



SPI 349

Will You Go to P.R.O.M. with Me? Lessons Learned in 2018

December 12th, 2018

Pat Flynn: Okay, I've been wanting to ask you this for a while. I'm really nervous, I'm sorry. Okay. All right. Get it together, Pat . . . Will you go to prom with me?

All right, don't leave, don't leave. That was just a little reconstruction of what life was like for me back in high school. I was a very shy, very nervous kid, and that's kinda what it sounded like most of the time when I asked for something that I was nervous about, but don't worry. The truth is I am actually going to take you to prom, but not that kind of prom, like a high school dance. I'm going to take you to prom because we're going to talk about four things today: Planning, Routine, Open Time, and Motivation. That's your prom right there. Planning, Routine, Open Time, and Motivation. What does all that mean?

Well, don't worry. I'm going to walk you through all of that today. Why is this important? It's because we are about to head into another brand new year, and hopefully you've capped off this year with something amazing, and what we're going to do is make next year even better than 2018 for all of us. To do that, there's some things that I learned and picked up from this year that I've implemented and put into my life and my business that I wanted to share with you in today's episode, and I'm also gonna tell you some fun stories along the way as well. So before we get to that, let's get to the intro music. Here we go.

Announcer: Welcome to The Smart Passive Income Podcast where it's all about working hard now so you can sit back and reap the benefits later. And now your host—he's got way too many fun facts about himself, but we love hearing about him—Pat Flynn!

Pat Flynn: Yo yo, what's up everybody? Thank you so much for joining me today in Session 349 of The Smart Passive Income Podcast. I appreciate you being here. My Name is Pat Flynn here to help you make more money, save more time, and help more people too.

Today we're just doing a solo episode. Sometimes we have guests on here, and we have many, many amazing guests lined up in 2019

so make sure you hit [Subscribe](#) if you haven't already, because you're not gonna want to miss those episodes. But for this episode, like I said, I'm going to take you to prom. I'm going to teach you about Planning, Routine, Open Time, and Motivation. Now, what does all that mean? Well, we're going to just dive right into each of these things, but a little backstory on prom to kind of set this all up, and my actual prom.

The funny thing is I know I asked you to prom here in this episode, but I was actually asked to prom, and it was because it was me and this other girl in high school, we were the last two people who didn't have dates, so she ended up asking me, because again, I was too shy. And so prom night comes, and I go to her house, pick her up, we take pictures, all that great stuff. Me and my friends, they have their dates and we go to this restaurant. We have a nice dinner together. I'm really excited about the night because I like to dance, and I like to go on the dance floor and dance. My friends liked to dance, and so I was really excited. I know I didn't know if this person who had asked me to prom, who I had gone with as my date had danced, but I assume so because most other people seem to do that kind of thing. And she looked like a dancer, I guess you could say.

Well, we get to prom in San Diego and the dance floor is open, and I'm getting excited; I like to dance. And so I go and ask my date if she wants to dance with me, and she doesn't want to dance. A couple more songs go by. "Okay, let's go onto the dance floor." She just wants to sit there the whole time. Fast songs, slow songs; I see all my friends dancing. She and I sit at the table for literally three hours straight, and we don't do a thing. I was bored out of my mind. I was kind of upset. We just sat there. Then the night ended and I was like, "Oh, that's prom? That's not how it supposed to go."

Now I'm always reminded of this every once in a while, because every year I go to restaurants nearby around May or June, and there's just tons of kids dressed up really nicely, and there's limousines and they pick them up, and I'm just reminded of my

prom and I'm like, "Wow, I hope you have a better prom night than I did."

But I'm also like, if I had a time machine—which I often feel like I do have sometimes, because I watched *Back to the Future* so much—if I had a DeLorean and I could go back into time, what would I do differently in that moment? Here's what I would've done: I would've turned to my date and told her, "You know what? This is our prom. I know that we didn't plan to go with each other. I know that you don't like to dance, but here's the thing: This night is going to end, and we'll never have a chance to dance at prom again and I would love to have just one dance with you. I don't care what song it is. I just want to be up there with you and our friends and let's have a good time. Something we can talk about in the future together." And if I had said something like that, I think the night would have gone a little bit differently, and who knows what would have—just thinking about what would have happened at that point.

We get on the dance floor, and maybe we dance one dance, but then guess what? The DJ doesn't say, "All right guys, that was that dance. If y'all just wanted to dance to that one song, everybody else can sit down, and everybody else who wants to continue dancing, I'm going to play the next song in just a second." They don't do that. They just go from one song to the next. So we would have danced for one song, and then that would have blended into the second song, and maybe there would have been a slow song. I don't know—who knows what that would have been like. But the thing is—and the reason why I'm telling you this story—is because sometimes we only have a single chance.

Now when it comes to business and stuff, yes, there's always opportunities. Sort of like what Richard Branson says. He says, "Business opportunities are like buses. There's always another one coming." And that is true. However, certain opportunities lend themselves to be very unique sometimes. And I think it's important for us to sometimes get out of our own way and to not just settle all the time. I think sometimes we just settle, or if things don't work out the way they wanted it to, we kind of just go, "Okay, I guess

that's the way that's going to be. Let's hope the next time around, it doesn't go that way." And part of being an entrepreneur, part of being a business owner is doing what you can to make things work. If you know something was supposed to be a certain way, figuring out why and taking action, and figuring out the solution is really what you should be doing.

In my eyes, an entrepreneur is not just somebody who builds a business that solves a problem. That's on one level. But an entrepreneur, a successful entrepreneur is somebody who will do whatever it takes to figure out how to best deliver that solution for that problem. An entrepreneur is somebody who will do whatever it takes to figure out how to best solve that problem. And like I said, prom is only in a one time thing, but luckily for you, these business opportunities are likely right in front of you right now and if not, they're going to come at you really soon, and I don't want you to A, let them go by without even trying, B, try and not getting it right the first time and then giving up, or C, even having it work a little bit and you kind of just settle and go, "Okay, well I guess this is it. This is how good it's going to be."

You're an entrepreneur. You're going to work to figure it out, and to help you I'm going to give you this sort of prom strategy, P.R.O.M.: Plan, Routine, Open Time, and Motivation, and this is something that I've been really thinking about a lot since the beginning of this year, and it wasn't just me. I didn't come up with this strategy, it kind of just formed itself and I put nice words to these things that we did implement on the team and within my life, and I'm passing this on to you with memorable stories so that you'll always remember it, so let's start from the beginning.

Let's talk about planning. Now obviously, when you are creating anything, a plan is a smart thing to do. Sometimes you might not have a plan, in which case you might have to, even before that, do a little bit of brainstorming, and I love Post-it Notes. I love using Post-it Notes to help take all the thoughts and ideas in our head and put them on paper whenever I'm creating anything. A new course, a new book, an outline for a presentation, all those kinds of

things. I always use Post-it Notes because our brain, as great as it is at coming up with ideas, it's terrible at organizing them. So one idea per Post-it Note, put them on one per paper, and you have this sea of ideas that now you can actually do something with because once you can see it, you can deal with it, and you can cluster them. Those clusters become the modules or sections of the book or the chapters, and then within those clusters are the little lessons or the subsections of those book, or other things, however you want to divide those things, and then production just becomes a lot easier.

So before planning, taking all the ideas in your head and coming up with exactly what you're hoping to create is obviously the most important thing. But when it comes to planning, I want to talk specifically about something we did planning-wise over the last year that has worked really well, and that is related to content. You're going to be coming out with a lot of content this year, we did. Next year you will on various places—on social media, on blogs, podcasts, YouTube videos, wherever you're at—you're going to have to plan because if you don't, you're always going to be playing catch up. And playing catch up, it's sort of like you're on that hamster wheel of content. As soon as you hit publish, you have to think about, again, what is the next thing that's going to be, and publishing something, and marketing it is very different than coming up with ideas for something.

But the problem is we do all those things in sequential order, and we don't give ourselves time to really stay in one focus area, that one part of our brain that can help us maximize those efforts for whatever part we're doing. So if you're writing, you want to be in writing mode, in creative mode; you don't want that editing, publishing, marketing mode to be completely ruining your creativity in your writing. When you are in marketing mode, you don't want to have the next piece of content on your mind. You need to market the thing so that the thing that you spent all the time doing gets in front of the people who need to see it. So the way that we've been planning in our team has been really interesting, because for six, seven years before my team came on board, it was very much just kind of a fly by the seat of my pants, we'll figure it out as we go kind

of thing, and I think that's really okay. It's okay to do that at the start.

Even before you start building a team, you can start to think about how you can plan ahead so that you can save a little bit of that creative thinking for other things, or when it is time to write or produce, you're not having to plan at the same time. Doing all those things at the same time is just a recipe for disaster, for burnout, for just not feeling good about everything that you're doing.

So this is how we do it. Once a year, the team meets and we plan out our entire next year. So right now, it is November as I record this, and my team's coming to town, some of the team members, the leadership team, and we're going to be planning out what we're gonna be doing next year. What are the big launch events that are happening? And obviously, there's FlynnCON, and if you haven't gotten your ticket yet, they're selling out fast, so make sure you go to FlynnCON1.com. We have more and more people every day sharing on Twitter that they just nabbed their tickets, and they're excited and we got the venue, we're playing it out. It's so amazing, I'm so excited. So FlynnCON1.com, and get your tickets for that.

So that's one big thing. We have a book coming out next year. We have a couple of course launches and other things. So those things now are planned for next year. Now that we know those are the things we want to do, we can then plan on a more micro level, where during the year do those things fit in. Some of them have very solid constraints like the event which happens at the end of July of next year versus other things like course launches and affiliate promotions are also in there as well. So where do those live against each other, and that's why it's important for us to really put ourselves in a room and think about our whole entire calendar year, and then kind of backtracking from that and going on an even more micro level. Then we can plan for each specific quarter, "Well, okay, for this quarter, this is launching, what needs to happen then?" So you can see, we kind of start big, and then we start thinking small.

If we were to start by thinking small, then there would be no way that we'd be able to really envision what this is all for. So when we

come to planning, we start to think big first, and then we reverse engineer, “Okay, well, that’s the year level. Let’s do the monthly or quarterly level, and then the monthly, and then the weekly.” And then the team and I, we work in two-week sprints. We get it down too, so that we know that based on those big goals that we have—which are chunked into quarters, and we know where they are in the timeline—we then can go, “Okay, during this two-week sprint,” is what we call it, “all hands are on deck on getting those things done. Same thing happens with our content. We plan out.

Now in some cases, you can’t plan out a whole year ahead, but with content, we found that planning a quarter ahead has helped us really well because when we produce, we know what we’re going to be producing ahead of time. So we don’t publish something and then think about what’s coming next. Once a quarter we get together to think about the next quarter to get into the micro details of the content that’s going to be there on the website, on the YouTube channel, on the blog. We don’t get into micro levels of social media. That’s more on a weekly, and kind of a monthly basis, but when it comes to content . . . So for example, we’re going to be meeting in November again to talk about content for the next quarter, and we’re going to think about, “Okay, well in January, what are the episodes that we want to create?” We’ve already gotten to that point now, which is great.

So we’re a little bit ahead of schedule, but once we start thinking about what those episodes are, what the blog content is going to be about, then we can shift our thinking from, “Okay, what do we do, how do we do this?” to “How do we do it well? How do we make it stand out? How do we produce this thing and streamline it? How can we be more efficient? How can we learn from the previous time that we’ve posted this or published this kind of thing?” So we have a number of things lined up in the first quarter of next year that we are already planning for right now, including content and who we’re interviewing—we could start reaching out to them now. We can become sort of somebody who can early on reach out, so we can start planning our calendars and scheduling those interviews, and

all those kinds of things. So again, starting from top level, thinking big, narrowing it down, and you've heard me talk about that before.

When it comes to creating goals, create really big goals, but chop them up into a lot of little pieces so that you can feel great along the way as you sort of go step-by-step in that whole process. And I'm just sharing with you exactly how we do that, in terms of the workload and the production schedule within the team, because the planning informs what we do. The planning informs what we do, not the other way around.

Next, let's talk about routine. Now a lot of you know that I practiced the miracle morning thanks to Hal Elrod and his amazing book, [*The Miracle Morning*](#), and that allows me to wake up at a certain hour in the morning and go through a number of things that are just repetitive every single day. Very much the same, from when I work out, to what I read, to how I journal, to meditation—getting ready for the day, really preparing myself for what's to come, and feeling very accomplished even by 7:00 AM. The Miracle Morning is one of the best books I've ever read. It's changed my life, honestly. But I also want to have you recall [the episode I did with James Clear very recently](#) about atomic habits, and a lot of what he said in that particular episode, and we'll put the show notes in the—or we'll put the link in the show notes for you, so you can listen to that one. That was a very popular episode, a crowd favorite as of late actually, and a lot of people are now practicing atomic habits and in a lot of what James taught. The Miracle Morning and Atomic Habits. It really helps you define the reality of it, that in order to succeed you have to have routines in your life. And it's very difficult to succeed when you don't have a regimen of daily practices that you do to support the goals that you have and the work that you need to do and how productive you want to be and how happy you want to be.

And so The Miracle Morning has been very great, and doing things like meditation and journaling every day and really making a game out of it—gamifying it so that I don't lose those streaks has been absolutely key, and it allows me to develop myself personally and again, feel very accomplished by the time the kids are dropped off

at school and I come back home and I start working. I already feel like I'm in a great momentum shift for the day, and just in the flow already. So that's the morning routine. And I think again, routines are important because if you don't have to think about doing that, it's creating these habits.

I think it was Tim Ferriss who told me—or not personally, but I heard him say one time that, you know, when we wake up in the morning, we wake up with a certain amount of creative thinking juice. It's just this imaginary—imagine like a scuba tank that you're hooked up to that has like creative juices, and throughout the day as you start making decisions and you're being creative, you deplete your tank, and when you go to sleep it's refilled. And of course, depending on how well you sleep, it could get filled all the way, it could be only filled halfway. But that's another topic.

Now, when we are working for somebody else or we start making decisions on things that may not even move the needle in our business, we're using those juices in our tank. And eventually those juices run out. And this is why, for those of you who work nine to five or more, when you try to fit in working for yourself afterwards, it's very difficult. You've already given those creative juices and that decision making energy to somebody else's business and have yet to even do it and give it to yourself. There's none left to give. But when you wake up in the morning and you do that for yourself, and even if it's only a half hour a day that you're able to give, you're able to start to see progress and you save your energy for when your tank is at the fullest for yourself, and then you give the leftovers to everybody else. And it's almost like—I heard this from Michael Hyatt, he gave the analogy of when you're on the plane and they tell you that you have to put the mask on yourself first before you put it on somebody else. It's so that you can take care of yourself so that you can take care of others. I think you only have like ten or seven seconds to do that before things get crazy, if you don't breathe when that there's that pressure differential. Anyway, it's—I don't need to get into that.

But all this to say that routines have been key for me this year.

Waking up every single day, and I'm proud to say that it's been almost every single day that have been following the same exact routine. However, the routine has changed. So it's not the same exact routine. But a routine in the morning has been absolutely key because really my creative juices start flowing after 9:00 AM. I don't allow myself for email, I don't allow myself for social media, things that can get in the way of just the routine that I have in the morning. I get to those things later in the afternoon actually, after I've dedicated my full tank to the higher-end things that are required for energy levels during the day, such as recording the podcast or some bigger planning or thinking about FlynnCON or other things like that.

So the other aspect of routine that's been really interesting this year has been the nightly routine. I think it was thanks to the iPhone, actually. In iOS 11, there is a tool that allows you to alert yourself when it's time to get ready for bed, and although I don't use that particular tool specifically, I do and have gotten inspiration from that to have a nightly routine as well. I feel like we needed to write a book called *The Miracle Night* or something. *The Miracle Evening Routine*. I'll have to ask Hal about that. But having a specific time of the night where I know that I'm cut off of work and then I can start, in my brain, shutting down, dimming the lights a little bit, has been really helpful, just to kind of signal to my brain through my eyes that, hey, it's almost time to get ready for bed. Putting the phone away, or if I do use the phone or computer—which, I'm not going to lie, sometimes that has to happen—I use [f.lux](#) on my desktop, which is something that takes the blue light off the screen. And then I also have these glasses that I got from Shawn Stevenson's recommendation, for removing blue light from my phone or any television set it might be on.

I just start to have that nightly routine where every single night it's the same sort of shut down process. It's like, you know, when you put a SD card or a USB plug into your computer, what happens when you just rip that off and you don't tell it to eject? It says like, "Hey, don't do that because you might lose memory and it just might ruin the drive." What do you have to do? You actually have

to go into your folder system and then click eject, let it kind of shut down and then you can pull it out and everybody's safe and happy and you keep whatever information was in there. It's very much the same thing with your brain.

So implementing some sort of night routine. I haven't found anybody really talking about this on a scientific basis, similar to what James had talked about related to mornings and what Hal talks about in the mornings as well. So I'm curious if you have a nightly routine or if you've implemented that. And that one small change has been huge for me because I'm waking up with a lot more energy. I'm keeping track of my sleep. I use a ring called the [Oura](#): I got this recommendation from the founder of Onnit—he wrote a book that was really good, it's called [Own the Day](#), and he mentioned this ring and I got it, and it keeps track of your sleep and how much REM, light sleep, deep sleep you got, energy levels, heartbeat, activity. Kind of like a Fitbit, but just very more powerful, and it's just a ring so it's always on. I can't lose it. And that's been really helpful for me. And I've noticed a definite increase in energy levels and increased quality of sleep if I give myself about an hour before nighttime to shut down and start to slowly kind of finish the day like that. So that's routine, and whenever you can implement routine in your life it's great, because you can then save some of that energy for decision making or some of those higher level creative moments in your day for that.

All right, we're about halfway through here. Let's talk about Open Time. What is that? Well, at Google—it's been really interesting, I remember reading an article where some of the work that you do, if you work for Google, is for Open Time. Like, you can work on whatever it is that you want. And I really liked that. I liked the fact that they encourage their employees to innovate by giving them time to do things other than what they're supposed to do while working there. I've been able to see how adding Open Time into my schedule has worked. And so it's really cool: Three days a week, I give myself two hours to do whatever I feel like doing at the time, related to work. And having that open time has been really great because I've noticed that when there are moments when I want to

do something that doesn't really align with the next thing I should be doing or whatever's on my task list, or what's in CoSchedule for the next thing I need to check off the checklist, knowing that that open time is there three times a week, two hours, it's just really great because then I can go, "Okay, you know what? I'll have time to do that if I feel like doing it tomorrow during Open Time, but for right now I'm just going to continue to do what I was supposed to be doing right now."

And that's been really great for those moments, but it's also been really great because I find that during that open time—it's interesting because I was a little worried that I was just going to go, "You know what, two hours free, I'm just going to take a nap or take a break, but I don't have to work right now. This is great." But knowing that I'm giving myself that time to be creative and not have to do something has been really great because that's been when I've been my most creative actually, is during that open time." It's almost like reward time, and I still keep it work related. I still turn off social media so I'm not on there and that's distracting. I really give myself time to think about whatever is on my mind. It's hard to explain because I'm not very regimented with what happens during that time, but just the fact that I have that open time has been really great. Now I do have a little bit of freedom and flexibility with the schedule that I have, and the kids are in school now. So I think a part of this was just an experiment, because I was getting more time than I'm used to because both kids are in school now full time. But even—I would imagine fifteen minutes a day or every other day of just, "Hey, I'm going to allow my brain to go wherever it wants to go and not feel bad about it," I think that's the thing; it's whatever, so you can't feel bad about it.

Some of my most creative decisions and thoughts have come during those moments, especially related to my upcoming book, related to FlynnCON. FlynnCON was really born in one of those moments. It's a good opportunity to allow you to breathe and to take breaks from the stuff that perhaps your brain doesn't want to do right now. So again, two hours every, every other day, Monday, Wednesday, Friday. But that's something that I think you should try,

you should try it out. Give yourself even just thirty minutes tomorrow and just see what it's like to go, "Okay, I got thirty minutes to do whatever my brain wants me to do. And you're probably gonna find that for some of you it's going to be hard. You're going to want to go, "Oh, well I have to do these other tasks. I have this extra thirty minutes, I might as well do that." I think it Ramit Sethi also has something similar where he leaves Friday specifically for creative thinking in his business. I think all of Fridays or half of Friday, and I don't know if he still does that, but it was partly inspired by Ramit Sethi from IWillTeachYouToBeRich.com as well. So he does his work and everything he needs to do on Thursdays. Everything is scheduled. Friday is a kind of open day for new thinking, future planning, innovation, novel thinking in the business. And I would imagine that you wouldn't need a ton of time to have it really be really beneficial, but I've been doing this for about three months now and it's been really great. A lot of the ideas and things that you're seeing now in SPI, or things that you're going to see next year, are going to be a result of just allowing myself to take time away from the things I know I should be doing and kind of just going with where my brain wants to go.

Then finally, I wanted to talk about motivation and to give you a little bit of a story here. I wanted to talk about the way that my motivation has changed throughout the years.

When I first started my business, my motivation was just to survive because I had gotten laid off and I was starting a family. I had no idea what to do. So I was just motivated to just to try something and see if it could work. And that survival instinct plays a huge role in just the initial year of success that I've had. Because even after I started finding success with Green Exam Academy and helping people pass that architecture exam—which was my first business, for those of you who don't know. You can actually still find that website at GreenExamAcademy.com. Even after I started succeeding and seeing five figures of income come every single month from that website, I still had a little bit of, "Oh man, I need to continue to push through this because what if this stops tomorrow?"

And I think that drive is really important because it allowed me to continue to find ways to add new things that were valuable for the audience that was there, and to look for new and creative ways.

This is exactly why in December of 2009, I decided that I was going to create an audiobook and do what an entrepreneur does and just figure out how it works. I had no idea how to do it. I ended up recording an audiobook myself, and I actually listened to it and it was so bad that I just scrapped it.

But then I went to my mastermind group that I had at the time—it was run through Internet Business Mastery and Jeremy Frandsen was there, and I went to him with this story of, you know, “Hey, I wanted to add more products, a lot of you guys have multiple products, and the next logical product I thought from my written ebook was going to be an audiobook.” And he’s like, “Yeah, that makes sense. What happened?” So I told him I recorded it. It was bad, I was recording it on a video game headset so it was just sounded terrible. And he and a few other group members kind of chuckled a little bit and I was like, “Well, why are you laughing at me? I tried.” He’s like, “No, no, it’s not that, like, I think it’s great. But you know there are people who will do that for you, right?” And I was like, “Oh, there are like who would want to record somebody else’s book?” And apparently there’s just many people out there who freelance and do those kinds of things. I didn’t know this at the time—now it’s kind of just like, second nature to know like, “Oh yeah, there are people who will do all kinds of things for you on all kinds of sites like Upwork and TaskRabbit and Fivver. Those things didn’t exist back in 2008 when I started. I think there was Elance though, and that’s exactly where I went.

And so I went to Elance and I think that later merged with Odesk to become Upwork actually, now that I’m thinking about it. But I went to Elance. I went to Elance, I put in a job description for reading my ebook, and I got like twenty people to bid on it and I picked a woman who had an amazing voice who read it in like a week and a half and delivered this amazing audio version of this ebook for me.

And it sold like hotcakes and I was so thankful for that.

And again, going back to like the A, survival instinct, B, the motivation to, as an entrepreneur to just figure out how to do it, and C, I think an important lesson there is the fact that it was actually somebody else who told me how to do it. It wasn't just me. Part of figuring things out is finding the right people, finding the right information. Maybe that's why you're here and you listen to the SPI podcast. But I think it's also the idea of finding and connecting with others who have done it already. And I know a lot of you are in the Facebook community for Smart Passive Income. We just hit, or are about to hit, 40,000 members there. So if you want to go and check out an amazing community of like-minded people just like you, and if you're not already a part of that group, just go to SmartPassiveIncome.com/community. And it'll take some time for us to approve you, you'll answer some questions; we do vet every single person to make sure you're not just coming in to come in and spam and that sort of thing, but man, amazing community there of people that you can find who will do what exactly Jeremy did for me, which was share experience and share thoughts, and ideas on how I could progress based on where I'm at.

A part of motivation is finding the right people, a part of motivation is that survival instinct, so that was my initial goal, was just to survive, and do whatever it takes to do that. Then, it was to thrive a little bit, and so after the business started running and then I started to get SPI up and running, I found it very amazing to see how SmartPassiveIncome.com—which started out as a blog before the podcast, it was a blog for two years before the podcast started—it was very motivating to see people enjoy the content that I was sharing, how I was building my architecture related website, and people taking that and using it for their own businesses too. That's really what stemmed where I got today and where we're at, which is just like, "Hey, let's just experiment, try new things, share it, and people will use it and build their businesses too." We live in this world of abundance where you don't have to worry about, if somebody takes your strategy, that they're going to take anything from you. I think that we live in this world where it's full of abundance, and so the more that we share with each other the

better off we all are. That's the mindset that I have.

The motivation was to thrive, so okay, I survived, business is running, how can I now create some excess income so that I can provide for my family and have a more secure financial future? In 2009, in 2010, the big focus was to thrive. After about a year I was done with just feeling like, "Wow, this could go away tomorrow," and realizing that, "Wow, this is something that is long-term. It's not a flash in the pan. How can I create something that thrives?" Then I started to really dabble with affiliate marketing and that started to take off, and I started to run more experiments, and be more open with everything. My income reports, and the niche site dual, and a lot of experiments that I ran very publicly, that really, really helped to have things thrive. Then within a couple years I was able to have enough money in my kids' college 529 accounts so if they choose to go to college in the future, that they're already taken care of. We have contributed to our retirement accounts, and I know a lot of you ask about okay, what do I do with this money? A lot of it is just planning and security. Thriving, to me, is putting it away, so that we don't have to worry about money. We have our retirement accounts maxed out every year, we have some investment accounts as well that are more long-term holds; we don't get into daily trading or anything like that, but that was my next goal—can I get to that point where we can do that?—and we were there.

Then my goals started to change a little bit more. As I started to see that wow, there are people out there who are doing some amazing things in the world, maybe I can make an impact in a different way, I got involved with—after interviewing [Adam Braun from Pencils of Promise](#), I got involved with building a couple schools there. Thanks to many of you, for those of you who have been following for a while you might remember my 34th birthday campaign, and actually it was the 33rd birthday. I had run a campaign asking for no gifts, but just donations for building a school in Ghana, Africa, and that I would match if we were to were able to reach our pledge goal of 25,000. Y'all stepped up and you got, I think \$27,000 raised by over 3,000 backers in the community, and I matched that.

We built two schools—and actually, for those of you who don't know, in Ghana, Africa there is a school there with hundreds of children that attend every single day with a plaque on it. On that plaque it says, "This school was built thanks to the SPI community." Mind blowing. You guys have played a huge role in not just my success, and hopefully your success as well, but the kids, and people who you will never even meet. I hope you feel really good about that; it's just amazing, the ripple effect that communities like this can have.

This is why you guys are Team Flynn; Team Flynn, you guys are awesome. The reason it's Team Flynn, and not just SPI Nation, is we're all in this together. We are a community—and yes, I may be happening to wear the armband on the side that says I'm the team captain, but I don't score all the goals. I mess up sometimes. I'm going to pass the ball to you sometimes, and we're all going to work on this together to try and beat the other team. That's why we're Team Flynn. Team Flynn, you're amazing. I always say, especially on my YouTube channel—if you haven't subscribed to that, [YouTube.com/smartpassiveincome](https://www.youtube.com/smartpassiveincome)—I always say "Team Flynn for the win," and that's really what it's about. It's all of us in this together so we can win.

The motivation became, how can we help more people outside of the realm of the SPI community? My involvement with Pencils of Promise started to become a very big goal, and just education in general. Now, as my kids have gotten a little bit older, wanting to be a major agent of change in the world of education and entrepreneurship for kids especially, is where my head is at. Ever since mentioning that on a previous podcast, I've had people come out and just offer for any sort of help that I might need, and I'm going to need help. Education, I think, is really important for our kids today because right now it's way behind. Where the world is at right now, we're training people for jobs that are not even going to be around anymore right now, for most schools. I think that things need to change, and I think entrepreneurship is an answer—I know entrepreneurship is the answer. Even if you choose to work for somebody else, if you have entrepreneurial skills you will succeed,

and my goal is to have, if I had a magic wand, my goal would be to have education change in a way such that entrepreneurship was on the same level as reading, science, and math in schools. It's not going to be easy, there's a lot to think about from regulation, governments, teachers, unions, school districts, and all the things. I'm thankful that there are a lot of people in this space who also want to make change in that way too, and that's what's motivating me now: My kids, everybody else's kids, and all of our futures.

The big lesson here is that your goals and your motivations will change. The interesting thing about my journey, especially over the last four or five years, is that every time I've created a goal for myself it had always been an achievable goal. The goal was just to survive at first; that's a legitimate goal, especially when you just got laid off, but I seem to be able to get to those levels, and be complacent for a while, and then I have to rethink about my goals to go bigger.

What if I just went a little bit bigger upfront, and then chopped that big goal up into smaller ones like I talked about earlier? I think that would work too. That's why, in this new motivation to help with education, I'm going big, and I think that it's going to involve a lot of chopping down so that we can get to a lot of steps to get there versus just, "Oh, I wish that kids had an online course to learn entrepreneurship." That could be a solution, but I want to think big, and maybe it starts with that, but my motivations are now to the near impossible.

I'm getting a lot of inspiration from people like Elon Musk, and Jeff Bezos, big names, people who have accomplished amazing things that most people would say, "Oh, that's impossible." Sometimes I hear Elon on interviews, and he has these solutions for things, and he's like, "Oh yeah, we can do that," when most people would say those things are impossible. Now, I think he is a smart man and he knows that a lot of the stuff is going to be complicated, but he knows it's possible. That's the thing: A lot of us, when we create our goals we don't even know what is possible. We often assume that things are impossible, therefore we're already not going to work as

hard, or believe as well.

I just wanted to create this episode for you to give you a little bit of a framework, and really what this was, was just inside my head for the year. I wanted to create the structure for you, so that we could make this show yes, easily digestible, but something to remember. I think that when it comes to planning, when it comes to routine, when it comes to creating open time for yourself, and then when it comes to motivation—all those things combined, especially when you have your big goals in mind, this is perfect for next year.

I hope that you will, as this episode finishes, you will consider what your big goals are going to be for next year and start that planning process now. Perhaps even start adding a little bit more into your morning and nightly routine, allowing for some open time for yourself, so you can have some room for creativity and some breathing room in between the other busy things that you may already do. Then, motivation, asking yourself well, what is your motivation? Sometimes we get so into the grind of everything that we forget to step back and remember well, why are we doing this in the first place? When you remember why, you're going to be more motivated to keep going even if it's hard, even if it's difficult.

Really quick before you go, a couple quick things for you. Number one, you may have listened to [last week's episode](#) with Justin from the [Empire Flippers](#); if you haven't, I'd highly recommend listening to it. Really, really interesting, unique episode where we talk about the idea of either buying existing businesses and buying existing websites, and then selling them as well. If you're ever in the market for any of that stuff, definitely check out [Empire Flippers](#) as well—they are the leading specialists in helping entrepreneurs like us buy, sell, and invest in online businesses.

It's not really a thing for everybody, but for some people this is how they get their start: They buy businesses that are already there, so they're that much ahead. Or, you might get to a point where you built a niche site, or built something, and you're just not feeling it anymore, you know you can't take it to the next level,

you can find somebody to help you sell it. That's exactly what the [Empire Flippers](#) do. It doesn't matter if you're looking to buy or sell, they have dedicated teams there to help you make sure you're supported every step of the way because, as you listen in that episode if you haven't already, it's definitely a big process, and there's a lot of things that could go wrong. As a very special gift, Justin came on, he messaged me, he's like, "Hey, I want to make sure that you guys know that the SPI crowd, the Team Flynn crowd, can buy our consultations for free. If you're ever thinking about buying a website or anything like that, just go to [EmpireFlippers.com/smart](#) for more details, [EmpireFlippers.com/smart](#) and they'll hook you up there.

To finish this episode, I wanted to do something a little unique that I haven't really done before by allowing for some time before whatever next episode's cued up. I'm going to have a couple minutes in here at the end for you to think about that. You're going to hear no noise for the next two minutes, and then I'm going to come back with you after two minutes and just say some final words.

Here is some time for you to think about the upcoming year, or if you're listening to this in the future, this is some time to think about your next few months, and what the big goals that you have might be, and what are you going to do to plan it, what are you going to do to create habits to support that, how are you going to allow for breathing room despite knowing that you're going to work hard for that? Then also, just remembering why you're doing it in the first place. Here's a couple minutes for you, on me.

[silence]

Now obviously, you could take more time if you needed, but I wanted to give you structured time for you to think about that, because even if you don't get any more time today, at least you took two minutes to start that planning process, so congratulations. Thank you so much for listening to The Smart Passive Income Podcast. I appreciate y'all so much. I'm not going to ask you to do



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anything more except [subscribe](#) if you haven't already, because we've got a lot more great episodes coming your way, and I cannot wait to finish off the year and start the next one with you. For those of you who have already purchased tickets to FlynnCON, you guys are motivating me so much. The space, the venue is gorgeous, I just cannot wait to host you in San Diego next year. FlynnCON1.com, for those of you who haven't checked it out yet, and have a great day everybody. Thank you so much. Bye.

Announcer: Thanks for listening to The Smart Passive Income Podcast, at www.SmartPassiveIncome.com!



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