



Achieve Your Goals Podcast #75 - Virtual Freedom (An Interview with Chris Ducker)

Nick: Welcome to the Achieve Your Goals podcast with Hal Elrod. I'm your host Nick Palkowski and you're listening to the show that is guaranteed to help you take your life to the next level faster than you've ever thought possible. In each episode you will learn from someone who has achieved extraordinary goals that most haven't. He is the author of the number one bestselling book "The Miracle Morning" a Hall of Fame and Business Achiever, an international keynote speaker, ultra-marathon runner, and the founder of vipsuccesscoaching.com, Mr. Hal Elrod.

Hal: All right Achieve Your Goals podcast listeners. This is your host Hal Elrod, thanks for tuning in. I am laughing because my guest today Chris Ducker, we both work from home and about two minutes ago or a minute ago, we were about to get started and I heard my daughter yelling outside my bedroom door, just fun yelling, just making noise and playing with her brother and I said, "Chris, hold on just a minute. My daughter's screaming outside my door, let me stop that before we start the recording." I came back 30 seconds later and he said, "Hal hey, my six-year-old son Charlie is trying to come in my office right now, give me a second to do the same thing." It's great, working from home, being able to see your kids intermittently throughout the day, Chris, don't you love that?

Chris: Yes, and then the ability to be able to shoo them away whenever you don't want them around.

Hal: Exactly, and then their memory is so short that it lasts about two minutes and they come back doing the same thing or you know, my daughter's going, "No, no, but Daddy, it's really important. Just open your door. I need you to help me put this dress on or something, right.

Chris: Right, right, right. Can you please get this Lego figure out of my nostril that sort of type of thing.

Hal: Exactly, my brain or "Halston.." her little brother, "Halston's doing this or that. He won't give me my toy." Well, we've never started a show like that, but you know that's life. Here we go, let me dive in. Let me get serious for a second. We just did our first author interview recently. Actually, sometimes these air in different orders so I'm not sure how many episodes ago our first author interview aired, but it occurred to me that I am author, right, I'm a huge... I'm an author, I'm a reader, a big fan of other authors and any authors I've had on the show in the past, I always had just kind of follow my normal format for the show, talking about achieving your goals. It just occurred to me like, "Why am I not doing author interviews where they're really coming on and talking about their book?" Not just for any author, not just for any book, but for books that really will help you achieve your goals, and books that have helped me achieve my goals.

The author we have on the show today, more than just an author, he is a number one best-selling author, he is the founder of the company called Virtual Staff Finder, virtualstafffinder.com, and he is known as the virtual CEO, I'm talking about Chris Ducker. He wrote a book called Virtual Freedom. I'm holding it in my hands right now. It is one of my top two books for this year, and you might be saying, "Well Hal, we're still pretty early in 2015, do you mean the top two books you've read so far?" What I mean is, when I read this book and I think I might have started in December of last year, it was one of two books that I decided would be the lynch pin for me to take my business and my life to the next level this year. So when I say it's my top two books, it's kind of my top two foundational books that I'm reading and re-reading and implementing and revisiting over and over and over and over and over again, because it really... it's all about... this book... and I'll let Chris tell you more what it's about, but I'll just read you the tag line, the subtitle here.

How to work with virtual staff to buy more time, become more productive and build your dream business; and that really is the focus this year for me is how to I buy more time, become more productive, and build my dream business. I could argue that I've got my dream business, but my goal this year Chris is to remove myself from 80% of the tasks that I currently do and build a virtual team that handles that 80% and then I now am only investing 20% of the time that I was investing before and I'm able to either a) spend the other 80% of time with my family, right, doing things that are fun; or focused on expanding and growing my business and starting new ventures and achieving and working on goals and

dreams that I may have been putting off because I've been so busy running the business if that makes sense. So I'm excited to have Chris on today because he wrote a book that's become kind of my bible, my business bible for this year. So Chris, are you ready to go buddy?

Chris: Yes I am, and thank you so much for including me in your top two books. Who's number two?

Hal: Tony Robbins.

Chris: See how I'm assuming..I'm having heavily assumptions here. Who is the other book? I'm curious.

Hal: Tony Robbins' Money.

Chris: Okay. Alright.

Hal: Yes, my focus is really protecting my family's income, my family's nest egg, right, that sort of thing. So that's the other book. Last year, I'll tell you it was The One Thing and The Millionaire Fastlane. Did you ever read The Millionaire Fast Lane by MJ DeMarco?

Chris: I have, it's a great book and I've also read The One Thing as well. It's funny, The One Thing was actually one of my sort of two or three books last year along with Essentialism and what's the other one now? Oh my good God, I can't for the life of me, I can't remember.

Hal: The Miracle Morning, that slipped your mind [laughter].

Chris: Well, you know what, Miracle Morning was only introduced to me, and you know this because obviously I had you on my show a little while ago. Miracle Morning was only introduced to me before Christmas by Pat Flynn, who I know you've had on the show, and here I am I'm going to start interviewing you now almost on your own show. I said to you when we spoke for my podcast that I just heard Pat talking about getting up early all the time and all the rest and the change... you know this is what a good book does. It effects change. At the very core as an author, that's what you want to do with the work that you produce within the pages of your book and it affected change.

Now Pat, I've know Pat for a long time, we're best friends and he has always, since the day I've known him and met him first, he has always been a night owl. When I mean that I mean like he goes to work like at 10 p.m. through to 2 a.m. or sometimes 3 a.m. he would work and then he would crash for six or seven hours and then get up and get on with the day. I think it was probably the beginning of December that he started waking up at I think like at 6 a.m. and now I think he wakes up at like 5:30 a.m. or something and he kept saying, "Dude, I'm waking up early, I'm getting stuff done, I'm exercising, I'm eating better, and all this stuff." And I said, "Where's all this come from?" And that's when he mentioned The Miracle Morning and I started calling it The Miracle Morning malarkey [laughter], "What's all this Miracle Morning malarkey all about?"

Then the next minute I knew the book was being delivered to me by him, and I read it, and was like, "All right, I'll give this a shot." But remember I said to you and this... and for you guys listening in you listen obviously because you love Hal first and foremost, I can tell you something right now I only utilized the concepts within The Miracle Morning, or I started I should say, I rather... when I read it and I went through it I said, "You know what, I work Monday to Thursday. I don't work Fridays. I have a three-day weekend. So I'm going to utilize this Monday through to Thursday. I'm going to do this. I'm going to get up at 6 a.m. and I'm going to rock this out." I've never really had a major issue waking up early, but the fact that I was sort of "I'm going to do it," and then now I wake up between 6 a.m. and 6:15 a.m. every single morning. So I'm not even getting my lie-ins Saturday and Sundays anymore. Any way I wanted to add that. My body clock is well and truly booked and set up now. There you go, you've changed my morning.

Hal: I appreciate that. That's great. My listeners must think that I pay my guests to talk about The Miracle Morning because Pat went on around too about how The Miracle Morning has changed his life. I only bring on guests that will talk about my book. No.

Chris: That's a great marketing strategy. That's one of the greatest marketing strategies ever.

Hal: Yes, I know that's true, but no I'm definitely not intentional, but I do appreciate you sharing that. Thanks Chris, I'm honored. I'm always... to me, whenever I meet someone who... they were struggling and then they apply... you're like, for you, you meet someone that's struggling and then they apply your concepts and now they're not struggling anymore. That's a level of satisfaction but there's this different level of like you meet someone who was already succeeding at

a very high level like you or Pat, but then they still apply your concepts and they see improvements. That's just a different kind of feeling like "Wow, it even works for people who are already crushing it."

Chris: It's important, that in itself, is an important concept that is when you hit a certain level of success and obviously success as a word and as a concept is different for everybody. When you hit whatever level of success you want to attain to, don't stop there, there are always additional things that you can take on board that can make it even better, and whether it's waking up in the morning earlier, or whether it's just productivity or focusing on one task at a time, or whatever it ends up being, whatever book you end up reading, it could be hiring virtual staff, whatever it is, don't stop learning and don't stop pushing yourself to try new things because you never know what might happen.

Hal: Well that's what they say - the enemy of great is good, right. You're at the place where, "Yes, I'm doing pretty good." And then you lose that drive that got you there and then you start to fall backwards, right. So I'll say a couple of words about you Chris and then I'll want to ask you some questions here, but for anyone listening if you don't know who Chris Ducker is, I already mentioned the author of the bestselling book Virtual Freedom, founder of virtualstafffinder.com. He's known as the virtual CEO and up until about 2009, he was a standard entrepreneur, workaholic if you will, working 14-hour days, six days a week, spending very little time with his family and he was working in his business rather than on it; and he made a goal, in 2010 he put a one-year goal in place and ironically or not ironically, but this is one of my top goals for this year and that is to become a virtual CEO.

Meaning he now is able to pull himself out of his business, work on it, but have a staff, a virtual staff that works in it that does most of the things that he was doing, and again that might sound familiar because I mentioned that's one of my goals this year after reading this book. So Chris, let's talk about the book itself. Why did you write it? Well, actually first give us a synopsis what it's about, how would you describe it, what's it about in terms of what's it going to do for people and why did you write it?

Chris: Well, I mean I wrote it first and foremost because this is a subject that I've been kind of engulfed in in terms of outsourcing and delegation. This is like 10-12 years of my life. This is what I've done for the majority of my entrepreneurial journey anyway. The real reason why I wrote it though is that there was so much rubbish online in regards to working with virtual staff, outsourcing, particularly

outsourcing overseas, and there's just so many "gurus" or experts on the internet that think that they can teach people how to do this stuff. Many of them have never done it before, many of them are just all-out lying, and many of them honestly from what I read and see have absolutely no idea what they're talking about.

So I just upset, quite frankly, as I sometimes do, and I just said, "You know, enough is enough. I've got to put the record straight here." So I started blogging a lot about the topic and my blog just flew. It took off like crazy. I've been blogging since January 2010 where I started talking about my journey to remove myself from the business by the end of that year and we achieved that virtual CEO goal that I put in place. The blog had grown relatively steadily for a few years, but when I really put the foot down on the virtual freedom kind of concept gas from a content creation perspective, it went through the... I get over 100,000 unique visitors a month to my blog now. When I say that number out loud, it's still... that's a tenth of a million.

So that's the way I look at it and so... yes, I wrote it to right the wrongs, to set the record straight, to tell people that if you think you can hire somebody in India or the Philippines or anywhere else for that matter for a buck fifty an hour and they're going to bring value to your business, you're wrong, and a lot of other errors and mistakes and real home-truths about how to do this right. What turned out to be a little bit of I guess a long-winded mission statement to begin with, turned into almost 300 pages, which is now very humbly referred as the essential guide to building a business with virtual workers and I'm very proud to have that.

Hal: I'm looking on Amazon right now...

Chris: It's a great achievement.

Hal: Yes, I know you know this Chris because if you're like me, you check on an occasional basis, but you have 578 reviews, 4.9 out of 5 stars, but again 578 reviews, 522 are 5 stars and you don't have a single one-star review. That's hard to do my friend, 578 reviews and not a single... and you only have one two-star review, and then you only have five three-star reviews, I mean that's crazy.

Chris: Thanks for screwing that right up, there's going to be horrible people... no, I'm joking. All of your listeners are beautiful I'm sure.

Hal: They are.

Chris: I mean it's how I've gone a whole year and got all those reviews without getting one troll giving me a horrible one-star review I don't know, I have no idea how I've gotten away with it, but yes, very happy with that result, obviously very happy.

Hal: Yes, very cool. So what's the biggest obstacle for people? I know that for me, let me back up, I'll share my experience real quick and then I'd love for you to kind of address this. For me, hiring anyone period, not just virtually, but when I hired my first employee who now is virtual. She started working in the office adjacent to mine and then I just... it stressed me out to be constantly thinking about what she was doing in there and listening and checking in on her and eavesdropping, so it stressed me out, so I sent her to her [inaudible 00:15:18]. I said, "Just go work from home, that'll be easier. I don't care, go work from home." But it was stress.. it took me years just to hire someone because I thought, "I don't know how to teach," like I do so many things that took me so long to figure out and there's so many details, I don't know how to teach somebody else how to do what I do.

So that was my biggest obstacle and of course when you hire somebody whether virtual or in person, there's a learning curve and it's a little painful, but on the other side of that is freedom, right, virtual freedom. So my biggest obstacle was that kind of, I don't know that fear of like I don't know how to teach someone to do what I do. It feels like I don't have time to teach them. So that was my biggest obstacle what do you see as the biggest obstacle for people to building a virtual staff?

Chris: Well, I think that is certainly one of them, time and not either wanting to make the time to train somebody and bring someone on board properly and all the rest of it. But that's one side of the coin, the other side of the coin is quite frankly, it's what you mentioned right there in regards to your staff, and eventually getting to send her home. Entrepreneurs are strange individuals, we're not wired the same as everybody else, we have slightly different DNA, we're-- I often say we're certifiably insane but in a productive manner, and what I mean by that is micro-management, it's-- we love the idea that we are the center of our own universe and that nobody is better than us at anything. In the book I call it Superhero Syndrome that we believe that we're the toughest thing in our universe and nobody can hurt us, which is complete BS obviously, we're not perfect, we do screw up just like anybody else does.

So it's really-- the main obstacle is just getting over your dam self, that's what it really comes down to and if the real first kind of sticking point is just putting your hand up and admitting to yourself that you are at overwhelmed. You're at a place

where you need to be able to get some help to be able to move forward, to become unstuck, to not hit the plateau or stay in the plateau if you've already hit it. I believe every entrepreneur will get to a fork, to a crossroads in their journey as a business builder and you will either go one way or the other. There's nothing in between. You either build a team and avoid burnout, or you hit that burnout wall at 180 miles an hour and it hurts like hell, and then you become no good to anybody for anything. So really the biggest stumbling block, the biggest problem people have is just letting go, literally. Letting go of anything, anything at all, whether it be managing social media or doing online research, or their bookkeeping, or their content creation, or their marketing, it doesn't matter, just letting go.

Hal: Yes, letting go of that control, right, it's like or the idea that well, nobody can do it as well as I can.

Chris: That's the biggest... that's the stumbling block right there and I often get, people say to me, "Well, if it takes me 45 minutes to train somebody how I like my blog posts formatted, I can do it myself in 45 minutes." And I'm like, "Well, you know what, here's an idea, the next time you format one of your blog posts, why not hit record on a screen capture software, talk through the layout and the way that you want things done, and the fact that you want the last sentence to be bold and in italics as a call to action, the fact that you want an image put at the top for social sharing, the fact that you want this, this, and this; why not talk through it and then dump that video into dropbox as a training file?" It never goes away and ultimately what happens is your VA gets that video, they go through it, they learn how to do what you want them to do when it comes to laying out your blog posts, and then you never have to do it again, ever.

There's a novel idea. It's called delegation. That's really the major issue with people. They just don't want to let go of their control. We're all control freaks. We're type A. I've never met an entrepreneur that wasn't a type A person and just how much you'd let that control yourself is only down to you, no one else can help in regards to that.

Hal: I love the tip that you just gave. That is a game-changer for someone that has-- even like myself-- that has that concern of trying to teach someone how to do something, just to use technology, turn on the screen, capture software, and if anybody... the book, obviously, teaches how to do this in detail, but you turn on your screen capture software and you don't even have to do anything, you just talk while you're doing it, "Now I'm doing this and now I'm clicking enter. Now I write..." That's it, it's easy."

Chris: Every task, every single task that I've delegated in the last five years has been in that fashion, everything, editing my podcast to uploading content to Facebook, to filling up my Twitter stream with old blog posts. Here's the other thing, if there's any content creators tuning in, I'm sure you've got other entrepreneurs that create content online on a regular basis, we work hard as content creators or as I call us, online publishers. We work hard to create that content and a lot of the time, a week after our blog post is live, people forget about it. We forget about it. You know, you've got social media that you can get a VA to go into your Google analytics and find out what was my 10 top blog posts or podcast episodes. What 10 top pieces of content from the last six months or the last year or maybe the last two years and then bring those posts and those podcasts and those pieces of content back into the fray by putting them onto social on a regular basis. Maybe it's twice a week you highlight something from your archives, and you're reusing... you know people-- 80% of the people that come to my blog every single month are first time visitors, 80%.

So there are new people discovering me all time, because after they come to my blog for the first time, they can get the majority of my content through my newsletter. I make it easy for them to consume my content. I don't care whether they go to my YouTube channel or whether they download stuff on iTunes or whether they read my blog, I just want them to consume the content. So I make it very easy by giving them the content ultimately in email, but the fact of the matter is your archive is a strong marketing feather in your cap, and it's silly if you're letting it go to sleep, so little things like that your VA can be a real godsend when it comes to getting the most mileage out of the work that you do.

Hal: You know I love that, and I'll tell you one of the biggest things that what you talked about in the book, you I think conceptually the idea that you have a general virtual assistant, but then you have a VA for each task or project or role to have an entire team and that's, I think that's a big kind of paradigm shift in that people are looking for one VA do everything and there's that general VA that, as you said, that's kind of where you start. That helps you run your life and maximize your productivity by freeing you up of time draining repetitive tasks that no business owner should be handling, that's word for word from your book there. That's where you start, but then the idea of having kind of one person that does everything in your business, there's going to be a lot of balls that get dropped right. You're setting that person up for failure, and I love the concept of it's like have different VAs that specialize in different areas and that's all they do for you, is that like one VA that

just does your blog post, because that's what they do for all their clients. That's their specialty, their expertise.

Chris: Yes, I mean think about it logically, if you are a consummate content creator, let's say you're creating two or three pieces of content on a weekly basis, to pay somebody, for instance, for example in the Philippines say \$600 or \$700 a month full time 40 hours a week to just manage your blog, make sure things are published on time, make sure they're looking good, and then to pump those out to social. Paying somebody that 700 bucks, depending on what your selling, product, service, experience wise, your ROI is huge for somebody truly focused, if you're creating content as a marketing tool, as a branding tool. That is a very very small investment to make that you stay on point and you stay front of mind.

I often say that as online publishers, we want to be somebody's favorite, that should be our goal. If we are somebody's favorite blogger, somebody's podcaster, somebody's favorite YouTube personality, if we can become someone's favorite, we're all ready winning the battle, we truly are, because those somebodies will spread in a viral fashion our content because they'll just consume everything that you produce because you're their favorite. So having somebody to focus on that role for you is incredibly, incredibly beneficial, but you're right where a lot of people think that they can hire one person to do everything. That is not possible. It cannot happen. It doesn't happen in the real world, and therefore it won't happen in the virtual world. You've never met an accountant that is also a great salesperson. You've never met a great IT person that was also a fantastic marketer. It doesn't happen. We have different roles in our businesses for very clear reasons and that is because people get paid well for doing what they do best and really focusing in on one particular role. You wouldn't have a plumber come to your house to help you with a roofing problem. So you've got to hire for the role and not for the task and that's one of the biggest mistakes people make when they get started.

Hal: Got it, got it. Can you go in to-- one of the things that you introduce early in the book is what you call the three lists to freedom. Can you expand on that? What are those lists, why are they important and how can our listeners apply them?

Chris: Well, this came out when I hit my burnout and I should say I really was a mess. Like I was hospital two weeks, anti-depressant, I mean you name it, I was a complete mess late 2009. I'd been building my business for a few years at that point and we were up to about 120-130 staff with 300 plus now and I did, I hit that brick wall and it hurt a lot.

So me and my wife, after I got out of the hospital, me and my wife went away for sort of a just a getaway weekend to one of the beautiful resorts here in the Philippines and there was no computers, nothing tech-wise around us or anything. I had a Blackberry, this is how long ago it was, I had a Blackberry back in those days. That's how long ago it was. So I... we were talking and as we were talking by the pool, or at the bar, or at the restaurant, or in the room I was writing notes down all the time, and it was at the Shangri-La. So I'd write notes about things that I didn't particularly like doing or things I thought that I was wasting my time on, someone else could probably handle that for me. You know how was I burning out, how was I working these 16 hours a day? What was going on?

By the end of the trip, I got home and I had, literally, I probably had 100 - and I'm not exaggerating this - I had maybe 100 pieces of paper. You know when you go to a hotels, particularly the nicer hotels, they have those little notepads everywhere, by the elevator, by the house-phones, everywhere. I threw all but one sheet of paper away and I'm looking at it right now. I'm going to hold it up to the mic here, don't know whether you can hear that piece of paper right there. That is a little notepad piece of paper and if you'd like, I'd love to send you a photo so you can see it. It says the Shangri-La MacTan Resort and Spa, Cebu, Philippines and I just wrote on there two words, and it says Virtual CEO.

I have that on my desk along with a piece of coral that I picked up from the beach one morning when we were having a walk that I use as a bit of a sort of a paper weight, and it's usually on top of that note. That trip, all those pieces of paper, when I kind of put them into different categories and lists so to speak, it created these three very, very distinct lists that had been built up over the course of this trip. They became the three lists to freedom.

Now, I didn't have that sexy title when I was doing this, but it came to me after that this really is going to be what leads me to, not just entrepreneurial freedom, but just freedom in general. So I categorized them in three different lists. The first list is a list of things that I hated doing. Like I really despised doing these tasks but I had to do them, or so I thought because my business demanded that I do them. So that was the first list, list of that stuff that I really hated doing.

The second list was a list of things that I felt that I was starting to struggle with doing them, and this is where that super-hero syndrome came into play because I had to ask myself, "Am I really struggling? I don't think I am, I can handle this, I'm great. If I don't know how to do it, I'll learn, I'll teach myself," that sort of thing. So

that was the second list, the list of things that I couldn't do or I was struggling to do.

The third list, this was the one that was actually, probably the smallest list out of the lot, but it was by far the most important and that was a list of things that I felt as the business owner that I am that I shouldn't actually be doing, like somebody else should be doing this stuff. I might be good at it, I might actually enjoy doing these kind of tasks, but the question is should I be doing them as the big boss, as the head honcho, can I offload them onto somebody else and then start doing more kind of high energy or high level activities like strategizing for growth, or spending more time developing my management team, or at conferences networking, or more time with my top 20% clientele, or developing products, or writing a book and all this other stuff.

So those lists became the three lists to freedom and they were such an integral part of me remove myself from that business in 2010 that I had to put it at the beginning of the book and I scatter it, I bring it up several times as you know throughout the course of the book as well and when I meet readers of the book, I often ask them, "What was like the biggest aha moment? What was the one thing that you take away above and beyond everything else?" The three lists to freedom is mentioned more than anything else, because it really gets you thinking.

Hal: And it does and you mentioned list three, the things you shouldn't do, but you might be good at them, you might even enjoy them, and that's the big thing right? You might enjoy posting on social media, but is that really growing your business, is that really moving you towards your highest vision for your life and your goals. No, it's not. I like formatting stuff. I'm big on formatting, I can spend hours... I do these hand-outs for my VIP coaching members and I will spend so much time on fonts and making them look pretty and it's like that's not a good use of my time. Every minute spent on something that you shouldn't be doing, is a minute that is not being spent on something that you should be doing right, your higher leverage activities.

Chris: Absolutely, I often say that when you say yes to something, your saying no to something else. That's another way to look at it, but yes, you're right those kind of things like I'm sure that you're VIP members would love you to actually end up producing more content for them rather than formatting the content that you are producing for them in the first place. It really is a game changer, it really is a game changer and I've had multi-millionaires buy the book, literally, and tell me, "Oh, my God, I cannot believe I was still doing some of this stuff." And they let go,

you've got to let go of that superhero syndrome, you've to cure yourself and start thinking, and I hate to use management speak here - you've got to start thinking a little bit out of the box. Truly, what can I be doing other than this, what's a better use of my time.

Hal: Absolutely, and the going back to the good is the enemy of great. For me, I could easily justify if things are great, I love my work, I love what I do every day, but reading your book and making those lists, it was a big wake-up call.

Chris: Good, good to know that.

Hal: So what's the first step? I think that's probably where people struggle is like, "Okay, where do I get started? Now I'm sold on the idea that I need to delegate more, I need to build a team, whether it's a team of one, two, three, ten, twenty, whatever it is, build a team that handles all the daily repetitive tasks so that I can focus on my areas of brilliance, doing what I love to do, that has the biggest impact on my business, on my customers, on my clients, on the people around me. Maybe it's just I want to free my time so I can free up my time so I can spend more time with my family, whatever it is, where does somebody get started?"

Chris: Well, I mean a lot of the time, people won't need somebody fulltime, maybe not even part-time, so hiring for the role, although that is the optimum way of looking at this, to actually bring somebody on and make them part of your mission, is... that's optimum. That's where you want to be long-term, but to get started, just outsource some tasks. Go on to elance, odesk, or one of those other job posting sites out there and get rid of the logo design that you've been tinkering around with in Photoshop even though you're not a graphic designer. These kinds of things, we do these things as entrepreneurs, we shouldn't be doing it. Logo design, maybe you've got a 45-minute video of you on stage or a 45-minute podcasting episode that you've got. You know 45 minutes of speaking is about 6,000 words when it's transcribed believe it or not.

So you get that audio transcribed and then you turn that transcription into an ebook, which you can then use as an opt-in magnet, to give away, to collect email addresses on your blog to grow your marketing list to sell them the product that you end up producing six months down the road. Now these are little one off tasks. Like I said, logo design, audio transcription, online research, maybe you're a speaker and you want a list of all of the entrepreneurial conferences, shows, and events within the next 90 days on the East Coast of the United States. You get a VA that put a list of those things together. Now, these are one off tasks, one off tasks,

once they're done, you pay them and thank you very much for playing and then you move on. But then as you do more and more of those tasks and you see what it can do for you, you're going to start thinking about, "Well hey, I also do this repetitive or revolving task." That happens every day, this happens every week, this happens every other week, and you start grouping those tasks together into a role, which you can then ultimately end up hiring full time.

Hal: Yes, that's fantastic. So it starts small, right, you don't have to build a virtual freedom team overnight. Now you mentioned a couple of resources, elance.com, odesk.com. What about virtualstafffinder.com? Obviously that's your company. I think it's appropriate for you to kind of just share with us what's the difference between virtualstafffinder.com and some of the other sites that you just mentioned?

Chris: Well, Virtual Staff Finder is set up as... I think the initial marketing message was something like Bridging the Outsourcing Gap or something along those lines, I can't remember now, it was about five years ago. So it was... what we do is we're a matchmaker plain and simple, so you're the entrepreneur who is busy, who is stressed out, wants a virtual assistant based here in the Philippines, we only work with Filipino VAs, and we're here in the Philippines, we've got our ear to the ground, we know everything there is about this market, about these people, and so you come to us and say, "This is the type of VA that I'm looking for" and we go out and hire you one rather or help you find one and you ultimately end up interviewing three people, which we will short-list based on testing and initial interviews and background checks and things like that that we do for you, and then you hire your VA and you get to work.

We're out of the picture, once that kind of traditional recruiting role is done from our side, we're out of the picture, you hire them directly, you pay them directly, they work for you directly, and we move on to our next stressed out, over worked entrepreneur. So we help, on average, we help around 80 entrepreneurs every single month, find their virtual assistants here in the Philippines. It's a business that has grown very nicely, slowly but surely over the course of five, we'll be celebrating six years, which is crazy, at the beginning of next year. It's been a great ride and that's probably one of the most enjoyable things that I do as an entrepreneur is I can help people overcome that superhero syndrome by providing that service, and it's a one off fee, it's not a recurring fee from us or anything like that at all. So yes, if anybody's interested in wanting to find a full time VA to come on board and help them work and build their business, we can certainly help them with that.

Hal: That's fantastic. I have yet to use your service, and I like literally when I asked you to describe it to me, I was curious personally because I haven't used you guys yet.

Chris: Curiosity has never hurt anybody. Well, it probably has actually.

Hal: It probably has.

Chris: But it's a good thing that you asked the question. That's man, you know what, as a fellow podcaster, that's the reason why I started podcasting. It was purely selfish, and I've said this many, many times. I wanted to speak with experts. I wanted to pick their brains as I was building my life and my business, and so I got on the phone with guys like Chris Brogan and all those other influences that have been online for years, and years, and years and here I am five years later still podcasting and still interviewing people that I want to pick their brains. They've got a message to share, they want to share it, everybody's winning. I've got an audience that wants to listen to it but I still get people to come on to my show that I personally want to learn from. So it's a great model. Podcasting is great for that. You get... it's like free consultations.

Hal: Yes, well you're right. Well, how many people would love to be able get an author on the phone. You know I read your book and I'm a huge fan and then I get to actually talk to you and share. Like you said it's a win, win, win, I'm sharing you with my audience, so everybody wins.

Chris: Yes, yes, yes, it's great.

Hal: It's very cool. So let's wrap up here. Any parting words of wisdom or encouragement for people listening to the interview today.

Chris: Well yes, I would just say that there is another way to run, support, and grow your business. There is another way to do it, and whether you're building an entire team of people or whether you just need that one GVA, that one General VA to help lighten the load for you, there's another way to do it. You don't need to work these silly, long hours.

I meet so many stressed-out, overworked entrepreneurs that you know are just--- they're killing themselves, quite frankly, they're sitting at those desks, 15-16 hours a day, just like I was. I should add by the way, those three years that I was building my business before I burnt out, the damage and this is real, the damage that I was

doing to my spine caught up with me in 2012, two years later where I suffered a herniated L5-S1 disk and I had to have back surgery to fix it. I had a six-hour fusion surgery on my lower back. I now have two rods and some screws at the base of my back that was the result of sitting at a desk building a business 16 hours a day for three years, and that didn't hit me until two years after I had removed myself from the business.

So it's real, this burnout thing, is just the beginning. There's so much else going on inside our bodies by just stressing out and working too hard. There is another way to do it. Society has led us to believe that the definition of success is basically becoming a workaholic. I call a massive amount of BS on that, you can become extremely productive and very successful as a business owner without working those long, silly hours. And the good news is, you get to keep your family in the process, which is a real good thing.

Hal: It's the key to quality of life. You can say delegation, if you're an entrepreneur, delegation is ultimately the key to your quality of life.

Chris: Absolutely, I couldn't agree more with that statement.

Hal: And you mentioned when you meet those burnt out entrepreneurs, not only are they working too much, but the growth of their business is being stunted because they're working so much.

Chris: It is. They're suffering man. You know they're getting sucked down further and further into that quick sand and even if they make a little bit of headway, they end up getting sucked back into it. I actually had a couple come to a book event that I did in New York City last year, and they came up, they had a copy of the book and it was dog-eared and it was ripped and highlighted. It was great, I love seeing my book in a horrible, horrible state like that, margin notes and everything. It was fantastic and this couple came up to me at this signing I did in New York, like I said, and they actually came up and the wife said to me, "You saved our marriage, you don't realize like it's real, your book saved our marriage." I was like wow, that's it, one person, that's why I wrote the book - that one couple.

Hal: And that's why you'll keep sharing it and sharing it and sharing it, because you know that you're doing that for people.

Chris: Yes, it's great, it's great. That's what it's about man. You know it as well. You've met thousands of people that have liked your book as well and it's changed

their lives. So we're doing what we can, one reader at a time, and that's all that matters.

Hal: Yes, absolutely. Well, I want to offer a free gift for our listeners. If you go to Chris's website chrisducker.com that is the blog he mentioned that has 100,000 visitors or one tenth of a million visitors every month, if you go there, put your name and email in, you will get his Seven Day New Business Bootcamp and if I understand correctly, it's a seven-day video training for free. The videos are I think about 10 minutes each, is that right Chris?

Chris: Yes.

Hal: And I actually just opted in for it before we started the call, so I have not gone through this curriculum yet or your training, but I'm excited to. So that is chrisducker.com and Chris, anything else to say before we wrap up? If anybody wants to get a hold of you, is there a better place than your website? I would imagine that's the spot to go.

Chris: The website's what it's all about, I'm also a big fan of Twitter @chrisducker, so they can give me a tweet, let me know that you heard me on the show, I'd love to hear from you and no that's it, and thank you man. Thank you very much for having me on. You're one of my favorite people right now, so I'm greatly appreciative of hanging out. You know we get the chance, this will probably go live after the fact, but we get the chance to hang out and me and Pat Flynn's one day Business Breakthrough in San Diego. So we'll actually get the chance to give each other a big hug soon. I'm looking forward to it.

Hal: I know, I can't wait for the in person hug and I'm excited that you guys are having me at your event, but Achieve Your Goals Podcast listeners, that's it for this episode. Thank you so much for your valuable time and your attention. I hope you got some value and I'm sure you did unless you fell asleep or something, but great, great stuff from Chris Ducker. Go check out his book on Amazon, Virtual Freedom: How to work with virtual staff to buy more time, become more productive, and build your dream business. Because you my friend deserve, nothing less. We will talk to you next week, take care.

Nick: Thank you so much for tuning in to this episode of the podcast. Now, hopefully you got a ton of take aways from this episode. I know Chris is one of my favorite people to actually follow online. So be sure to go check out his website chrisducker.com, get his book. I actually bought his book and I've been

implementing many of the things in virtual freedom as I start to grow my team and my business, and I have actually even given his book away to several people along the way just because I think it's such a big game changer for those of you who own your own business, and I'm starting to look, to really just scale that up.

At the very least, go check out his three lists of freedom exercise because that's going to give you a real clear picture of where you should actually be spending your time and what tasks you need to start getting rid of. So if you haven't, please go and let us know what your big take away was from this episode by going to haleldrod.com/075 for episode number 75 and also be sure to subscribe to podcast and leave a review on iTunes, by going to haleldrod.com/itunes, click the little subscribe button and just write in a little review right there. That actually is a huge help, because it helps people find the podcast and decide if it is right for them. Deciding if this is the show that can actually help them to live a level 10 in their life. So until next week, please go there, take action and achieve your goals.

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