hard to play a character that everybody thinks is actually you.

Ray Edwards 15:49

Yeah, because if we're honest, we know we play different characters throughout the day, depending on who we're with and what we're doing.

Jeff Goins 15:54

Yeah, there's nothing wrong with that. I think the, the place that I got to is I stopped identifying with the character as the only thing I am.

Ray Edwards 16:03

Well, right.

Jeff Goins 16:04

Bano has this ritual. Where I mean, Bano, arguably, inarguably one of the world's greatest living performers right now, like, puts on a show, you know, I saw U2 for the first time years ago, but it was like two and a half hours. I mean, they just went for it. And he is, I mean, that is a sexual, spiritual, you know, transcendent kind of experience. But he has this ritual. I love this. When he comes off a tour. He doesn't get to come back home right away. Do you know the story, you know this story?

Ray Edwards 16:41

No, why?

Jeff Goins 16:42

Yes. Fascinating. Because his wife says, I don't want that guy in my house. He's a dick. You stood on stage in front of 10s of 1000s of people and you're a god to these people. And you come home with that persona, you know,

Ray Edwards 16:57

ouch.

Jeff Goins 16:58

And he tells the story about- it's a two-week process, basically, to reintegrate into family life to go from Bano, the rock God to Bano the dad and husband.

Ray Edwards 17:09

Yeah.

Jeff Goins 17:09

And, you can't flip a switch. I mean, literally, you can't, your adrenaline is pumping. Like, it's an ego trip. And I think it's a wonderful thing. I've been to a U2 concert going, I like that guy, I need that rock god to give me a transcendent concert-going experience. There's nothing wrong with that character he's playing, but that's not all of who he is. So he comes off a tour and he checks into a hotel. And that's it. That's day one, you know, and then the next day, the wife and kids come and meet him for dinner at the hotel, you know, that's day two, and they kind of, and then eventually, he kind of goes over there for dinner, and then like comes over and like stays a night and then goes back to the hotel. And there's this gradual reintegration of him into the family unit. And he gets to transition out of rock god into, you know, Bano family, man. And they have been doing their own thing for weeks or months now, kind of bring him back into their orbit, like they both get to get used to each other. But I like that, like that's a really cool way of thinking about the characters that we play in life and the roles that we play because you don't talk to your wife the way they talk to your dog, or your kids or your co-workers. That doesn't mean you're being disingenuous, that actually means you are something more than the roles you play in life.

Ray Edwards 18:30

How many best selling books have you written?

Jeff Goins 18:32

Depends how you count it right? I have had I've written five books with my name as the principal author. I've written another five or six books, where I'm either named or not named, that have come out and then probably a few more that are about to come out including your book, I had two what are called National bestsellers. My last two books, *The Art of Work* and *Real Artists Don't Starve* were considered national bestsellers. A national bestseller is a publishing term. Nobody. The average reader doesn't know what it means but a national bestseller means you've hit multiple bestseller lists that are recognized as, as legitimate. There are lots of bestseller lists. Obviously, everybody knows the New York Times bestseller list. There's the Washington Post bestseller list. Publishers Weekly has the bestseller list. USA Today has a bestseller list and of course, there are Amazon bestseller lists. But even the New York Times doesn't have one list. There's multiple lists as a list for fiction nonfiction ebook as numerous ones Wall Street Journal same thing there are, there are many lists. And I have had two books two out of five that have hit multiple lists that are recognized by most industry insiders, as those are real bestseller lists. And I had a self-published book that outsold those books and never hit an official bestseller list. So I would probably say I have three best-selling books.

Ray Edwards 20:02

So how would you define forget about the lists and recognition from other people, how would you define a best selling book?

Jeff Goins 20:10

You know, I years ago picked a fight with with this term because it used to mean something. And now it doesn't.

Ray Edwards 20:18

Yeah, because anybody can direct their way to getting on some list somewhere and say, I have a best selling book.

Jeff Goins 20:24

Yeah. And now it's like, if everybody's a best seller, then nobody is. You know, best is superlative. It means exceptional, better than all the rest. I mean, hey, if it works for you, go for it. But years ago, I saw a friend and person that I'd work with kind of expose this. And he wrote, he didn't write anything, actually, he created a file that he uploaded to Amazon, it was a blank file, he took a picture of his foot and made it into a book cover. And then he published a book in about 24 hours, I think the book was called Putting My Foot Down. And it's a picture of his foot. And then he texted 20 friends and said, Go buy this book. And half of them did. And he listed the book into some niche category in Amazon like podiatry advice or something. And the Amazon bestseller lists, which are based on categories are calculated hourly, and they're calculated hourly, algorithmically, which is a lot of adverbs. But the point is, if you get a bunch of people to buy your book in an hour, which is what something I actually saw with my first, actually I saw this with every book is, is you get addicted to refreshing the page every hour, and you can see the number go down. And the way bestseller lists on Amazon Go is if you're the number one book, you are the best if you're the number one book in a category, or across all books on Amazon, you are the best. Like Matthew McConaughey, when his book came out the other year, he was number one, in all books on Amazon. That's the best. And this guy hit a bestseller list. He was number one in some random, obscure category for an hour and the book was blank.

And he and he turned it was a media stunt. Then he wrote an article about it, he wrote an article about it. And a publisher said we want to acquire this book, and actually turn this into a real book. Because it's a media stunt, and New York publishers love media, you know, it's the same engine. So if that's possible, and it happens that you can sell a blank book with a picture of some dude's foot on it. And that's a best-selling book. And your book is and my book is a best seller. What does it mean anymore? That kind of made me go, oh, what's the point and my story is in 2015, I pulled out all the stops to do a big book launch and hit all the bestseller lists and lost my soul in the process and didn't like who I was. And I started to like research, what is a best seller, and the newspapers, you know, because back in the days when literary critics would write about your book, and then people would buy it, the newspapers were how people found out a book, books and bought them and a best seller was a newspaper making a list of these are the best selling books from this week. And this is where the term comes from best-seller is local newspapers and eventually, national newspapers started printing lists of books that were doing well. Selling well. It wasn't a perfectly objective calculation. It's still not a perfectly objective calculation. But it is the newspaper saying these are the books that are doing pretty well, therefore you should read them. And it became sort of this self-propagating thing. And this happened in the late 19th century and early 20th centuries, where bestseller list started to become a thing. I think Mark Twain at one point, you know, was, was a best-selling author. So first of all, it's a marketing term. Best seller's a marketing term.

Ray Edwards 23:58

Because if I say it's a best seller, that means other people liked it, therefore, you should like it.

Jeff Goins 24:03

And that's what happened. And there were a handful of books every year that everybody was reading, and those were the best sellers. And the reason everybody was reading them was because the newspapers were saying everybody's reading them. You know, what's the what's the Don Draper thing? You think that's love? You think love exists? Love is a term that people like me invented to sell laundry detergent, right? Best Seller is a term that newspapers invented to make you buy books. And it worked. And as already evidenced by the story about the, you know, the foot book is it kind of doesn't mean anything right now. But I was like, Well, this is a good term. This is a good idea best selling book. What does that mean? It should mean if you Google it if you if you look up the definition in a dictionary, a best selling book is a book that sells better than most books of its kind, right. So if you have a best-selling medical book, that's a best seller, but that doesn't need, nor should it compete with a best-selling novel, right. And so the bestseller lists are actually trying, I think, when they're, you know, I'm gonna give them the benefit of the doubt. Like the New York Times is trying to say there're, there are different kinds of books. And so we'll have different lists. And then we'll tell you which ones are selling better than others, and therefore, by implication worth reading. And so a best seller, as I define it, is a book that sells better than most of its kind. And I think that is a really good goal for an author.

Ray Edwards 25:43

I agree. And what about after the initial I think most people who write books think about having a bestseller campaign to get their book up on the bestseller list? Nothing wrong with that promoting your book to a lot of people. So a lot of people read it, presumably they like it. And if they don't like it, then it won't remain a bestseller very long. What about the ongoing sales that

comes from the quality of the book, right? So it keeps selling after that first initial marketing push.

Jeff Goins 26:07

Again, it's like what is the best seller mean? Ryan Holiday sort of coined this term. I mean, he popularized it perennial seller. And it was this idea that it's better to sell a lot of something over a long period of time, then to have a decent number of sales in a short period of time and be a flash in the pan. Neil Young, you'll appreciate this. Neil Young, saying it's better to burn out than fade away and he was talking about rock and roll. The irony of that is he was talking about he was talking about rock and roll, he was talking about you know, art, and I think John Lennon I think John Lennon was alive when Neil Young wrote, hey hey, my my which is you know, rock and roll never dies- that song, and he said that's, that's stupid. That's not, that's not good. The irony is John Lennon did burnout he was killed. And Neil Young produces a record every single year, right? Now, it's a romantic notion that you should have some big hit and then disappear. And it is, it's, it's kids stuff. It's not what mature artists do. Michelangelo lived until he was almost 90. And he changed careers multiple time he went from sculptor to painter, he hated painting. And he got into painting because he lost a public painting contest with Leonardo da Vinci lost in this public mural contest, where Leonardo said, painting is the best art. And Michelangelo said sculpture is the best art. And I'll prove it to you, I'll paint better than you and show you how easy and stupid it is. And they painted these public murals in Florence 1500s. And then the public judged it, and Leonardo won and Michelangelo lost. And now people knew that he was a pretty good painter, because he was, you know, he painted this good mural. And what happened after that, within a year or two, the pope called up Michelangelo and said, there's this ceiling that I want you to paint, which was the Sistine Chapel. Then he became a painter. And then he became an architect. And then he became an engineer, he was actually in charge of a cathedral for the last the construction of a cathedral for the last 40 years of his life, where he was in charge of managing hundreds of employees, construction workers, he was a construction foreman, Michelangelo, the great artist, he was a poet, he did lots of things. My point is, great artists, make great things for a long time. And so and it takes a long time for the public to catch on sometimes. So that's a long way of saying, be careful with the flash in the pan stuff, because our system right now does incentivize you to sell 10,000 copies of a book, hit the New York Times list, and be a New York Times bestseller. I know a guy who did that. And he sold 3000 copies of a business book. And he hit the New York Times list. And for the rest of his life, he can call himself a New York Times bestseller. Now, Steven Pressfield wrote *The War of Art*. And that book sold about half a million copies over the course of 15 years and never hit a bestseller list. And then Oprah had him on this is not that long ago. This is 5-10 years, not even 10 years ago, had him on Super Soul Sunday or something. Then he hit the bestseller list because he was on Oprah. He hit the New York Times bestseller list. But why is it that one guy sold 3000 copies of a book in a weekend as a New York Times bestseller and Steven Pressfield who wrote *The War of Art* and sold half a million copies that book has now sold millions of copies. But at a time it was, it was the sleeper just kept selling every year a little bit more a little bit more, a little bit more. Why is it that he never had a bestseller list or Michael Bungay Stanier who wrote *The Coaching Habit*, which has sold almost a million copies now has never had a bestseller list. The system is stupid.

Ray Edwards 30:07

The system rewards what's expedient, not what's valuable.

Jeff Goins 30:11

The system, it's media. The system rewards what's popular right now and will not be tomorrow. And so my question, I don't judge it, I mean I kind of judge it. I don't care. They can do whatever they want. I'm not mad that The New York Times has never given me the best seller medal. They haven't they never have. I've had every almost every other list, but I've not hit their list. I'm not mad, because it's their list. If there's a Jeff Goins Best Seller list, and Ray Edwards writes a book that sells pretty well, but I don't like it. And I think it's kind of a stupid book, and it doesn't deserve anything. And I go, sorry, Ray doesn't hit the Jeff Goins bestseller list. And you're like, why not? It's my list, bro. I do want to want you know,

Ray Edwards 30:54

yeah, yeah,

Jeff Goins 30:55

If you like, it's like the Oscars like, the Oscars are not the best films of the year. The Oscars are the films that the Academy, which is a group of Hollywood elites, they go, Hey, we think these are the best movies. And there's nothing wrong with that. It's like if you like, if you like what these people stand for, and you trust their aesthetic you go cool, you know, but there's plenty of movies that I've watched that Roger Ebert doesn't like, and I go, that's a good movie, just a movie that Roger Ebert doesn't like. And so what is unfortunate is that the system doesn't make room for books that sell pretty well over a long period of time. And that's unfortunate. Tim Grahl actually talks about this. He said, It should be like records. If you've sold 10,000 copies, you get this so 100,000 copies, you get it, you know, like gold, platinum, double gold, double platinum. Yeah.

Ray Edwards 31:47

Like how many copies of, how many copies of Dark Side of the Moon had been sold?

Jeff Goins 31:52

Right? Yeah. 20 million or something? You know,

Ray Edwards 31:54

It's something crazy like that. Yeah,

Jeff Goins 31:56

Yeah, But, but it's, you know, how many copies did it sell in the first week? Who cares, right? So my challenge to authors is know what game you're getting into, and don't change games halfway through. So if you, because most authors go, I want to write a really good book, and I want people to read it. And that's a wonderful goal. That's a noble, good goal, admirable, good thing. Of course you do, right, you're not writing this, you're not writing a journal entry or writing something that you want people to read, you want to make an impact. And then halfway through the release of a book, they go, this, it sounds really sexy to hit the New York Times list. And I can, I can say it till I'm blue in the face, speaking of the stories people want to hear, no author wants to hear that hitting the New York Times list is not going to do all the things for your career that you think it is. It's not going to it's not going to make you more money. These days, it might not put you on more stages, it might I mean, if that's your game, know your game, it's not going

to make you more money, and it's not going to sell you more books, and everybody believes it's going to do those two things, and it doesn't happen. What it does do is it gives you a new byline. And if that matters to you, or your industry, and then go for it, I'm not mad about it go for it, I found that it actually didn't matter. It didn't matter to the goals that I was trying to accomplish. And after publishing five books, I go, I just want to get more books into more people's hands. And that requires a different kind of strategy.

Ray Edwards 33:27

So I want both Jeff, I want to have a big splash and have a best seller. And I want to keep selling books 100 years from now because people are recommending the book to one another saying this is a book you must read. How do we do that?

Jeff Goins 33:41

Yeah, and those are, those are not mutually exclusive. And I would want the same. You want to splash. And what you don't want to do is you don't want to exhaust yourself at the launch. And not like run out of gas. And you know, say, say you you do what I did with my book, *The Art of Work*, which was my first big book is you go really hard- balls to the wall for you know, the first 8/10 weeks. And then it does or doesn't do what you want it to do. Hits a list or doesn't hit a list. And my book hit every single bestseller list except for the New York Times bestseller list. And I was deflated. I was frustrated. I was bereft. And I was like, Screw it. And I'm gonna move on. And I kind of neglected the book for about a month. And I started getting emails from people. We'd sold about 15,000 copies of the book in the pre-launch and first, first week of the of the release of the book. And I started getting emails from people who had who started reading it because just because they buy it doesn't mean they've read it yet. And few weeks later people were reading it, they're going this is a great book this like it was changing people's lives. And that kind of lit me up again and I was like, Oh, I care about this message. I spent two years working on this thing. I want more people to hear about it and I, if the first if the book launch was a sprint, I started jogging, and I started doing a couple of interviews a week, and just getting it out there and talking about it over and over and over again. And then the next six months, the book sold another 35,000 copies, and it sold about 50,000 copies in the first six months. Now, isn't that interesting that I killed myself and my team, and called in every favor with every friend to sell 15,000 copies of a book. And then I just kind of like, chilled out and talked about it in a way less aggressive, pushy way and sold another 35,000 copies. Now, I think both are valuable. You could say the latter wouldn't have happened without the former. Yeah, I think that's valid. And you know, what it's like to do crazy launches. And you know, what it's like to do pretty good launches. You know, I remember going we it's like *Moneyball*, you know, you start looking at the economics, is it better that I do two \$250,000 launches a year, or, you know, three \$150,000 launches? Or 10 \$150,000 launches over the next two years or whatever, like, can I make more money in the long run, pursuing a strategy? That is still kind of high energy, but I'm leaving something in the tank for the next at-bat?

Ray Edwards 36:21

Yeah.

Jeff Goins 36:22

So to answer your question, do both. And the essential ingredient for a book that hits now, and people keep reading is not a marketing plan. It's not hirings, you know, the biggest book marketing experts in the world. Because I did that. And that person said, let me see the book. I go, No, I just want the launch strategy. He goes, No, no, I will work on your book, if it's already done. Because once the book is written, the marketing is over. And that changed my understanding of marketing. But it's true. Like I got into marketing. When I worked for a nonprofit organization, I work for a ministry when I got out of college for seven years. And this is how I fell into marketing is they, they hired me as a writer, and then they didn't have a marketing director, and I became the marketing director. And my boss said, Read Seth Godin 's blog, and try stuff. And that's, that was my education in online marketing. And so, um, you know, I got kind of schooled and what Seth calls permission marketing, which is just kindly asking, you know, hey, kind of, you know, Can I can I share a thing with you? Yeah, sure. Okay. And then the process of gradually persuading or convincing somebody to buy something. Yeah. So all that to say, when I was working at the nonprofit, I was like, Oh, I'm trying to sell stuff that I didn't have a hand at creating. And when I quit that job, and became an author, I said to myself, if I ever become a marketer, again, I didn't think I was becoming a marketer when I when I started writing books, and that was wrong. I was, I was signing up for a lifetime of marketing. If if an author says, I don't want to market, well, you're crazy. Because a book is a sales letter, a book, a nonfiction book, is a persuasive piece of material trying to persuade somebody that you're right, that your idea is true. You're trying to make an argument, a writing coach told me once you don't have to be right, this is a this is a writer, she goes, You don't have to be right, you just have to make a case, you just have to make an argument, you have to make it interesting is what she told me, that's what a book needs to be. So what do you need, if you want to sell something? You've got to get into the mechanics of the thing. And the number one ingredient for for creating a best-selling book, a book that hits the bestseller list and keep selling afterwards. It's not all hype. Because we've seen from the economics, you can sell 15,000 copies of a book in the first few weeks, and then never sell a copy again, if you've push, push, push, push, push. But what makes a book enduring the great is there's some substance and it all begins with an interesting idea. Most authors, write a pretty good book and then figure out how to market it. And if you do that you've already lost. What great books do, whether they're doing it consciously or unconsciously, is they start with an idea that people are ready to hear. And, and it's not enough to have a good idea. Because people don't follow leaders- thought leaders, authors, politicians, marketers because their ideas are good, or even because they're true. They follow leaders because their ideas are interesting. And an interesting idea is any idea that challenges your audience's assumptions in a way that could make their lives better.

Ray Edwards 39:55

Dear listener, Jeff and I had a much longer conversation about all the tactical, detailed ideas, strategies, and tactics he has for creating your own bestseller. That interview is at prosperouswriter.com. Just put in your email address there doesn't cost anything to watch the interview. And we'll give you a summary of those ideas, so you can create your own bestseller. Now back to our conversation. So Jeff, what's on the horizon for you? What's next for Jeff Goins writer?

Jeff Goins 40:32

I am growing a, a book production agency where my team and I work with about 20 to 30 authors every year. And we plan, write and edit best-selling books. I got out of the online course game a year ago, and I don't really teach anymore. I'm working on a new book myself. My life in many ways has got smaller and deeper and more concentrated. But at the end of the day, like I care about books, I'm just trying to put more good books into the world. That's that's what I'm up to.

Ray Edwards 41:06

I love that. We're on the web should people go?

Jeff Goins 41:11

Our agency website is called Freshcomplaint.com. Yeah, right. We appreciate that. You know, it's, I either get people going, oh, people that aren't authors or marketers are like, Oh, cool. Yeah. But that, you know, our thing is we want to help thought leaders pick fights worth fighting. You know, as make a ruckus, as Seth Godin says, a fresh complaint. That's what a good book should be, you're going hey, this is Have you thought about it this way. So you go to freshcomplaint.com, you can learn a little bit more about what we've done and what we're up to.

Ray Edwards 41:49

I recommend you do. I love you.

Jeff Goins 41:51

I love you, too.

Ray Edwards 41:52

Thanks for a great conversation. And folks, if you want to hear the more detailed outline of how to create your own best-selling book, then just go to prosperouswriter.com for a limited time, I must add. Until the next time, you know, what I pray for you is that God will give you more good things and you could ask or even possibly imagine that you enjoy peace for yourself and for your house and that you live long and prosper.

Announcer 42:30

Thank you for listening to the Ray Edwards Show. Find the complete archives of all episodes at RayEdwardspodcast.com or subscribe for free through Apple Podcasts and never miss an episode. This program copyright Ray Edwards International, Incorporated, all rights reserved. Each week we bring you a message of prosperity with purpose and freedom. Remembering that true freedom is available to all through Jesus Christ.