



Achieve Your Goals Podcast #101 - Steal The Show (Interview with Michael Port)

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 ever thought possible. In each episode, you will learn from someone who has achieved extraordinary goals that most haven't. He's the author of the number one best-selling book, *The Miracle Morning*, a hall of fame and business achiever, an international keynote speaker, ultramarathon runner, and the founder of VIPSuccessCoaching.com, Mr. Hal Elrod.

Hal: All right. Goal achievers welcome to another episode of the goal, no. I always mess up the title of my own podcast. Michael, maybe you can coach me. You're like a public speaking guru genius. I need some... this isn't public. This is like private, public speaking. I'm in my office. I don't know.

Michael: Well, you know, I'll speaking is public speaking, isn't it?

Hal: That's true.

Michael: Unless you're talking yourself in your head.

Hal: That's true. Sometimes I do that too. So, all right. Let's start over. Goal achievers welcome to the Achieve Your Goals Podcast. This is your host Hal Elrod. And today, what's neat about today? We've had this before, but it's always a special experience for me when I get to interview someone who I've looked up to for a long time. Someone that has been a mentor from afar. This gentleman, our guest today Michael Port. I read his book. One of his many books, he has actually six

books. But I read his book, Book Yourself Solid. I don't even know if it's...Michael, how long has that been out for.

Michael: That was 2006.

Hal: Okay. I was going to say I felt like it was around 10 years ago.

Michael: Yeah.

Hal: ...seven, eight years ago. Really a game-changing book. I've recommended it to dozens of my private coaching clients and probably hundreds of my group coaching clients. But our guest today has been called an uncommonly honest author by the Boston Globe. He's been called a marketing guru by the Wall Street Journal and a sales guru by the Financial Times. Again, Michael Port is our guest. He is a New York Times bestselling author of six books including what I mentioned, Book Yourself Solid, the Think Big Manifesto, and his hot new release, Steal the Show, which we will ask him about on the call today. But he is definitely an expert in the area of achieving extraordinary goals. So I'm very excited to introduce you to Michael and his wisdom today on the show. Michael thanks for being on.

Michael: It's my pleasure.

Hal: So, there's a lot of different directions that we could take the interview today. But I want to start where I typically always start with my guests. And it's kind of not necessarily the beginning, but really that defining moment where all human beings are born with unlimited potential. But most of us somewhere along the way most people resign themselves to settling for a life of mediocrity. And it's that small percentage of people that at some point in their lives they have a realization or a breakthrough or they learn something or they achieve something or experience something. It's some sort of defining moment or maybe a series of defining moments that it causes them to realize that they can become great. And I want to know what was your life like before you had that moment, that realization, and what was the defining moment for you?

Michael: I think for me it's been a seesaw over the years. I think when I was young on one hand I felt very confident that I could do a lot of the things that I was interested in doing. But at the same time I also felt a little bit stupid and insecure. I went to a school that was pretty advanced and I didn't feel advanced. My friends were all getting straight A's with 1,600 on their ACT's and I wasn't at all. And I was

very dyslexic and I still have trouble spelling. You'd be amazed at how bad my spelling is.

So it was sort of this I feel like I lived in two worlds. On one hand I feel capable on the other I didn't. And when I was acting as my first career, then I had a modicum of success. I felt very capable, but I was impatient. And I would get frustrated if what I wanted to happen didn't happen quickly. And here's the thing. I would often pretend that I didn't care about something that I wanted as much as I really did. And I think that was a big, big deal. I think that's one of the reasons that I left acting. Because I think sometimes when you admit how much you want something, it's really scary. And so, if you don't, if you don't really want it that much then you don't get it. It's no big deal. But if you do want it and you do admit it and you go after it with everything you have and you don't get it, well what does that mean? Does that mean that you're not enough? You don't have what it takes?

And that's how I sabotaged my career as an actor. That's why I didn't get as far as I wanted to go as quickly. And that taught me a lot. That was a really, really big learning experience for me. But I didn't learn it until a number of years after I left the business because I started to see it pop up in other areas of my life. And not until I was willing to really be honest about how important things were to me, so much so that I would risk not getting them in front of other people, I really didn't start playing a big game. And when I started saying, "Listen, this is important me. I'm going to make this happen. I'm going to go after this with everything I have and not playing it cool anymore." Then things started happening because I do the work, I do what it takes, I extend myself, I get comfortable with discomfort. And over time, those things started making a difference. And then I was able to handle the responsibility that came along with doing bigger things. But this is not a before and after for me. This is a constant process of learning more about myself, my strength and my weaknesses.

Now, I've got to keep increasing the ability of responsibility that I can handle because our level of success I think is often directly proportionate to how much we can handle. And that's something that I find difficult. Right now we're in this intense book launch period. And frankly I don't really like it. Some people get a charge from this, I think. But for me, I find it exhausting. I find this kind of sort of a launch mode of incredible high intensity for a period of time where you and everybody you work with gets burned out and works so hard. I just don't find that a worthwhile way of spending time. But it's often par for the course when you do these kinds of things. So you have to buck up and you've got to say, "I know what the work is. I know what the job is. I got to handle this responsibility." And move

forward. And how much you can handle often determines how well you can do and the ability to admit how important it is. Like I'm not going to pretend that this book doesn't mean the world to me. I'm not going to pretend that I don't care if it does well. I want everyone in the world to read this book for many, many reasons. And I'm not going to shy away from it. And I'm not going to back down from that. And that can be scary sometimes. But that's made a difference for me.

Hal: So it sounds like just the, I don't know, brutal is the right word, but just the dishonesty with yourself being honest about...

Michael: Yeah.

Hal: Yeah.

Michael: And not hiding from things. Your experience is very different. You had this really extraordinary experience that opened your eyes to the world in a different way. And I haven't had one of those particular type of defining experiences. But being more honest about who I am to myself and to the people around me is what allows me to grow and handle more responsibility. And for example, there are many, many years of my life where I would struggle with food. And it's not typical. It's not as typical for men as women to have food issues. But many men do and they don't talk about it. And people wouldn't really know because I was an athlete and I was fit. But I would overeat when I get stressed. Sort of emotional eating.

Hal: Sure.

Michael: And it got to the point where I was in my 30's and I couldn't stop. And then I started getting heavy. Then I was embarrassed. Then I didn't want to go out and be on the stage. This idea of performing in front of others, all of the sudden wasn't that appealing to me anymore. And I really had to come to terms with the fact that I couldn't control myself when it came to certain foods, just like an alcoholic or somebody who has a drug problem or some other kind of addiction. And for people who don't have any problems with food they're like, "What? How is that possible? It's just food."

Hal: Yeah.

Michael: Just like I say with alcohol; I have no interest in alcohol, but I know what it does to people, just like I know what it does to food. So for me, I had to really

make some major changes in the way that I lived in order to manage that and find some control over it. But still be vigilant every day to make sure that I'm taking care of myself and doing the things I need to do to move forward. And not being afraid to talk about it. Like, I'm not a man or something. Or I'm not cool. Or people going to be like, "Oh, I'm not going to read his books because he couldn't stop eating cookies." And if that's the case, that's fine. Then maybe they're not my ideal client. In any event, those kind of things have really made a difference in my life and I keep working on it.

Hal: You know, I love your honesty. I love your vulnerability. I'd like to go down this rabbit hole a little bit, the food issue. And for the bigger picture of our audience, food was your, it was your vice. It was the thing for you that you lost control over. Or you could say lost discipline over. Lack of discipline in that area. So what I'd love to just dive a little bit into is how you overcame that.

Michael: Sure.

Hal: And for our audience members, take the area of your life that you lacked discipline. And right. this is really what I want to pick Michael's brain on here is, what area of your life do you lack discipline? Is it food? Is it alcohol? Is it lack of exercise? Do you indulge in Facebook and the computer? Where do you lack discipline and lack control? And I'd love for people to apply whatever you're about to share Michael, how they can apply that to their own life and their own vices.

Michael: Yeah. So I would make a distinction between discipline and addiction. I think those are two different things. I think that once you get to the point where you have an addiction to something, the discipline is just out the window. An alcoholic can't say, well, I'll have just three drinks a day. Because once they start down that rabbit hole, as you said, there's no turning back. Once they have one, they have two, and then three, and then four, and then five. So there are some things we need have more discipline around. Like, for example, the way that I manage my time. I might need to be a little bit more constrained around. I have to create constraints to keep me focused on the things I need to do. But I don't have an addiction problem with that. That's something that just takes more responsibility, so to speak.

But then the food thing for me is, is more...I look at it more like an addiction because the way that I was able to manage it. It was just by completely cutting out the things that don't serve me, period. Full stop. Like I don't eat cookies. I don't eat

cake. I don't eat fried foods. And I just don't eat things that would trigger that type of behavior. And then it makes it easier because I'm not...you know, like food. You have to eat all day long. You have to eat three times a day. So you can't just stop eating food. It's a little different than some other type of substance. So you just have to make sure you're eating the things that don't get you in trouble. And I think there are many people who have addictions that they don't recognize. And they're like, "That's not that bad." People have lots of different things, everything from drugs or alcohol or smoking to people. We get addicted to different dynamics in our life with people, codependent relationships, porn. There are a lot of different things that people get taken with because it's not hard to lose yourself in things that take your mind away from the reality of life.

Hal: Yeah.

Michael: And then, of course, there are other things that are more discipline related. So the way that you work. The commitment to a particular product development marketing sales that you go all the way with it. You don't start and then stop and dabble. You pursue mastery in different areas. If you say you're going to save every month for retirement, you save every month for retirement. Those kinds of things.

And I often like to create constraints, that there's no way I could make a change. For example, one of the things that I'm able to do and something like you're able to do if you have an S corp or a C corp as your entity is, you're able to create what's called a cash balance plan. And it's a defined benefit plan typically used by large companies. But most small business owners don't use them because they don't have that much money to save. So you might use something called a SEP and you can put a certain amount of money into a SEP and then save for retirement.

The cash balance plan is a tricky vehicle because once you commit to the amount of money you're putting away into that cash balance plan, you have to. I mean, the IRS says you have to. Because the way the plan works is say that we have a 10-year plan and we put X number of dollars in it every year. And we have to produce a certain amount of money for the employees, us, by the end of that 10 year period. And if we don't, we have to make that up. So I cannot get access to that money once it's in there. It's gone until it's time for me to retire. There's no access to it. And so I could say, "Well listen, I'm not going to do the cash balance because it's too restrictive. I want to make sure that I have some more flexibility." And then what happens? Well, you know what? I'm going to get a new boat. So why I don't just take that 250 grand that I was going to put into my retirement plan this month

and I'll go buy a boat? Well, that's not really a good idea unless I've planned for it and saved for it. And this way I don't have a choice. I have to do it the right way.

Hal: Yeah.

Michael: And those kinds of things helped, it makes a big difference.

Hal: Setting yourself up for success. It's kind of like automatic savings, right? It was in Automatic Millionaire, that book, that just said set up automatic deductions every month. You don't see the money.

Michael: Yeah, you're setting yourself up for success by not really having a choice in the matter. So I like this idea...look, we live in a world where we're pitched nonstop of that all the different options we have and you can do anything with your life. And sometimes it's overwhelming because there are so many different choices. And Barry Schwarts wrote a great book called the Paradox of Choice. All about how more is less. And the more choices we have, the harder it is to make a choice.

And there are certain choices that would be great to do away with. So we don't have to think about them anymore. And then we can focus on the important things. And I like that idea. I like making really strong choices. It's one of the things that I write about in Steal the Show. This idea that top performers choose early and they choose often. Because people who make choices are very attractive people and they often produce bigger results. They don't perseverate and wonder, "Should I do this?" Or "Should I do that?" "I'm not sure." They talk about it for years before they do it. The high performers, they make a choice and they go. And they do everything in their power to make it work. If it doesn't work, they put it aside. They make another choice and they go again.

Hal: Yeah.

Michael: And so, I like to get as many options out of the way that I don't need to be thinking about, just to focus on what is actually important.

Hal: Yeah. I think that whole, the choice, just making a choice and making a decision, take an action, moving forward. Sometimes obviously it's almost like it's the entrepreneurial mindset where it can be problematic. But it's like you win more often than you lose. But for me, I've often not thought through a choice, I just made it, taken an action on it, then later, "I probably should have thought that through better."

Michael: Yeah.

Hal: But six out of ten were good.

Michael: Sure. I write about it. I make a distinction between choosing quickly and choosing often. And often is a relative term, isn't it?

Hal: Yeah, sure. Sure.

Michael: So I'm not saying you should say, "You know what? I'm going to write a book." And you just start writing a book. We want to be much more deliberate about the big things that have a major long-term impact. But there's a difference between being deliberate and discerning than perseverating and vacillating. Those are very, very different things.

Hal: So let's dive into some, just some strategy. You've achieved phenomenal goals. New York Times bestselling author. I mean, you're a world-renowned speaker, you put on live events, you do so much. What are your, if you had to break it down to like your top three tips--and it could be two, it could be four--but your top three goal achieving tips for our listeners that they can apply to whatever their goals are personally or professionally?

Michael: So we already went through constraints. Normally that's one I put in there for sure and we already talked about that. So that's a bonus. We'll do another trick.

Hal: All right.

Michael: But that is a big one is this idea of constraints. There's another book called the Theory of Constraints. And it's typically written for larger organizations, manufacturing companies, etc. But you can still get a lot from it if you understand the theory behind constraints. I would also say focus is a big deal.

Hal: Yeah.

Michael: It's a really, really big deal. And I know a lot of people struggle with focus. So that's one of the big ones. I would say for me also, it's confidence. Now, I know that's a tricky one because people say, "Well, how do I become more confident?" If I don't feel confident you'll say, "Michael, if you feel confident, how

do I become more confident or feel that way?" I don't always feel confident. I really don't. And what I figured out for myself at least is that I really can't sit and meditate and feel more confident. I can't think about feeling confident and beef and just be more confident. I have to do things in the world. I have to actually do the thing that I'm thinking about in order to feel confident. And so, I get into action really quickly. And this way, for example, I was talking about this cash balance plan. And I manage our investments myself. Because over the years I've lost a lot of money in lots of different investments by taking the advice of a lot of very conflicted financial advisors. And when I say conflicted meaning their interests, and my interests aren't exactly in line. So we know how that rolls. To manage the money, it's a very serious proposition to me. So I don't just think about it. In order to be confident, I need to dive deep into it. And I need to do the thing in order to feel more confident. And so there's a learning piece to it. But there's also a lot of action that's required to do the things that you need to do. So for me, that really helps. So I say constraints, focus, confidence and other people. It's always other people. This idea of the self-made millionaire. I get it. I really do. This idea of people pull themselves up from their bootstraps.

Hal: Yeah.

Michael: I really get that. But do we really do it on our own?

Hal: Yeah.

Michael: I don't think so. What's the podcast? You're doing this with other people. You're doing the work to get out there and promote it and make it happen and the whole thing. But you're doing it with other people. I'm sure you've got producers. When you're making that huge film, you're not doing that alone. You're not the cameraman, director, writer, star, editor. You're doing it with other people. So without the other people in our world, we just do not exist. So the question that I often ask is, how do we become a person that others want to help? And that's something that I love to consider. Because when I get pissy or grumpy or tired or feel like woe is me. I've got so much on my plate right now. I ask myself, "Is that the kind of person that others want to help? Because I don't think so." And just remind ourselves of how freaking lucky we are. Even if we're not at the financial position that we want to be in or haven't accomplished everything we want to accomplish. But just the fact that we have options at all, is extraordinary.

And for me, these options they result from relationships with other people. I mean, you and I write books. We can't get our books read without people supporting them

and saying, "Listen, you've got to go read Hal's book. You've got to go read Michael's book." We live and die by the support we get from our friends and our colleagues. And so, I put a lot of stock in people. That's my religion, man. People.

Hal: Yeah.

Michael: And so, that's something we need to do every single day is to make sure that we are serving other people as we stand in the service of our own destiny.

Hal: Well I think you asked a question earlier that you say you ask yourself, "How do we become a person that other people want to help?" And I think that you just kind of answered it there at the end, which is you add value. You can phrase this in different ways. But for me is I look to add value to every person I possibly can, you know.

Michael: There's another great book. I'm going to get people reading way to many books.

Hal: Yeah. I do the same thing.

Michael: Yeah, yeah. And then, I forgot, "Oh, yeah. Wait. I have a book too that you should read." I forget about that. No. So, the other thing that I would consider is another book called Social Intelligence.

Hal: Okay.

Michael: And it's by Dan Goleman who really created the Emotional Intelligence movement. And then he wrote Social Intelligence. And I love this book for a number of reasons. I think it is something...social intelligence can be learned. And it's such a key component of leadership because we need to understand the dynamics that exist in groups. How do we fit into groups? How we can integrate other people into our groups? That's not just emotional intelligence, which is how we manage our own emotions which is critical, of course. But social intelligence is something else. And social intelligence gives you lots of help.

For example, during a book launch, it's the worst time to ask an author for a favor that is very time consuming because they don't have a lot of time during that period.

Hal: Sure.

Michael: So we are always checking like is this making someone's life harder or making it easier? And I think that that's a big part of social intelligence trying to determine how we fit into the lives of other people. And then if we make their life easier and we are an easy person, then, of course, they want to help us.

So this is one of the things that we work with our kids on all the time. I keep just saying, be easy. Be easy. So for example, we don't have screen time limits. We don't say one hour of screen time or two hours of screen time. Because then what we have found is, we start getting into this period where some days, you know what? We let them watch a little bit more because they're home say from school. And then we have to rationalize, justify. Well, you're home from school. So you can do a little more. Or we're on a six-hour car ride. And you know what? You can do some more screens in a six-hour car ride than you might normally be able to do.

So we let them use their screens if their homework is done. But if we decide that we think it's enough, we just tell them it's enough, they just get off. That's what we say. And if you don't get off as soon as we ask you to get off, then you just lose the screen. There's no fight about it. We're not going to get angry, we're just going to take it. And what we found is that they're getting easier. Because they're learning that the easier they are, the more they get from us. Because if I don't worry that they're going to push back when they're on the computer if I ask them to get off, then I'm much more likely to say, "Yeah, yeah. You can take a little more computer time." Because I know it's going to be easy to get them off.

So the ease of relationships is so important. So when your relationships with your family, if you think about it, like some people in your family are easy. Others not so much. And the people that are not as easy are the ones that don't get included as much.

Hal: Yeah. That's something I learned. And I'm sure the same thing here as a speaker, I was taught that by...when I first learned how to become a professional speaker they go, "Be easy." Speakers are such a pain in the asses to work with. They've got all these demands. And you got to fly them first class. And you got to do this. Just be easy to work with, you know...

Michael: Yeah, that's true. I mean, as a speaker there are certain things that I require in order to do, you know, the service to the audience that I'm paid for. And they're little things, they're not big things. But the big things are the things that we really need to be easy about. So you show up and you're supposed to do 60 minutes

and they start 15 minutes late. And they say, "Listen, we're late. Can you still end on time?" And go, "Of course, not a problem." They say, "Listen, our tech is messed up. We're not going to be able to do the thing you wanted to do with tech." No problem.

Hal: Yeah.

Michael: You know, "We want to put you later, we're switching the order." No problem. So that really does make a difference. And it's the same thing in most situations. Now, all generalities are false including that one. So I always like to say that we don't live in a black and white world, we live a multi-colored world. So there are certain times where we want to be very, very strong and our convictions matter. And if we say, "Listen, this is what I need to do the job that you've asked me to do. This is what you're going to give me. And ultimately, it's for you." That is a perfectly fine conversation to have somebody if it truly is in service of them. But if it's not, then be easy. Right?

Hal: Yeah. Absolutely. Okay. So I love it. Constraints. Putting constraints on the areas of your life that can potentially cause you...I don't know if harm is the right word, right?

Michael: Or even, let me give you one more example.

Hal: Okay.

Michael: Okay. So harm, you know, we're talking about these intense things. But you can do a lot of harm to your own sanity, your family dynamic, and your life as a whole if you don't make time for yourself and your family. This is an obvious thing, most people know this. But when you're working hard, you're trying to move and shake and make your way in the world, sometimes you've got to dig it out. And you will go that extra mile if the time is there for you to do it.

So let's say you have the whole day open and you say, "You know what? But I'm going to take the kids to their tennis practice this afternoon and then will go out for dinner and we'll do hang out." But then all of the sudden you're working during the day and get caught up in your work and like, "I could just accomplish a couple more things. You know what? I'm not going to take you guys to tennis. You get yourself to tennis and then I'll see you later." And then you come home later and you just got deep into something else. And they're like, "Dad, you said you're going

to play ping pong." "Well, I was going to. I can't and it's really important." You might let yourself fall into that habit without even realizing it.

So I create constraints. In my calendar it says, "Do not book." Period. And my assistant can't book in there and I can't book in there. There are always exceptions. If Oprah calls, we're going to make an exception. There are certain things and there are certain times or a couple week period here and there where say, for example, a book launch where you need more time to do the things you need to do to make that work. But if that becomes your way of being, then you could lose sight of really what's important. So those kind of constraints are really important too.

Hal: Yeah. That's a great point. I think for me, that was a big game. I used to work back when I was an entrepreneur, kind of a new entrepreneur, I'd work until nine, ten at night. Then I got into a serious relationship with my girlfriend who is now my wife. She's stuck through it all. But she would want time. You work from when you wake up until almost we go to bed. So I took that constraint from going. But I would miss out on all these hours of productivity and I finally just said, "All right instead of nine, I'm getting off at nine. I'm going to get up at six." And you figure it out, right? You make it work and then you figure it out. But you've got to, I think put your family and the people in your life that are most important to you. You've got to make that a priority.

I want to do something I never done before, Michael. I've never done this before. And we'll see if this works. This might be the first and the last time I ever do this. I was just developing...I've had the podcast now for about a year or two. And I've always developed kind of, how can I improve the podcast? How can I improve the experience for the listener? How can I improve the experience for the guest? How can I add more value, etc.? And so, what I wanted to do, this is the goal. Achieve your goals podcast and everything is kind of targeted back to how can we help our listeners achieve their goals. So I would love to ask for your best advice for three different scenarios, for three different types of people that might be listening to the podcast. Are you up for that?

Michael: Yeah, I'll do my best.

Hal: Yeah. All right, Do your best. I'll fill in. If you mess up, I'll fill in.

Michael: Thank you. Thank you.

Hal: So all right. So what advice would you give to someone in each of these three scenarios. So scenario number one. Somebody who is, they've got big goals and dreams, but they're not pursuing them. Right? Something maybe is holding them back. Maybe it's fear, maybe self-doubt, limiting beliefs, lack of clarity, whatever it is. But they haven't really even gotten started. Maybe they're just working their day job, going through the motions. They've got big goals and dreams. They're big talkers, they're not doers. What would you advise them to start moving the directions of their goals and dreams?

Michael: One of the things that you can consider is partnering up with somebody. I think that working alone is difficult, it's not for everybody. You have got to be so self-directed. Nobody is telling you what to do. And unless you are making promises to other people, you're just making promises to yourself that nobody knows about. And those are easy to break.

So it doesn't mean you have to start the business with somebody else, but maybe you work on a project with them. One particular offering that you put together that is with them. You've got your own business, they've got their own business, but you work on something together. Or maybe you get a couple of your colleagues together who are also trying to do things. And you actually work on each others projects with them. Not as accountability partners but let's say you and I are just starting out and I said, "Listen, I really want to write a book. But I'm just not getting it done. I'm procrastinating a lot and I could really use a writing partner." And you say, "Well, okay. I don't really want to put my name on it because that's not my area."

Hal: Yeah.

Michael: But okay. You know what, interestingly enough, I'm working on say, I don't know, an event or conference. And I really could use some help putting on the conference. And I said, "Well, you know what? I can help you with that." And we actually each take roles working for the other person in that particular endeavor. I've done this with people. And so then all of a sudden you now you have an accountability. If I asked you, "Look, will you help me with the book?" And I don't follow through, I'm a dick. I'm sorry.

Hal: Yeah.

Michael: I've got no right even calling myself an entrepreneur.

Hal: Yeah. Or a good friend.

Michael: Yeah, or a good friend, right? Let alone that. So I think that we just do, often we better when we've got other people that are waiting for us to deliver on a promise. I really think it makes a difference. And there's not one way to do it. I don't want everybody who is listening to get wrapped up in a way. So he said he'll do it exactly like this. It's not that. It's figure out a way to work with others at the earliest possible moment, so you're not doing this alone. And that may get you into action.

Hal: Yeah. And then you may not need them anymore, right? Once you get that momentum started...Michael, that's a really outside the box kind of a tip, but I can look at my life and success and having mastermind partners and whether it's an accountability partner or mastermind partner, a little bit of both. Yeah, I love that idea. And I've been in different environments where kind of like you said, maybe you're this person that you're going to partner with is a friend or a colleague. And maybe they're in an industry that's not at all related to you or what you do. But often like, for example, I'm sure you can relate to this. My wife gives me the best freaking advice on stuff that she is totally outside the sphere of influence. She's a mom.

Michael: Yeah.

Hal: You know? She'll give me the best business advise or book ideas. So I love that, I love that. So everybody is listening. And that's true I think any level that you're at. Especially yeah, if you have big goals and dreams, but you're not pursuing them, call up a friend today, today. Literally, today. Okay? Call up a friend say, "Hey, what are some goals or dreams that you would love to achieve if you could not fail, but you're not taking action on them? Let's meet once a week. Let's make some plans. Let's support each other. And let's start making some progress. So Michael, thank you for that. I really, really like that idea.

Michael: Yeah, you're welcome.

Hal: All right. So far, so good. All right. Second scenario. Someone who has big goals that they are working towards, but it's taking them longer than they wanted to. They're not where they want to be or they're not where they thought they would be at this point. Maybe they're getting a little discouraged, a little frustrated. What would you tell them?

Michael: I'd say sell the thing that you're working on before it's finished. I do that all the time. I still do that to a certain extent. In the beginning, the first information product I ever created in 2003, I'm dating myself. It's like a grandpa on this industry.

Hal: You were like 12. Yeah.

Michael: I was 12. And it was a CD set. Okay. So for those who are young, this is not a podcast, this is not on your phone. There are these things you--

Hal: So wait... so CD is like an acronym for something?

Michael: So these round things you put into your car and they would play. And I said, "You know what? I want to make an audio program, a CD program. And it's going to be about book yourself solid." And this is before I had a book or anything.

Hal: Yeah.

Michael: I said, "Okay. Well, I need some money to produce it." Because at that time there wasn't print on demand for those kind of things. You have to produce them. And I had to order about 3,000 of them to make it affordable.

Hal: Yeah.

Michael: I didn't really have the money. So I said, "Well, let's see if I can sell it. So let me put together the outline and let me write a sales page for what I believe will be in this. And then I'll sell it. And I'll say, 'Listen, when I bring this out, I'm going to charge \$179.'" And in those day you could charge \$179 for two CDs. Content was not as easy to come by, so the market price was higher.

Hal: Yeah.

Michael: And I said, "I'm gonna do a two-CD set and here's what's going to be in it." Now, I haven't gone to the studio to do it yet. So I'm going to charge \$179 when it comes out. But if you buy it before I record it, then you can have it for \$69. And it will never cost \$69 ever anywhere again. That's a promise.

Hal: Yeah.

Michael: Well, I sold \$7,000 worth of it. And I had just a small group of subscribers but they loved the idea. And I gave them a due date. I said, "Listen, it's going to be done by this date."

Hal: Yeah.

Michael: Okay. Now, that's scary because what if it's not done? Well, I'll tell you what, you got me in action. I got my part done. I sent it off to the disc makers. And they send it back exactly when they were supposed to. We were right on schedule, but they put it in the wrong case. Yeah. So, it didn't work. What it's called? Like, the cover for the case, it didn't fit. It didn't fit. So I had to send it back, but it was going to make the product a week late to deliver to my buyers. So I had a little ace up my sleeve. I have told them I was going to do a two CD set for them, but I knew I was going to do a three CD set. So my plan was if nothing went wrong, I'm just going to say, "Hey, here's a bonus." But if it didn't go wrong--

Hal: It did go wrong.

Michael: Yeah. If it did go wrong, then I would have something to give them to make up for it. So that's exactly what I did. I said, "Listen, guys. We got a problem. It's a week late, the packaging was wrong. But I got this bonus for you. Here's what's on the bonus. I think you're going to love it. If you have any problems with this whatsoever, I will refund your money immediately because I want to always deliver on my promises. But if you can just hang in there for a week, you're going to get this extra stuff." How many refunds do you think I got?

Hal: Zero.

Michael: Zero, of course. And that made me produce this product. And that was the start of my whole information product career. That's what got me going.

Hal: I love it. So sell it. Or I would say for someone that doesn't have a product, announce it, right? Announce it before it's ready. And we have done that as well where I like with my first live event, I put it off...fear held me back for years. Just the fear of, "What if nobody shows up?"

Michael: Yeah, right. I still have that fear.

Hal: You have that fear, I have that fear.

Michael: No, I still have that fear, of course. And everybody still shows up.

Hal: Yeah.

Michael: And I still there are times where I'm like, "I wish we sold more tickets." Or whatever. That's normal.

Hal: Sure.

Michael: But I still have that fear. Like you said, "Is anybody going to come?"

Hal: I know. What if nobody buys tickets?

Michael: What if I had a birthday party and nobody comes? It's that kind of feeling.

Hal: Yeah. And so for me, though, the way that I got over it was I did exactly what you're talking about, or similar, I put an announcement in my community 20,000 people. I guess it was 10,000 back then, I said, "Hey, guys, mark your calendar. Our first ever live event is the first week of December in San Diego, California. It's going to be life changing. Don't miss it." And I hit click post. And I went, "Holy crap. I've got to figure out how to put on a live event first week of December in San Diego."

Michael: That's right.

Hal: But I mean that's it. You've got to put it out there. And that's a great way to overcome if you're not making progress, if you're procrastinating, etc. Just make a commitment, make it public. And then unless you're okay being a liar.

Michael: Yeah, right.

Hal: You'll find a way to get it done and love it. All right. So third scenario. Somebody who is an achiever, right? So people who are listening, I mean, our podcast it ranges. We've got all ranges of people here. So, someone that is already an achiever. They're very successful. Maybe they're successful in one area, though. You see it often where someone is very successful in business, but they're struggling or settling for mediocrity in another area such as their health or their relationships. How do you achieve extraordinary success in most if not all of the

important areas in your life? How do you balance that and keep striving for success in all these areas, even though you've already achieved so much?

Michael: Yeah. So it's really important. I say this again and again, so people who listen to me a number of times, they've heard these ad nauseam. But I don't have it all figured out and I am not perfect in all areas. That's really, really important. I feel like I have definitely achieved a lot. When I look back, I don't know if I can give myself a lot of pats on the back for what I've achieved, you know.

Hal: Sure.

Michael: I actually try to make a habit of doing so. Because if I look back, I used to race bikes and I did pretty well. And I used to teach Aikido, and I have a black belt there. And I have five years in Jujitsu. Like, I have lots of things that I've done. But I don't really think of them as special. And I guess what I'm saying is that I did them because I enjoyed that, as simple as that.

Hal: Yeah.

Michael: And until we are interested in something, we're probably not going to spend a lot of time doing it. So what gets us interested in something? So either we just have an innate interest in it, we're just drawn to it and we can't even tell you why. Or we see the benefits of it and those benefits are stronger than our disinterest in it. So let's use retirement savings as an example. When I was younger I was great at spending money. I'm still really good at spending money. I have a skill. I have a natural talent for spending money. I like stuff. Like, I have a great boat. I want a bigger boat. It's just in there. I'm a maximizer.

Hal: Yeah, sure.

Michael: And so, I have to work against that, as I said earlier. But when I was younger the future didn't really seem like something I would ever have to worry about. And to me I would look at savings as worrying about the future. You see there's something wrong with that thought process, that picture. What I realized over time--and there's a very specific reason that the realization came to me--is that the first, maybe first 30 years is for learning. Next 30 years is for earning. Next 30 years is for doing whatever the heck you want, wherever the heck you want. And you've got to be comfortable. You got to have the means to do it for that last 30 years. But until I met Amy, who is my fiance and we're getting married, actually depending on when someone's listening to this we might already be married.

Hal: Congratulations. Either in advance or well I guess, as of today it will be an advance. Yeah.

Michael: Yeah, for today it will be in advance.

Hal: Sure.

Michael: So that changed the way I saw the world because I saw a future for us that was extraordinary. And that meant I needed to do things differently now to create that future. So it became more important to me. You see, I didn't have a fear necessarily that was holding me back from planning for the future. I just didn't see the value. I mean, I can understand it intellectually.

Hal: Sure.

Michael: But it's a lot, it's this connection to it. Why is it important to you? If it's just an idea, it's really hard to do something with it. But usually pain moves us pretty quickly.

Hal: Yeah, sure.

Michael: Or desires. But if we're not moving towards the desires, it's usually the pain that can help us get started. If you don't have any money in your bank account, you'll probably going to work harder than if you've got money and you're comfortable, you might not push yourself quite so hard.

Hal: Sure.

Michael: That's why people worry about trust fund kids because you've got everything there. Now, I used to tell my parents that I would be perfectly fine with being a trust fund kid. And they would say, "Well, we have no money so that's not going to happen." But I would not take advantage of that. I would be perfectly you know...

Hal: Sure. Back then with that maturity level, you know right? You and I both sales, are like born salesman, right? Sort of convincing our parents.

Michael: Yeah, exactly. And they were like, "We would be happy to do that for you, except we don't have any money for you, for that."

Hal: They don't have the means. And I'm sure you're thankful for that. My parents put me to work at age 11 and I had to work my butt off from that point on.

Michael: Yeah. That's great.

Hal: And so it taught me to work. It taught me to be self-reliant. One of the greatest lessons I think we can teach our kids. Well, let's wrap up with this. I'd love to wrap up if you don't mind sharing, what is your number one goal for the present or the future? And what's your strategy or your plan for achieving it?

Michael: Well, I would say the number one goal, we keep hitting on this retirement thing. And I'm a little bit older than you, I think. And so folks who are older who are listening, may feel a little closer to this point. But being set up for retirement. We know what age we want to retire and we have a particular goal that we're working towards.

So the work we're doing is to get us to a point where we don't have to work. That's a really, really important part of our life and that's one big goal. So that's just the further term. And then, what we're doing now is trying to be lean. In the business, trying to be as lean as we can and trying not to be operational heavy and streamline operations. These are the things that at our stage of business, these are the things that you need to continue to work on to produce more profit because it doesn't really matter. And honestly, some people to talk about how much revenue they make. It doesn't really mean anything unless you're taking it home. So if you make 10 million dollars and it cost you \$9,999,000 to make it. It doesn't mean anything.

Hal: Or 12 million, right?

Michael: Yeah. Right. Exactly right. So that's a big part of our focus. And learning more and more about how to really run that type of business. Because as your business grows, you often are now doing different things in the business. I have different responsibilities now in the business than I did when it was me and one virtual assistant years ago.

Hal: Sure. All right. And take a second to tell people before we wrap up, your new book *Steal the Show* is out. People are loving it. In fact, the tagline, I just want to read it for everybody. It's from speeches to job interviews to deal closing pitches. How to guarantee a standing ovation for all of the performances in your life. Take a minute to tell us what this book is about and what it will do for the reader.

Michael: Oh, this book is so great. It's about stealing the show during life's high stakes situations. It is a tour de force on public speaking technique. There's no doubt about that. But it is also a lot more than that. It is a fact that if you can perform at a high level during life's high stakes situations like as you said negotiations, job interviews, pitches, even the first time that you meet your future in-laws. If you can perform well during those high stakes situations then you can have a big, big life.

But if you fold when the spotlight is on you then you don't play as big a game. So what I've done is, I've taken my training and my experience as an actor and have applied acting techniques and created a methodology for the non-actor to use, so that they can perform at a high level authentically. And that's the key. And you don't need to be an entertainer to be a performer. You need to be someone who is willing to be in service of the people in front of you. And that may be one person across the table or might be 1,000 or 10,000 in a huge auditorium. But either way, authentic performance is what is going to win the day for you. And that's what the book is about.

Hal: I love it. We actually... my business partner John Berghoff and I did a podcast episode probably a month or so on exactly that. It was kind of the idea that professional or public speaking skills are just, they're communication skills, right?

Michael: Yeah.

Hal: If they try to influence another human being or group of human beings to get a result or an outcome.

Michael: And you're always speaking in public unless you're speaking to yourself in your head and you're trying to get people to think a different way, to feel differently, to do something different and that's performance.

Hal: And you're one of the best. When I saw you speak at Mastermind Talks, that was where we met in person for the first time. And we had to vote for our number one favorite speaker. And it was just a whole cast of world-class speakers and I told you [inaudible 00:50:55]. I voted for you. You were phenomenal. You just blew me away.

Michael: Thank you so much. That really meant a lot to me, you told me that. And really I have great respect and appreciation for you and the work you do. So it meant a lot. Thank you.

Hal: Well, if you're listening Steal the Show is the book. Go grab it on Amazon. And Michael, what's the best way if somebody wants to get more info on you, reach out to you, what's the best way to do that?

Michael: Yeah. So MichaelPort.com has got everything that we do. Speaking Side of the Business, Book Yourself Solid, book yourself solid side of the business. All of it is there. And if you ever need me just shoot an email to Questions@MichaelPort.com, Questions@MichaelPort.com. And also go subscribe to to Steal the Show with Micheal Port, the podcast. It's a very, very content driven podcast. 5 minutes, 15 minutes, 25-minute episodes using content directly from the book. So they get a really clear sense of what's in the book and it'll help you for sure.

Hal: That's fantastic. Well, appreciate you being on my friend. Thanks so much.

Michael: Oh, hey. Thank you. I appreciate it.

Hal: And goal achievers, thank you for tuning into another episode. I appreciate you. I love you. I tell you that every week. Thank you so much for your time and your energy. Your love and attention, right back at you. And until next week, go out there. Set some big, big, big goals. Follow Micheal's advice and achieve them because you deserve nothing less. I'll talk to you soon.

Nick: And thank you so much for tuning in to this episode of the podcast. So hopefully you enjoyed this interview between Hal and Michael. Michael is truly one of my favorite authors. I have several of his books including Book Yourself Solid and Book Yourself Solid illustrated. I highly recommend that one. But now we're actually going through, I'm in a book club where we're reading Steal the Show right now. I'm about halfway through. I highly recommended it if you do any sort of public speaking at all. If you're pitching anything. I definitely think this is the book you should check out.

So be sure to let us know what your big takeaways were from this episode by going to HalElrod.com/101 for episode 101. And just, yeah. Let us know your biggest takeaways and what you've enjoyed from this interview.

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