



Achieve Your Goals Podcast #112 - The Single Most Important Skill for You to Master

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'll learn from someone who has achieved extraordinary goals that most haven't. He's the author of the number one bestselling book *The Miracle Morning*, a Hall of Fame in Business achiever, an international keynote speaker, ultramarathon runner, and the founder of VIPSuccessCoaching.com, Mr. Hal Elrod.

Hal: All right, goal achiever. Good morning, this is Hal Elrod. I don't know if it's actually morning where you are, but it is always morning somewhere, and morning just happens to be my favorite part of the day. I believe that we should seize the opportunity to really enjoy every single moment, but if I had to pick a favorite time of the day, it would definitely be morning.

Before we start today's podcast, which I am so excited to record for you, the topic which I'm going to keep you in suspense a little bit here for a minute, because I want to take a minute to sincerely thank you for being a listener of the Achieve Your Goals podcast. I don't know how often I do that, but it really means a lot to me that ... And, maybe you're not a long-time listener. Maybe you're like, "This is my first episode, dude.

Slow down." Whether you're a long-time listener or this is your first time, I really want to thank you, because the reality is there are so many great podcasts that you could be listening to right now, many of which I'm sure you probably listen to as well. It means so much to me that you invest your valuable time listening to the Achieve Your Goals podcast. In other words, I appreciate you more than you know, so thank you for this.

What you're about to listen to, this podcast, you may be driving in your car, maybe you're exercising or you're on a run or you're at the gym. Maybe you're sitting at your desk, you're at your computer, you should be working. Maybe you're relaxing at home. Either way, whatever the case is, you undoubtedly want to get something out of the podcast, right? That's why you're listening. It's not just for no reason. There's obviously, you're wanting to gain something. Maybe it's that you want to learn something that will improve your life or your business. Maybe you just want to be entertained or you like the sound of my voice. I can't imagine that it's that last one, but who knows, right?

Either way, if you're listening right now, you're probably in one of two categories, right? People are typically in one of these two categories, and myself included. Either you're at a place in your life that is not exactly where you want to be right now. You might be struggling or unfulfilled, or maybe you're just looking for a change. You want something better. You're in what I would call "growth mode." You're listening to the podcast potentially because you're seeking knowledge that will help you take your life to the next level.

Or, maybe you're in a place in your life that is exactly where you want to be, or pretty close to it. Maybe you achieved a level of success, whether it's personally or professionally or both, that has you feeling satisfied and fulfilled and successful, but you're

always learning and growing still because that's the one thing we all share in common, is that our potential is never reached, right? There is no pinnacle, and the next level is universally available to all of us. Doesn't matter how successful you get, there's always a new possibility for you and for all of us. It's almost like when you achieve the level of success that you have been working for for so long, who you become, you start to realize, "Wow, I'm only scratching the surface." You start to realize how little you really know related to what's out there and what's possible.

Whatever best describes your current situation, whether you're struggling right now or you're exactly where you're supposed to be, or somewhere in the middle, today's episode, I really believe, is going to be an important one for you. I'm going to teach you the formula that's designed to radically improve what is arguably the single most important skill for any human being to master. I know that's a big promise to make, but the more successful you become, the more that you realize that truly the most important skill to develop and master is your ability to effectively connect, communicate, and influence other human beings. As a human being, that is the skill that trumps all the other skills. This is just as true with regards to verbal, spoken word communication as it is to written communication -- connecting and communicating and influencing, whether that be through written word or face to face, mouth to mouth. That sounded dirty.

The formula that I'm going to teach you today is what I call the "Context Creation Formula." If you're taking notes, you can pause it, you can stop the recording for a sec and write down Context Creation Formula. This is the same formula that I've used for over ten years to effectively connect, communicate, and positively influence people through everything I've ever done. Back when I was a salesperson or every book that I've

now written or every speech that I've given, every email I've sent, every podcast I've recorded, you name it. This is the Golden Formula, if you will. By the end of today's podcast episode, you'll be able to immediately implement what you learn to radically improve what, again, is the single most important skill for you as a human being to master. Of course, that's my opinion, I'm not stating it as a fact. Again, that is your ability to connect, communicate, and influence others.

That's what we're going to talk about today, is how do you take your ability to connect, communicate, and influence other human beings to a whole new level, and again, it's something that will be immediately implementable. What I'm going to teach you today, you could take this formula and you could apply it in your next conversation or your next sales presentation or the next website that you write or create, or your blog post, or whatever. The next time you talk to your significant other or you try to get your kids to do something. This formula is very universal.

This is something that I learned, again, roughly ten years ago, and I believe that ... I think that I first learned this from my good friend John Bergoff, who I believe learned it from the Train the Trainer event at Peak Potentials, the company Peak Potentials. John went to their event to learn how to run events. As many of you know, you were at my Best Year Ever Blueprint ... I shouldn't say "my," but you were at the Best Year Ever Blueprint live event, and you got to see John implementing those skills at a very, very high level. He's one of the best in the world that I've ever seen at managing a group and conducting an event in a way that is really, really transformative.

Let's dive in here. In terms of communication, there are two parts to all communication, okay? The first part is the content:

what you're trying to get across. The second part is the context, and as I mentioned, the formula that we're going to talk about today is the Context Creation Formula. I should mention, by the way, I mentioned that I originally learned this, or a version of this, from John Bergoff, who learned it from Train the Trainer, I believe. This is my own take on a lot of this. This is evolved over ten years. It wasn't called the Context Creation Formula, that's what I've evolved this to be, that's what I call it. FYI.

Here's the deal. Two parts to communication. Number one is content and number two is context. Now, think about this. Most people only focus on the content, meaning the "What." "What do I want to tell you?" I'll use speaking as an example. You listen to a professional speaker, and they often come up and they go, "Here's what I'm going to tell you. I'm going to teach you these three things," and then they teach it to you and then they tell you what they taught you, right? That's the old school "Tell them what you're going to tell them, and then tell them, and then tell them what you told them." That's the old school way to effectively communicate, and there's still value to that, for sure, but that really revolves around content.

The content is crucial, it's important -- it's often where the most value comes -- however, here's the distinction that we're going to get across today, is that the context is infinitely more important than the content. Now, granted, you kind of need both for effective communication, but the point is ... I'll give you an example. My son occasionally has a tantrum, because he's going through a phase right now. He's three, and he's started to have these tantrums recently, and my wife and I are like, "What is going on? He's like this totally different person! What's going on?" When he is in that frame of mind, no content that we try to deliver to him will get across. We say, "Houston, be good," or "Houston, what's going on?" Emotionally and

mentally where he's at, he's not in a place to receive the content that we're trying to deliver.

Often, when we hear a message, somebody comes and they try to deliver content to us. Again, whether they're trying to sell us something or they're trying to teach us something, they lay out the content and we often ... It often doesn't hit us at the right time. You might hear that, right? You have to hear something when you're in the right state of mind or at the right time. Here's the deal. As an effective communicator, you can create the right time through context. You can put someone in the right frame of mind through creating context.

That's what this is really about, is how do you put someone in the right frame of mind? How do you prime the pump, if you will? How do you get them in a place where the content that you're going to deliver, whether you're trying to sell them your product or you're trying to convince them to do something, or you're trying to inspire them? If you're talking to a friend who's down in the dumps, and you want to influence them and you know that you've got some valuable things you can share that could change their life if they receive it and if they implement it. That's what context is all about. How do you get someone in the right frame of mind and set the right context so that when you then deliver the content, they're primed, they're ready, and it lands the way you want it to land. That's what this is really about.

I want to give you the definition -- I looked this up on Dictionary.com -- the definition of context. There's two different definitions that I got here. Number one: Context is "the circumstances that form the setting for an event, statement, or idea, and in terms of which it can be fully understood and assessed." That's a much more eloquent way of what I was trying to say. Again, "the circumstances that form the setting

for an event, a statement, or an idea, and in terms of which it can be fully understood and assessed." Again, this is how you're going to create this context so that you're creating these circumstances that are optimum for you to deliver your message or your idea or your sales pitch or whatever.

The second definition of context here is, "The parts of something written or spoken that immediately precede and follow a word or passage and clarify its meaning." Again, the word "precede" there stands out to me, right? "The parts of something written or spoken that immediately precede." The formula I'm going to teach you today is designed to precede any communication. This is the formula ... Before I send an email, as I mentioned, before I do anything, before I give any speech, I pull out this formula and I fill in the blanks. I pull out the formula and I fill in the blanks for any speech that I'm going to give. I'm going to give it to you. There's five parts to this. This is really an episode where you do want to take notes. What's inspiring me to record this is I taught this to a private coaching client, one of our Quantum Leap Mastermind members yesterday, and she was blown away. I was like, "I need to do a podcast on this."

All right. Let's dive in. Number one, and I'm going to give you a three or four letter either abbreviation or acronym. This is like when I do the formula, when I'm writing it out, I use these abbreviations to remind me of what I'm going to go through. The first abbreviation is ACK. Jot that down. Number one, ACK. That stands for "acknowledge your audience." Now, your audience could be your significant other, it could be one person, it could be your prospect or your client. It could be your email subscribers. It's Facebook. Whoever's receiving the message that you're trying to get across, right? Number one, acknowledge your audience.

What does that mean? When you show respect to a person or a group of people, there's a natural affinity that's created in that moment. I'll give you an example. By the way, I normally don't script anything. I don't script things. Even in my speeches, I rarely script things. Occasionally I'll script this whole Context Creation, but I want to let you know that I actually scripted the beginning of this podcast. Maybe you could tell. I was reading it, for the most part. I did that very purposefully. As I was about to record the podcast -- which was an hour ago, I was supposed to be done by now, by the way -- as I was doing it, I was like, "Wait a minute, I need to actually use the Context Creation Formula to open up the podcast so that then I can point back to it as I'm teaching you each of these points." I actually scripted out all five of the Context Creation components, and then I went through and I actually did each of these. This was kind of an experiment. I don't know how well I did it.

The first one, ACK, acknowledge your audience. I'm going to remind you of how I opened up the podcast, other than the whole, "Good morning, it's morning somewhere," right? That was more off the cuff. I said, before we started the podcast today, "I want to take a minute to sincerely thank you for being a listener of the Achieve Your Goals podcast, or for listening to this episode if it's your first time." I talked about how there's so many other podcasts you could listen to, that your time is valuable, and how much I appreciate you. Please know that was from the heart, I meant all of that very sincerely, but that was an example of how you acknowledge an audience.

When I'm speaking, like in that example of a speaker -- and you'll even see this with presidential candidates, right? Watch the presidential candidates, watch how they implement these components when they're giving a speech or addressing a crowd. You'll often see this. Even in marketing, you'll see a lot

of this, because it's how you effectively connect with, communicate, and influence human beings.

You can acknowledge somebody. You'll see speakers say something like, "Thank you so much for being here today, it's an honor to be here," yadda yadda yadda. They're acknowledging the audience, and the audience then feels an immediate connection to the speaker, they feel an affinity. You'll often hear people say, "Hey, your time is really valuable and you could be anywhere right now, and the fact that you're here listening to me, I don't take that lightly. It really means a lot to me, so thank you for that." Think about how you feel when someone sincerely tells you that. You immediately feel like, "Wow, that's a good person. Cool guy, cool girl. She respects us. That's great." That's how you start any communication. You should acknowledge. Again, this is if you're talking to your kids. You can apply this ... I'm thinking more you're going to apply this probably in a professional setting that's going to help you advance your career, your business, etc., but this is valuable in everything.

Again, I want to mention the idea that this is also important in written communication. If I'm going to write an email ... Now, sometimes, I totally forget about the formula, but a lot of it's ingrained in me. I've done this for ten years, so a lot of it's ingrained. Effectively, you would write the same thing: "Hey, I know you're busy today. Thank you so much for taking a few minutes to read this email. I promise I've done my best to make sure it's valuable for you." You're acknowledging someone for the value of their time and acknowledging them for sharing that time with you. That's number one: acknowledge your audience.

By the way, I'm giving you the formula. I'm not going to give you the word for word how to do this, because there are infinite ways. When I'm about to give a speech -- here's a little behind-

the-scenes. I don't typically prepare this for an audience until I'm in the room, typically an hour or 30 minutes before I'm going to speak. I'll usually just kind of do it in my head. That's where the abbreviations ACK and the other ones I'm going to teach you come into play, because in my head, I remember all those abbreviations, and then I go, "ACK. Oh yeah, acknowledge. How am I going to acknowledge this group?" Then the next one we get to is ETW, which, I'll dive into that in a second.

The point is, this formula, you're going to ask yourself, "What are ways that I could acknowledge the audience? What are ways that I could acknowledge my audience, whether that be my email subscribers, the reader of my book and my blog, whoever. My wife. How can I acknowledge this person or this group of people?" These are all prompts. This formula are prompts that should be followed up with questions, because there's not one way to acknowledge someone or a group of people, there's infinite ways.

The reason that I like to create this while I'm in the back of the room listening to the speaker that's going on before me is because I want to really be in the moment, and I want it to be customized, and I want it to be really catered to what the people that I'm going to speak to -- What are they experiencing right now before I go onstage, what's the mindset that they're in, that sort of thing. Then, I'm going to customize the way that I acknowledge them accordingly. I often will ... Sometimes I'll come up with the first line of my speech while the person's introducing me, or five minutes before, just in that moment. Being in the moment.

Acknowledge is the first step of the Context Creation Formula, that's how you want to start any communication where you want to either connect or influence another human being.

All right. Number two: ETW. ETW stands for "Enter Their World." What that means is you want to ask yourself, "What are the people," or what's the audience, "What are they thinking right now? What are they feeling? What's going on in their mind or in their head or in their body?" I'll give you an example, and then I'll point back to how I used this in the podcast opening today.

Once I was set to speak right before ... It was either lunch or dinner. I don't remember which meal it was, but I was speaking at an event. This was a long time ago. I was right before a meal. I was personally really hungry, and then, as I was going through this process and I'm entering their world, I go, "What's on their mind right now? Food!" There's nothing that anyone is going to be thinking more about than, "I just want this Hal guy to fricking finish his speech so I can go eat. I'm starving!" I thought, "Okay, how can I address that in a way that is positive, in a way that is proactive for them to receive my message?"

I went up on stage, and the way that I entered their world is I said, "Hey," I said, "By the way, guys," I said, "I know we've got dinner after my speech. Personally, I'm starving. I don't know about you. Anybody else hungry right now? By a show of hands, raise your hand if you're pretty hungry right now," and most of the hands went up. I said, "You know what, because I'm hungry and you're hungry, let's do this. I was supposed to talk for an hour today. I can get you my message in 45 minutes. I'm not going to cut anything out, I know I can do this in 45 minutes. If it's okay with everybody, I'll let you guys vote, I would love to keep the message down, cut it from 60 to 45 minutes, so that we can get to dinner faster. Raise your hand if you vote yes on that."

As you can imagine, right, almost everybody's hand went right back up, and all of a sudden, think about what that did for the

audience and for my connection to the audience. It went from me being the person -- that was my chief of staff cell phone going off in the background, by the way ... Last episode, it was Houston coming in, right? This is the benefits and the joys of working from home. Where was I? I was talking about context creation.

I talked about being hungry. What happens is now the audience ... Now I go from being the enemy, I was the barrier to their meal, to having their hunger pains satisfied. Now, all of a sudden, I was the hero. Now, all of a sudden, it went from "Wow, this was the barrier to our meal" to "This guy is actually going to make his speech shorter, so we can get to dinner faster." Imagine that, being in that audience, now you're tuning in. You're like, "Wow, this is awesome." There's an instant level once again. The rapport and the affinity continue, so you begin acknowledging, then you enter their world. You're building a stronger connection with the audience, and that's the first part of this, is how do you connect with them.

Now, back to this podcast. How did I open it? How did I enter your world when I opened the podcast? Well, I asked myself, "What's going on right now if you're listening to the podcast?" That's a hard question to answer, because we have people in, I don't even know, 50 countries or something listening to the podcast. You could be anywhere doing anything. I tried to just cover as many bases as I could. You might remember, I said, "Now, as you're listening to this podcast, you might be driving in your car right now, or maybe you're exercising. Maybe you're on a run or you're at the gym. Maybe you're sitting at your desk looking at your computer and you should be working right now, or maybe you're relaxing at home. Either way, undoubtedly you want to get something out of the podcast."

Let me pause. First thing I did is I actually handled logistics geographically. People, what situation might you be in? I tried to cover as many as I could. You're either driving in the car, you're exercising, you're at work at your desk at your computer, or you're at home. I tried to cover quite a few bases. Then, I went further. That covered the, people are like, I'm entering their world in terms of where you are listening to the podcast, but then I went further and I went more universal. I said, "No matter where you are, you undoubtedly want to get something out of the podcast, right? Maybe you want to learn something that will improve your life or your business. Maybe you just want to be entertained." Then, I said you want, like, the sound of my voice, or whatever. I'm entering your world.

You're either listening to this ... if you're listening to a podcast, it's pretty much because you want to get something out of it, that's why you would listen to it. It's usually you want to learn something that's going to improve your life in some way, or some people just listen to podcasts because they pass the time. It's like a meditation, it's just a way to be entertained and kind of zone out, like a form of watching television for some people. That's how I attempted to enter your world on opening up this podcast, so that's how I tried to implement that tool.

Again, enter their world. It depends. If you're talking to an audience of people ... Back when I talked to real estate agents in 2008, 2009, when the real estate market had crashed and home sales were down, I had to enter their world. I had to ask, "What is it like to be in these people's shoes right now? It may be challenging." Or, maybe you're talking to a group or you're communicating to people that are ... They're excited, something great's going on for them. It just depends. Everybody's different. That's why, again, these are guideposts. This formula doesn't tell you what to say, it gives you a prompt on what

questions to ask. How do I enter their world? What's it like to be these people right now? Etc.

By the way, the best way to figure that out is not to guess, it's to talk to them. It's to talk to some of the people that are in your audience. Whether it's your email subscribers, like I did. I wanted to host a podcast recently, and I sent an email out to our email subscribers, and I said, "How many of you," because I didn't know the answer, I'm like, "How many of you listen to podcasts? Please click Yes if you do and No if you don't, or maybe you don't now, but you'd be open to it." Not podcasts, sorry. I said, "How many of you watch webinars?" That became ... That was me entering their world because I didn't know the answer, so I couldn't just guess.

There are some times where you, maybe if it's people that are in a similar space that you are in or that you've been in in the past, and you're talking to an audience that you're very familiar with what work is like or what life is like for them, often you can enter their world on your own. If you're not sure, talk to folks that are similar or that are actually ideally in your audience, find out what they want.

That is, by the way, what John Bergoff and I did for the Best Year Ever Blueprint event this last year, is I sent out a very detailed survey that ... I was even concerned that I was asking too much. Some of the questions are optional, like your income level, and just all sorts of different ... Your age. All sorts of different things. We sent out this detailed survey, and the answers that came back ... Out of the 330 attendees, I think we got 285, I don't know the exact number, but somewhere around 275, 285 responses. We got a ton of data to review and understand what our audience wanted to get, what the attendees wanted to get out of the event, and what was going well in their life and what wasn't going well. We even had a multiple choice,

like, "Check all that apply. Do you want to a., write a book, b., start a podcast, c., do live speaking?" We were trying to figure out all these different things. "Are you an entrepreneur? Are you an employee?" All of these things. That allowed us to effectively, or as effectively as possible, enter the world of our audience.

I can't tell you how much John and I completely customized the event and catered it to those survey responses. Rather than just running a generic event that we thought would be the right event for these folks, for our attendees, we figured out, "What do they want? What is it like to be them?" We entered their world as best we could by surveying them, and then we could really deliver on what they were hoping to get out of the live event.

I think, by the way, if you are wanting to attend this year's live event, we sold out last year a month in advance, and this year, I think we already have almost half the spots taken, but you can go to BestYearEverLive.com, BestYearEverLive.com, and get all the details and even secure your spot early for the 2016 Best Year Ever Blueprint. There's a little plug.

All right, number three. Number one is acknowledge, ACK, acknowledge. Number two, ETW, enter their world. Number three, ENR. ENR stands for "Enroll your audience." Enroll your audience. What does that mean? Essentially, it's asking an either/or question or making an either/or statement. It's doing your best to group your audience into as few groups as possible that covers, ideally, everyone, or at least the majority. I really want to get to everyone. We were able to do that by sending out those surveys, as I mentioned.

Now, in this case, I can't see you, I'm not surveying you, I couldn't talk to you, so how did I do that on this podcast? I basically chose two categories. I said "Either you're," and you'll

probably remember this, I said, "Either you're at a place in your life right now that's not exactly where you want to be, you might be struggling or unfulfilled, or maybe you're just looking for a change, you want to go to the next level, and you're in growth mode right now. You're seeking knowledge that will help you overcome your challenges or take your life to the next level." That was type one, right? That was category one, is people that are not where they want to be.

Category two is people who are where they want to be. I said, "Or, you might be at a place in your life that's pretty close to exactly where you want to be. You've achieved a level of success personally, professionally, or both that has you feeling satisfied and fulfilled, but you're still always learning and growing because the one thing we all share in common is that our potential is never reached. There is no pinnacle, and the next level is universally available to all of us." That's an example of enrolling.

What you want to do is you want to ask ... this is really very, very related to entering your audience's world in that you want to try to group your audience into as few categories as possible, ideally two, the have or have not, want or don't want, you've achieved this or you have not yet. You want to try and do it in two. That way, you can get everybody.

I'll give you an example. If I'm giving a speech and I'm talking about achieving your dreams ... There's a story I tell about a dream I had when I was 15 to be a radio disk jockey, and I'll say, "How many of you, by a show of hands, how many of you when you were a kid, you knew what you wanted to be when you grew up? Raise your hand," and whatever percentage of hands go up. I go, "Awesome, thank you so much. Then, how many of you, when you were a kid, you didn't know what you wanted to be when you grew up? You didn't have that figured

out when you were younger, there was no dream from an early age. Raise your hands." Then, guess what. All of the rest of the hands go up. This is an example of enrolling the entire audience. You ask an either/or question that gets both groups involved.

Again, I couldn't ask you the question ... I mean, I could have phrased it as a question, but it was just saying you're either, most likely, you're at a place where you're not where you want to be, or you're at a place where it's exactly where you want to be. It's one of those two. Or somewhere, and I even said, or somewhere in between. That kind of covers the gray area, if you will.

When I used to do sales training, I would say, "How many of you have sold," like when I was in [CutCo 00:30:21]. "How many of you have sold at least your first ever ultimate sell, like the big set that we sell? How many of you have sold one of those?" You know, 50% percent of the hands went up, or 30% or whatever, and then I go, "All right, awesome. Thank you. How many of you have not yet sold your first Ultimate Set?" Guess what, all of the other hands went up. Now I've engaged everyone in the audience specifically. They're either at this place or this place.

Now, if you're doing a live presentation or something, that's also great because you actually can see and go, "Oh wow, only 10% of the room has done X. Wow." Now you really can kind of customize in that moment and cater your communication to that group.

Again, I'm using examples from speaking and this podcast, but this applies universally. That's enroll, number three. ENR, enroll everybody in your audience.

Number four is WIIFT. WIIFT, "What's In It For Them?" What's in it for them, right? Even if we're the most altruistic human beings on the planet, we still, "What's in it for me?" We want to know, "Why should I talk to this person? Why should I go to this thing? Why should I watch this movie? Is it going to entertain me? Why should I go to this restaurant? Is the food good?" It's human nature to want to move toward things that please us, that make us feel good, that meet our needs. We're wondering, unconsciously or consciously, "What's in it for me?"

You've got to tell your audience that you're communicating to, again, your subscribers, your listeners, your friends, your family, your employees. By the way, this is great -- If you're a leader, this is a great way to frame any conversation, like the annual review you're going to have with an employee, or even if you have to fire somebody, you have to fire an employee. I would still follow this formula. I would acknowledge them, I would enter their world, I would enroll them in some way, and I would ... What's in it for them, to be fired? I don't know what that is, but there's definitely a silver lining that you could highlight for them, which they might not see on their own.

Number four, what's in it for them? I'm just going to repeat what I did in the beginning of the podcast. By the way, often there's a direct transition from the enrolling, ENR, number three, "enroll," to number four, "what's in it for them" -- meaning you'll break them into two categories, you'll kind of try to assess your audience in two categories. Either you've done this or you haven't, either you're here or you're not. Then, the transition statement is, "Whichever group you raised your hand for, what I'm going to share with you is blank blank blank," or "Will help you to blank blank blank." It's a direct transition where, when you enroll them, you're getting them to raise their hand either literally or figuratively, if it's like a

podcast, I can't see you raising your hand, but you're getting them to raise their hand, to acknowledge that, "Hey, that's me, that's me." Once you've done that, you then can make that smooth transition to go, "Okay, great, whichever group you fit into, this is going to help you."

Here's what I said. I said, "Whichever best describes your current situation, whether you are where you want to be, or you're not quite there yet, today's episode is going to be an important one for you. I'm going to teach you a formula for radically improving what is arguably the single most important skill for any human being to master. In fact, the more successful you become, the more you realize that truly the single most important skill in my opinion -- it's not a fact, but it's my opinion -- the most important skill to develop and to master really is your ability to effectively connect, communicate, and influence other human beings. This is just as true with regards to verbal, spoken, word communication as it is to written communication. The formula I want to teach you today is what I call the Context Creation Formula. It's the same formula that I've been using for over ten years to effectively connect, communicate, and positively influence people through every book I've written, every speech I've given, every email I've sent, every podcast I have recorded, you name it."

I just realized that that last piece is actually ... The last thing I just read is kind of from the next point that I'm going to teach you, so doing some copying and pasting here.

Anyway. You see what's in it for them, right? It's just simply letting them know, "Here's what I'm going to teach you today. Here's what you're going to walk away with today. Here's what you're going to gain from investing your time with me today." Think about it. If you're sending an email to somebody, especially if it's a long email, and they scan down with their

eyes, they're like, "Oh my gosh, this is the longest email ever," you'd better hit what's in it for them pretty quickly.

In fact, by the way, you can sometimes go ... Not sometimes, whenever you want. You can do these in different orders. You don't have to follow the Context Creation Formula in this order. In some ways, there's logic to the order, kind of like I said with the transition from enrolling people to "what's in it for them," that transition is there. But, you might lead with what's in it for them. You might take the stage or send an email that says, "By reading this email, you're going to walk away and know exactly how to get everything you ever wanted in your life," or "To do 1, 2, and 3." Whatever it is. You might lead with what's in it for them. It kind of depends on the attention span of your audience, so in an email, you might have less time to grab their attention and to keep their attention, so you might want "what's in it for them" to move up toward the top.

Now, another little trick, and this is ... Here's a couple hacks on how to embed "what's in it for them" very early on. If you're doing an email, it can be in the email subject line. If you're writing a book, it can be in the book title and/or subtitle and/or description. If you are giving a speech, it can be in your introduction. Before you even take the stage, the person introducing you -- by the way, this is ideal, this should be absolutely in your introduction -- the person that is introducing you, they let the audience know what's in it for them. "We brought so-and-so in to speak to you today to teach you how to do blank blank blank in less time," or whatever. Before you even take the stage, people are already like, "Oh wow, this is what I need to learn, this is going to be great." Right?

Step number four, "what's in it for them," WIIFT, arguably the most important acronym in all of acronyms.

Number five, this is the last part of the Context Creation Formula. I've kind of added to it over the years. There are two parts to it. It's ETR plus B as in "boy," V as in "vulnerable," and A as in "apple." ETR plus BVA. That stands for "Earn The Right, plus Be Vulnerable and Authentic." Earn the right, plus be vulnerable and authentic.

Let me explain what I mean. If you make a promise -- "what's in it for them," by the way, if you want to make a note, that should be some big promises. If your "what's in it for them" is not profound and compelling, well then why the heck would they listen to you? You'd better be pretty profound and pretty compelling when you make some promises on what's in it for them. By the way, a transition from "what's in it for them," you can say something like, "I know those are some big promises to make, but here's why I'm comfortable making them for you," and then that's the transition into earning the right. Earning the right is where you establish credibility. If you're taking notes, that's a great way to ... Another way to summarize earning the right is establishing credibility. If you're teaching someone to do something, you might want to tell a story about how you were able to do that thing, and what results came of that, of you learning that.

Now, being vulnerable and authentic is really important. When you earn the right, there's often a fine balance between being boastful and being humble, right? Going, "Well, I can tell you this because I'm the man, and I've done it!" There's Donald Trump's way of approaching his credibility, and then there's what, I think John Bergoff, he termed this or calls this "the reluctant hero," which, again, being vulnerable and authentic ... When you're vulnerable, people fall in love with you, by the way. That's a quote from Robin Sharma. "When you're vulnerable, people fall in love with you."

I'll give you an example. I was watching a video yesterday of Ronda Rousey. If you go to my Facebook page, you can see this video, or if you just Google "Ronda Rousey on Ellen DeGeneres." For those of you that don't know who Ronda Rousey is, she is the first ever women's champion in the UFC, the Ultimate Fighting Championship. She is the first female ever to win a medal, an Olympic medal, in judo. That's what she did when she was 19 or 20, I think, and now she's, I think, late 20s, and now she's parlayed her abilities as a professional athlete and fighter into being a world champion. You may know her, too. She's in all the movies, she's on the new Sports Illustrated issue, all this stuff.

Ronda recently had her first loss, and it was a pretty brutal loss. She got knocked out by a head kick. Some of you are going, "Why do you watch this sport, Hal?" That's another episode, another time. I saw Ronda on Ellen. Ronda, she's very confident. To be the best in the world, it's kind of like you're Muhammed Ali, right? You've kind of got to be confident. I think it can be challenging to have this extraordinary self-belief that's required to go into a cage and perform at your best when you know the person across from you is trying to take your head off, to knock you out. There's an element of confidence, or what would come across as cockiness, involved. Also, in order to get people interested in the fight, typically you've got to talk. You've got to be a good talker and talk some smack, and people get intrigued. They either love you or they hate you, they want to see you lose, but either way, if you're a good talker, people will tune in to watch you.

The point is, there were a lot of Ronda fans, millions of Ronda Rousey fans, but there are also arguably millions of Ronda Rousey critics and haters. "Oh, Ronda's cocky, and I'm glad-" I heard that from a lot of people. "I'm glad she lost. She was so full of herself," or "So cocky." I never saw her that way. I

mean, I saw that persona, but I realized that that was for the cameras, that was for show.

What's the point? The point is, I wasn't a huge Ronda Rousey fan, and I really think it's because she almost never showed any vulnerability. I didn't realize that until this interview she just did the other day on Ellen, and she was extremely vulnerable. She talked about what it was like to lose, and that as soon as she lost, in the back room, she thought, "What am I?" She's so used to being the best in the world, she goes, "If I'm not what my identity is, that I'm the best fighter in the world and I've believed that and I've told myself that and I've been that ... But if I'm not that, what am I?" She said she contemplated suicide. She was in the hospital getting checked out for her injuries and concussion that she suffered, and she was contemplating suicide.

Just to hear, just to Robin Sharma's point, his quote that "When you're vulnerable, people fall in love with you," I just felt that I became a much bigger fan of Ronda Rousey in that moment. I didn't do it consciously, it was very unconscious, but it was that vulnerability, which shows our humanity. People really resonate with that, for all of us.

I had that realization a long time ago when I was giving a speech and I messed up. I got nervous and on my feet, I thought real quick, and I went to the audience and I said, "Hey, remember I have brain damage? I don't remember what I'm talking about all the time. Can you guys help me? What was I talking about?" They started shouting out, "Oh, you were telling a story about your mom," and I was like, "Okay, what else? It's not coming to me." Somebody else shouted out, "Oh yeah, you said this," and I go, "Oh, yeah, got it. Thank you." In that moment, I felt this ... The entire crowd, it was probably 500

people, I just felt this connection where they all went like, "We did it. We did it, and it was this team effort."

In that moment, that's when I came up with the quote right after, "Give up being perfect for being authentic." Give up that need, that illusion that we tend to buy into, of "Oh, I've got to be perfect. I've got to do things flawlessly." Give that up for the opportunity to be authentic, and when you do that, you connect with people. People don't connect with people that are perfect, they connect with people that are authentic and that aren't afraid to be vulnerable and to be real and to be human and talk about their fears and talk about their faults and talk about their shortcomings and their insecurities. I do that possibly to a fault, and it's unconscious now, because again, I've just been communicating this way for a long time. Unconsciously, I think the authenticity or the vulnerability, it's just who I am now. I don't try to put on airs, one way or another. I don't try to impress, and I don't try to be overly vulnerable or whatever. It is what it is.

In terms of earning the right, one of the best ways to do that, and to be able to do it while being vulnerable and authentic, is tell a story. Tell a story about maybe when you overcame hard times, or talk about before and after, like "I used to suck at blank, then I read this book, and it introduced me to this idea, and I didn't know if it would work, but I implemented it, and wow. It totally changed my life. My results went through the roof. It was incredible." You don't want to be [bragadocious 00:44:39], right, when you're earning the right. It's not about bragging. It is about being vulnerable and being authentic.

By the way, for the most part, or not for the most part. I accidentally read this. I had it in my notes in the wrong place. What I did to earn the right and be vulnerable and authentic is I said, "So the formula I'm going to teach you today is what I call

the Context Creation Formula. It's the same formula that I've been using for a little over ten years to effectively connect, communicate, and positively influence people through every book I've written, every speech I've given, every email I've sent, every podcast I've recorded, you name it."

Now, I didn't really do anything to be vulnerable and authentic, but the earning the right component, I also didn't want to go over and above most of you listening. If you've been listening for a while, you know who I am, so I didn't want to be like, "Well, I'm the author of The Miracle Morning, and I host the Achieve Your Goals podcast, and I put on live events!" I didn't want to go down that route, I just kept it subtle by saying that this is the formula that I've used for every book I've written, every speech I've given, every email I've sent, every podcast I've recorded. Anyone listening is like, "Oh, wow, this formula is what Hal uses to do all the things that he has done that are the accomplishments that he has."

I tried to take kind of a back door, creative way to do it, and by the way, if you are giving a speech, for example, your introduction should earn the right for you, for the most part. You don't need to brag about your accomplishments. Have somebody else do that. That's always a better way to go. The "being vulnerable and authentic" is talk about your struggle. Don't be afraid to talk about your struggle. From your struggle comes your strength, and that can often inspire other people who have not yet found their strength, but they are in the midst of their struggle. Your story of overcoming your struggle and finding your strength can often empower and inspire other people that again, that are struggling to find their own strength. Don't ever shy away from being vulnerable and being authentic.

All right, guys and gals. That is the Context Creation Formula, and I'm going to go old school real quick. I'm going to tell you what I told you.

Number one, ACK. Acknowledge your audience. Again, your audience could be the one human being sitting across the table from you or standing next to you. It could be your children, it could be your spouse, it could be your clients, your prospects, your employees. It could be your audience sitting in front of you while you're on stage at a speech, it could be the person reading your book, your blog, right? You name it. That's the acknowledge component. Acknowledge your audience, make them feel respected, and they'll immediately feel a mutual respect and an affinity toward you.

Step number two, ETW. Enter their world. Ask yourself, "What is it like to be this person?" If you don't know, ask them what it's like to be them, so that you can enter their world.

Number three, ENR. Enroll your audience, which means try to categorize them into two groups, the either/or. "If you've done this, raise your hand, if you haven't, raise your hand." Okay? "If you've been here, raise your hand, if you've never been here, raise your hand." "If you've had this..." Right? You just really simply, if I ask an either/or question, to enroll them, so that every person feels like, "Oh, you're talking directly to me."

Then, transition into WIIFT, that's number four, "what's in it for them, and that's where you're going to simply tell them what they're going to gain by investing their valuable time listening to you or reading your stuff or whatever.

Then, number five, now that you've made these big promises on what's in it for them and what they're going to get, that's when you need to earn the right, and the best way to earn the right is by being vulnerable and authentic, that reluctant hero take on

things, where you're not bragging about how awesome you are, you're actually doing almost the opposite where you're being authentic and you're saying, "Look, I'm just a normal person, and I figured out some stuff. I got a mentor or someone taught me or I learned this or whatever, and I applied it, and it changed my life, and wow! Now I feel responsible to help you and pay it forward and share it with other people." Obviously, for me, The Miracle Morning was exactly that. It changed my life. I never knew it would be a book. Then I felt a sense of responsibility to share it with others, and now it is what it is.

I think that's it. I'm going to end the podcast similar to how I started it, which is, thank you for tuning in. Again, I know I scripted that. You're like, "Oh, yeah, Hal, whatever. That was just scripted Context Creation Formula." No, but there was nothing that I scripted that wasn't from the heart and that wasn't authentic.

Thank you for tuning in, once again. I hope you got a lot of value. I would love, love, love, love, to see you or hear from you on how you are going to apply, or how you are applying or have applied, the Context Creation Formula. Please leave a comment on the blog/podcast at HalElrod.com/blog. HalElrod.com/blog, and that's where all of our past podcast episodes including the new one the day it launches, that's where they're all posted.

Goal Achievers, I love you, thank you, and I will talk to you very, very soon.

Nick:

Thank you so much for tuning into this episode of the podcast. Now, we want to know, what were your biggest takeaways from this episode, and what are you going to do to actually go out there and master that single most important skill?

Simply head on over to HalElrod.com/112 for episode number 112, and leave a comment there on the Show Notes page. Also, if you haven't done so yet, please go subscribe to the podcast on iTunes by going to HalElrod.com/iTunes and clicking the little "Subscribe" button, and then please leave a rating and review. Rating and reviews are truly the best way for you to show your appreciation for this show, because they help more people find out about the podcast and decide if this is the one for them.

Now, until next week, it's time for you to go out there, take action, and achieve your goals.

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