



How to Build a YouTube Brand that Makes an Impact with Tim Schmoyer

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Pat Flynn: By the year 2020, Google says, which is a little bit scary—that's next year—they say that ninety percent of all content consumption will be through video. That's a pretty significant percentage. And they have access to data that may actually show that they are right. Obviously, they own YouTube and now LinkedIn is on the video train, Facebook, Facebook Watch, Instagram video, IGTV . . . Video is here to stay and whether you believe the ninety percent number is actually going to happen, we can all agree likely that a large amount of the percentage is going to be video consumption. So it's really important that we understand how to create videos, and not just videos that are often one-off answers to certain questions and things like that, but videos that can actually gain a following, build a community, help us in our business.

And today I'm very, very thankful to invite our good friend Tim Schmoyer here on the podcast. He owns a YouTube channel called Video Creators, and he has helped some of the biggest brands and is now focusing on helping creators just like us with mastering and just getting better and fine-tuning our YouTube strategies, which pertains to all kinds of videos actually. So I'm really excited because even in this conversation, you're going to hear Tim offer me some suggestions for my own YouTube channel, and you'll hear a little bit of the struggles that I'm having so that you can actually get ahead of me and do better and get a little bit more ground more quickly than I did on YouTube. I've been on YouTube for nine years, and it's only now that I'm finally learning really how it works. And you can get that education today in this episode with our good friend Tim Schmoyer. So sit back, relax, play the intro.

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, a random goal he has is to create his own font one day, Pat Flynn.*

Pat: What's up everybody? Thank you so much for joining me today. My Name is Pat Flynn, here to help you make more money, save more time, and help more people too. And you're listening to Session 368

and if you haven't hit subscribe yet, please do that because we have a lot of great episodes just like this one. And again, you're going to hear Tim Schmoyer who has been very instrumental in my YouTube journey over the last year. Him and Roberto Blake, Sunny Lenarduzzi, Sean Cannell, who else do we got? We got Amy Lendino, Derral Eves, and several people who have been on the podcast before, actually. Thomas Frank, several people have had an impact on me and my YouTube growth over the past year, gaining over a hundred thousand subscribers in a year. And we're here to shortcut that for you today, and we're going to listen in on Tim and some of his strategies. And also how he has a family of seven children yet is still able to manage a business and help a load of people make a bigger impact in the world.

So here we go, Tim Schmoyer from Video Creators. Tim, welcome to the SPI podcast. Thanks so much for joining us today. How are doing?

Tim Schmoyer: Hey, I'm great. Thanks for having me. I'm excited to be here.

Pat: Yeah. I'm stoked for you to be here because I wanted to make sure everybody knows who you are because you've done so much for me and helping me on the YouTube channel. I know I don't tell you this enough, and I've told you a few times, but you and a few others have been instrumental in just helping me understand this world of YouTube and video. And so I just wanted to publicly thank you for that before we get started here.

Tim: Oh no, you're welcome. I love serving people who have a message that we want to spread that reach people and changes their lives, and I know that your message certainly does that. So it's an honor. Thank you.

Pat: Yeah, and I recognize that. That's your tagline that you say at the beginning of all your videos.

Tim: Yeah, I've said that a few times.

- Pat: A few times. Yes. And currently, you have your main channel, youtube.com/video creators. How many videos would you say you've recorded and posted on YouTube this far in your career?
- Tim: So far, it's probably getting close to four thousand, I think.
- Pat: That's ridiculous. So tell me about the start, I want to know your first video and what encouraged you to post it out there.
- Tim: Yeah. I was actually in graduate school. I had just moved across the country, and I started dating this girl, and like I'd love for—to have a way to introduce her to my family across the country. And this little site called YouTube had just started, and I was like, oh, this might be a good idea. Maybe we could just make some videos, I can introduce her to my family back home. And so we did, we started just making little videos back in 2006. We used to go out on dates, go out to the park, go out to the movies, go out to dinner, whatever, and we'd have this little eight-millimeter camera that ate my tape half the time. So whether or not we'd even actually get a video from it was debatable, but we'd post those on YouTube and I just emailed the links to my parents and family and friends cause it was easier than sending them a quick time video file that was hard to transfer, you know?
- Pat: Right.
- Tim: So we started posting those and after a little bit of time, other people just started watching, and I was just like, where are these people coming from? This was like MySpace days where you didn't use your real name on the Internet and if anyone knew who you were on the Internet, they would hunt you down and kill you for some reason. So I was hearing all these horror stories about people meeting other people online and it was terrible. So I was concerned when I saw other people are watching, other people are commenting, people kept coming back and watching more and I was like, who is CatLicker69 and should I be concerned that this person keeps coming back and watching my videos and commenting?

That started me down a rabbit trail trying to figure out, how are people finding my videos? Why are they watching them? Why do they keep coming back? What are they looking for and how do we help other people who . . . At that time, some people actually wanted that. And so I reached out to some friends of mine, this is like 2007 or 2008 at this time, and they're like, "Tim, we don't know, but if you figure it out, let us know because people are asking us how this thing is working all the time." And at that time most people who had substantial audiences was a few hundred people. So it wasn't long where I was like, okay, I think I can actually maybe help answer some of these questions for people. So I started posting some videos, just helping people with that and then make a long story short, it wasn't too much longer after that a lot of agencies were like, "Hey, our brands are asking us to help them with YouTube strategy."

So before I knew it, I was doing YouTube strategy for Disney, Warner Brothers (I did the Batman release for Warner Brothers), HBO, Century 21, eBay, Budweiser, all these brands, and they were all having tremendous success with it. And I was like, okay, I'm onto something here. And it was 2013, I started Video Creators, which is my current business. And in the past several years it's grown into a full team of ten of us and so far our clients have earned, organically with us, over fourteen billion views and sixty-one million subscribers. And we've seen channels go from zero to sixteen million views a month in only six months. Other people have like hundreds of thousands of subs in less than a year. And it's just been really exciting to see how much life change is happening as a result of what we've been able to do with people on YouTube. So it's been a lot of fun.

Pat: That's so cool, and that's amazing. And do you still currently work with larger brands like that or are you more focused on the individual creators at this point?

Tim: I have those opportunities, but I've turned them down just for the past few years because they're so slow, and I don't really like that. It's just really frustrating when you have one meeting, and then you've got to wait another three months for them to have another meeting and then when you do the work, it's like another six months before

they have a team in place to implement it. It got a little frustrating for me personally.

Pat: Yeah.

Tim: It was a lot fun though, at the time.

Pat: Well, your YouTube channel now is one of the most helpful out there to help us with YouTube. And with some of these numbers that you're sharing about people who go from zero to sixteen million views and zero to hundreds of thousands of subscribers in months, is that growth still possible today?

Tim: Yeah.

Pat: Because you got in early, and the people you helped, you helped them early, but is that still possible today to do?

Tim: Oh yeah, absolutely. One of our clients has just been working with us for about six months and just passed a million subscribers last week. We've had someone late last fall that we were working with, went from . . . I think they started with about four hundred subscribers, and they passed a hundred thousand subscribers around nine months later. So yeah, growth is still absolutely possible. If anything, it actually might be easier in some way. I know there's a lot more competition, but there's also a lot more eyeballs on there and people are watching videos for longer, they're consuming more on YouTube than even television and network television. So there's a lot more opportunity there as well. The hard part is just cutting through the noise, but once you cut through the noise with good value and clear branding and all that, it's totally possible.

Pat: So if somebody's listening to this right now, and they're getting amped up about getting on YouTube and actually getting started, what would be the primary things that they need to consider before even diving into this space in order to maximize their acceleration to loads of people who are watching, which could obviously help them share their message and make an impact, which is to me always the

most important thing. And I love that you share that at the beginning of all of your Video Creator videos because that's really why we should be doing what we're doing. Because, for me, I teach serving first and helping others and as a byproduct, you can make money, and I would imagine that it's largely the same with you. You create great things and as a byproduct, you will grow, you will get subscribers, but tactically, what should a new person getting onto YouTube think about to maximize their success?

Tim:

Yeah. Back when I was working a full-time job as a youth and family worker—and I loved it because I was reaching people, changing their lives, I love working with teenagers and their family—working about maybe 180 students a week or something at that time. And I loved it because I love seeing the relationships between parents and teenagers restored, and those things are just growing and building. It was really exciting for me, I just loved it. And at that time, my wife and I . . . I married my girlfriend by the way. We got married, and we just kept going with our videos. With our engagement and wedding and honeymoon, first real job and first house and all that kind of stuff.

And at that time I had a decision to make. We were getting like a million people a month for watching our family, and I was working with like a hundred and eighty students a week in my real job, but on YouTube, it was like the same stories of life changes were coming out of what we were doing. People were saying, “Hey, you don't know me, but I've been watching your videos, and I just got married two months ago and my husband and I are already struggling in our relationship. I don't know if we're going to make it, but I watched your video where you and your wife were talking about how you're learning to love each other better, and I shared that video with my husband, we sat down, we talked about it and I just want to let you know that we have hope again for our marriage. Just thank you so much for making that video—”

Pat:

Wow, somebody you didn't know said that.

Tim:

Yeah. And then people were coming up to us, that we didn't know, just like, “Hey, I recognize you from YouTube.” And one girl was like,

“I've noticed ever since I started watching you guys I've really changed my standard for the types of guys that I date, and will one day marry, and thank you for changing that in my life.” I'm like, “We did that? How did we do that?” There's people who didn't commit suicide because of videos we've done. There's one lady also who was like, “I didn't grow up with a mom. She left my family when I was a young girl, but I'm getting married next month, and I feel like, because I've been watching your videos, I know, or at least have an idea of what it takes to be a good wife and a good mom one day. Just thank you for all you've done.”

Pat: Wow.

Tim: My gosh. So it's those types of stories I'm like, you can literally reach people and impact their lives on YouTube at scale. And so that's when I had to make this choice, am I going to keep going down this youth and family work path or the YouTube path? And I'm like, if I'm ultimately about reaching people and changing their lives, I have to take the YouTube path. And then I was like, what if I could not just reach my million people a month, but what if I could help other people reach their million and their ten million in their whatever—now fourteen billion people—and reaching and impacting their lives . . . Could I help other people make the world a better place rather than just sit being about like, yeah, I might have one or two good ideas that might be helpful—

Pat: Yeah.

Tim: But Pat Flynn and all these other guys, they have all these other ideas that could help people too. So that's what really got me excited about the tagline. In terms of growth, I think that a lot of the principles are pretty similar to what grows a business. The place a lot of people start when they come to YouTube, which is not where I start actually, is they jump pretty quickly to doing keyword research to analyzing tags and metadata, and I understand where that approach is coming from. A lot of it is leftover from old-school Google SEO days and things like that, but YouTube doesn't really work like that as much anymore. YouTube still asks for that information, so it's still important

to give it to them, but their search and discovery systems are all designed around looking at what people are responding well to and then surfacing that content to more people.

And so, ultimately, being discovered on YouTube is more about the viewer signals that your videos help people give to YouTube and less about, did you properly get all the right words in the right places and click the right buttons and check the right boxes. And so we start with the very basics. One, who's your target audience? Who are we going after here? Who's your most ideal subscriber? Who's the most ideal viewer for your channel, for your content, for your videos? And then number two, what's the value proposition of your channel/brand to those people? Why do they care? Why would they watch?

And so knowing exactly who you're going after and why they should care. And then third, being able to clearly communicate that to that first time viewer. So as soon as they find one of your videos for the very first time, the bounce rate is really low. They're like, oh my gosh, where have you been all my life? This is exactly what I need. Subscribe, watching every video, commenting, engaging. And if the brand's messaging is just unclear or at least confusing in any way, it's really hard to get people to interact and engage and start getting momentum in the first place. So we usually start at those pretty foundational places when we start working with people and then go from there.

Pat: All right, let me play a role really quick. But Tim, “target market,” I want everybody to watch my videos and I think my stuff is good enough to help everybody who's doing this kind of thing too. How would you respond to somebody who wants to target everybody on YouTube because everybody is on YouTube.

Tim: Yeah. You can try it, but let me know how it goes. I don't want to sound cocky or anything, but it's really hard to get momentum with a broad audience on YouTube right now. You can make it broader as you gain momentum, but it's hard today to start with, “I want everyone to watch my videos.” Well, okay, maybe we'll get there, but in the meantime, we have to gain momentum with someone, and the

way you gain momentum with somebody is making them feel like, “This channel's for me, this is exactly what I need. I need to watch everything that you do, I need to subscribe, I need to follow.” And it's really hard to make someone feel that way if you're just making broad general content for a broad general audience. You need to get some momentum going first.

The other thing that's difficult about that from a discoverability standpoint is that, yes, YouTube is the second largest search engine on the planet, and it definitely has that component built in, there's a lot of value there. But from an average view duration perspective, arguably one of the more valuable traffic sources would be the suggested videos or definitely getting to the homepage. And one of the ways that you get YouTube to start adjusting your content to people and putting your videos right on the homepage so people don't even have to go search for it is by helping YouTube feel confident. Like, we know who this video is for, if we surface this video to this type of person and this person engages with it and then they love the channel.

And it's really powerful when you can just leverage YouTube to put your videos in front of the right people for you. They're not even looking for it, but then they see the title and the thumbnail, they're like, oh yeah, what is this? And they're intrigued, they click due to no other merit than what the title and the thumbnail pitched. And they get into the content, they get introduced to you and the brand and the brand clearly communicates who they're for, what they're all about, and it gets that person to be a subscriber and watch additional content after that. And Google starts picking up on those signals, and they start feeling confident like, this type of person will engage with this type of video. They'll just start putting your videos in front of the right people. But if the content's really broad, Google's going to be like, I don't really know who this is for. No one's really engaging with it specifically and so the video will just get buried pretty quick.

Pat:

Yeah. That's where I struggled too. I have a large number of videos on my channel, like four hundred videos, but they span across all different things. I have some really popular videos about podcasting,

specifically, and I rank really high for a lot of podcasting related terms. But then I can imagine somebody going there and finding my podcast content and then going into the rest of my channel and seeing stuff about blogging and my family stuff and some of the vlogging things that I do, this switch pod related things and all that kind of stuff. And they're just like, oh, well, I got my answer, I'm done. I can move on now, versus . . . this is where I get sometimes jealous of those channels similar to the ones that you started with your wife, where it's just like, it's your family and people are there because they love you for who you are. And that's the feeling I get from people who listen to my podcast, but I don't yet have that kind of subscribership and fan base, I would say generally on YouTube, where a person knows every video is going to be some hard-hitting thing that they're used to, or just something that they can expect. I feel like every video that I produce is just random right now. And so the reason I'm sharing this and asking you questions is not just for me, but because I don't want other people to have to go through nine years of YouTube to discover their path like me.

Tim: Right, yeah.

Pat: At the start, when it comes to creating these videos, not going for search terms, but going for target market and truly creating videos about things that they would be interested in watching and sharing and hopefully trigger those algorithms. Do you have any strategies for how to determine what those videos are? So you have this target market, how do you know what videos are going to resonate versus which ones don't?

Tim: That's really common, you're certainly not unique in that situation, in that problem. The way I would start by looking at it is, first of all, on an educational versus entertainment level. So YouTube, we can roughly break almost all channels and content in general, probably into entertainment and educational. So entertainment type of channels, like the family vlogs and the gaming and the personality-based channels and stuff . . . They not always, but I'm talking very generally here, will have higher return viewership from their subscriber base because people are coming back for different value.

As opposed to someone who subscribes for an educational one, like yours and my channel even, people subscribe because they want to know something and learn something and they're like, "Oh Pat did a great job talking about how to start a podcast. This is great, subscribe." But then the next video is maybe still about podcasting even, maybe it seems about the same topic, but it's how to convert your WAV into MP3 or whatever. And they're like, I already know how to do that. And so they don't feel like they need to watch.

Pat: Right.

Tim: Right? So it's common, it's normal, very . . . Again, broadly, generally speaking for educational channels and entertainment channels to perform differently in terms of stats and metrics and things like that. However, there is something that's in common I think between both of them. The value proposition for an entertainment channel like that typically revolves around a relational value or a community value. Whereas the educational channel will revolve more around like, I want to learn something, you're going to help me progress, help me reach a goal that I have, something like that.

Tim: And so when it comes to how do we position maybe an educational channel like yours in mind to maybe perform a little bit more like an entertainment channel, it's like, how do we take some of the things that are working on the entertainment side and bring them over to the educational side? Such as the community and the relational aspect. Now, one of the things that . . . There's a whole bunch of stuff, and this will probably be a whole other conversation, but I'll try to make it quick, which is like, how do you set up your brand for people to create an emotional connection with you in the first place? Have you heard of a book called *Primal Branding* by a guy named Patrick Hanlon by any chance?

Pat: I've heard of that book. I have not picked it up yet.

Tim: Yeah, I'd highly recommend it. It's something that we work through with all of our clients. What he does in that book, he just looks at all

the top brands that have developed cult-like followings and he's just like, what made it possible and easy for this brand to develop this type of following? What made it easy for people to fall in love with them? And he breaks it down to seven aspects of the primal code. And the channels that are just killing it on YouTube, they've got at least five, usually six, if they have all seven they're just humming on all cylinders, their channels are blowing up, they're growing crazy. And some of those things that I think are particularly applicable to an educational channel would be things like knowing your story, right? We talked about mine here. I think everyone who listens to you knows part of your story. It's a very iconic story, represents a lot about you and the brand and gives people a framework, gives them a context for understanding who you are, what you're all about. And that starts to build an emotional connection.

The biggest thing though is . . . And this is where a lot of brands I think go wrong—especially with social media—is actually making the brand not revolve around what you do, but making it revolve more around a belief, or in Primal Branding it's called a “creed.” It's like your why, why do you do this? So if you just say, hey, subscribe to my channel cause I'm going to teach you how to grow a podcast, then some people will be like, okay, do I want that value or not? But if it's like, I'm going to teach you how to do a podcast so that you can reach people and change their lives, now you're getting even more specific. You're potentially eliminating a lot more competition of other channels who might be teaching people how to podcast. And you're also helping people form a much deeper emotional connection with you because the strongest communities online and offline—this isn't like a social media thing—the strongest communities, they don't actually revolve around common interests, they always revolve around shared beliefs. And so if someone's like, I know what he's doing and I know why he does it and I share that belief, they are much more likely to become an engaged part of your community. And so I think that if your brand revolves around a belief and you pitch to people like, “Hey, subscribe, because . . .” and then you have a belief instead of a what, then you really have maximum flexibility on one channel to do almost any style.

Instead of pitching, hey, subscribe to my channel because I do daily vlogs, or subscribe because I play video games, or because I do whatever. It's like, yeah, you and a lot of other people. But when that why is there . . . Like for me on my channel, it's subscribe because I'm going to teach you how to master YouTube so you can reach people and change their lives. Most people don't actually believe that with me. Most people are like, master YouTube make more money, or master YouTube feel more popular, or master to whatever. And so my goal was to grow the largest YouTube educational channel out there. I would go more that direction, but that's not really who I am as much. So it's like, master YouTube reach people and change their lives. So I end up attracting those types of people. I end up working more with those types of clients. But it also gives me maximum flexibility because now I don't have to just sit down and teach YouTube all the time. I can talk about a wide variety of things as long as it comes back to reaching people and changing their lives on YouTube because that's what people signed up for. And so I can do vlogs, I could even do a gaming video if it still delivered that value proposition.

Pat: Yeah.

Tim: I could do a skit, comedy . . . I actually have a full reality show type of series coming up on my channel later this year that we're producing that is a really big project. But it's going to be unlike anything I've ever seen, really, and I think it will still work if people won't be shocked and be like, oh, what is this now? Because it still directly aligns with the belief that I've always told people like, this is what you should subscribe for. Does all that make sense? I think it's kind of a ramble—

Pat: It does make sense. And the truth is that's not new information for me. However, I still struggle so much with it. I can't nail that proposition on YouTube yet and I know I need to do it. I've tried it and I have changed my . . . I've done a few things based on largely what you've said and have taught on your channels and what other people have taught me. So a couple strategic things that I've done, and maybe it's just because I'm so in the weeds of my own business it's

hard for me to determine. I have now started addressing my viewers as Team Flynn and I've already started to see the community start to step up, even use that hashtag and feel like more they're a part of something. So no matter what video comes out, I always end with "Team Flynn you're amazing, Team Flynn for the win." Or I start videos with, "Hey Team Flynn, Pat here." So that people can feel like they're a part of something, and that was very strategic.

Again, I don't know if that's the right thing or not, but I like what I'm seeing from that. And the other part of that is I have a tagline now that I didn't have before which is, "Make more money, save more time, and help more people." And so I can, like you said, have a little bit more freedom in my videos that I can create with that particular tagline, but I think it's just the surface. I think I could go a little bit deeper and I know that there are some things that I could touch on. For example, making business fun. That's something that I try to do in every video and I think that a certain kind of person would want to follow me for making sure there is fun in every video. Something related to perhaps even family and lifestyle and that direction to, sort of, distinct me from a lot of the other people who are maybe more younger and travel and have Lamborghinis and stuff, which is really, honestly the primary reason why I'm on YouTube specifically.

It's not just to help more people. But there are some people out there teaching business who I'm just like, no, why are you . . .? You're getting people's hopes up and then you're going to ask them to pay for things. But those videos, even though I try to create videos that are better, they're far outranking, they're getting millions of views and it just is very deflating because I haven't "cracked the code" yet. And I know I'm maybe just, again, impatient or whatever, but I think a large amount of it is like everything you're talking about here. It's the brand, it's what people can expect when they watch the videos, and so hopefully, sharing all this with all of you listening can help you feel maybe a little bit better about the fact that maybe you don't have it all figured out, or maybe you have more figured out than I do at this point. Any comments or thoughts on that, Tim?

- Tim: Yeah. All of that is really good. I think the Team Flynn thing, that's good. In Primal Branding that's called sacred words—
- Pat: Basically I just need to hire you.
- Tim: Just read the book.
- Pat: I will. Honestly, as you were speaking earlier, I ordered it on Audible so I can listen to it.
- Tim: There we go. Cool. Yeah. Hashtag not sponsored, just really good resource that I highly recommend.
- Pat: Thank you for that.
- Tim: Yeah. But the “sacred word,” that identifies the community. My wife and I have been debt free for over 10 years. We're big Dave Ramsey fans. His brand does a lot of the same stuff, very educational, like teaching people how to manage their finances and money and things like that. But the personal brand, you feel like you have a connection to Dave and you don't even really care what he's going to talk about cause you just know it's going to be good on some level. I look to him as a good example for a lot of this type of stuff too, but he has so many sacred words like you mentioned—
- Pat: I'm debt free.
- Tim: Oh yeah. And that's actually considered a “ritual,” which is like the repeated interactions people grow to love and expect with your brand. So that's another Primal thing. And if you look at Dude Perfect, for example, that's my favorite YouTube channel.
- Pat: Yeah.
- Tim: They do all these so seamlessly you wouldn't even notice. So you're on the right track. The thing maybe in terms of what I've heard so far, just two things real quick. One would be to really drive home that Creed that you said, what was it? “Make more money—”

Pat: Save more time, help more people.

Tim: “Save more time, help more people.” Yeah. Just really drive that home as much as you can. As much as you hear me say, “reach people, change their lives.” It becomes almost like the thing that your audience revolves around. It's like, Oh yeah, Pat Flynn. They immediately associate it with that. And so making every piece of content really drive that home consistently would be one thing. The second thing is—one of the things we've been doing a lot more with our clients over the past two years or so. YouTube landscape has been changing, and it used to be . . . Back in 2006 when I got started it was like, could you just figure out how to get video footage off of a ribbon on a camera and onto your computer? And did you have that fast enough Internet connection to upload it? That was the barrier of entry. And then going through all of these other phases. We're coming out of the phase, I believe, where it's quantity over quality. I think we're thankfully on the back end of that, and it's shifting more towards quality.

But by terms of quality, it's actually like, can you tell us a meaningful story that impacts someone? And this applies to educational and entertainment channels by the way. So I did a few experiments, even on my own channel. Actually, at Social Media Marketing World last year I did seven interviews, or nine interviews with people and I did two videos with each of them. The first one was like, give me the quick bullet point tips for how to do something on YouTube. Second Video I did with them was, tell me the story of how you discovered this and how you do this on your channel.

And so in your YouTube analytics, you can do things called groups. And I grouped the two different videos and you can . . . One was story, and one was listicle basically. And I put the two groups and compared them side by side and what I learned was, hands down, the story videos got at least quadruple the views, twice the engagement, twice the watch time. Then the quick, shorter, punchier . . . Like, “let me just give you the hard dirty facts about how to do this thing, and we're done.” And so stories, unless I actually told

the story poorly then, in that case, it actually performed even worse. But if you tell the story half decently, it performs a lot better. And so that's one of the keys behind these channels that we've been working with and they're growing really fast. I'll give it to you here real quick, but we have our clients work through seven different questions when it comes to their story.

We say, before you start shooting this next video, answer these seven questions for your content, and then go ahead and shoot it. The seven questions are: one, who is the character? Two, what do they want? Three, why can't they have what they want? Four, what is at stake or what's it going to cost them if they don't get what they want? Number five, who or what comes along to help them do what they couldn't do before? Number six, how do they ultimately get what they wanted? And then number seven, this is the whole point of the story, is how are they changed as a result? The stories that people really love are actually about character transformation. Like, this person is different at the end of the story than they were at the beginning of the story, and we can see how the conflict over time actually changed them into this different version of themselves that they are today. That's the difference in making a story people just are interested in, and a story people love. It's how that character changes.

So thinking through those seven and how do I integrate that type of story and wrap my content, even educational content, around that can make a really big difference in terms of watch time, in terms of retention, in terms of people coming back and watching more videos and session time and a whole bunch of things. It's not mind-blowing to hear that, "Oh, stories make a difference?" But telling a good story and having a structure to do it, maybe that helps actually craft it so that the videos intentionally accomplish what you want them to accomplish.

Pat:

I love it. It's what I teach in my podcasting course to try and pull out the stories from the people you're interviewing and to tell your own story. And it's funny because in YouTube Land and the way that I started on YouTube was just, people have a question, I'm going to

film a video to answer it and that performed pretty well. But I wanted to be more than just a repository to answer questions, so I love that. It reminds me of the hero's journey, Joseph Campbell's—

Tim: Exactly.

Pat: . . . Monomyth, and like you said, it's not mind-blowing information, but we don't do it. And I think we just need to spend a little bit more time and care. I've worked so hard on some of these videos, I know some of my listeners have worked so hard in some of their videos, and to just get a hundred views on something is pretty deflating. And I think, really, it's everything, it's the start of that journey. And in your questions, the character, can that be anybody? Can that be the person who owns the channel and maybe it's featuring somebody else? Can it be just a story about somebody else that they don't even have contact with?

Tim: Yeah. I've tried a few different ways. I found it's easiest to do this if you're the character. And so you're telling your story, but we know behind the scenes that we're ultimately not telling our story, we're telling our audience's story. But we're telling their story because it's also our story. And so we're telling it in a way that when they hear it, they think, “Oh yes, me too. Oh, me too. Me Too.” They're identifying with us as the character. That's typically the easiest way to do it. I've done it—like this creator story series I have coming up, I've tried making the viewer the character and making them the hero, and it's just really difficult to do well, and I actually don't think it worked that well. So I usually just default to, I am the character, they're watching, what do they want?

So if it's in educational videos, the character, me . . . I remember when I wanted to make a better podcast and I remember when I made that episode it only got two views. Not views, sorry, downloads. And so now we know what you wanted and you wanted more downloads, but why couldn't you have . . . What will be at stake if you didn't get more downloads? What's it going to cost you? And then who comes along and helps you—meet Pat Flynn. So you're not positioning yourself as the . . . In one way you're the hero, but you

also then become the guide for the person who's watching or listening because they want to be the hero of their own story and you then become the guide. So we become multilayered in one regard, but you got the idea. You just follow that through your content.

And so when I open up my YouTube videos, rather than opening up with a hook that repeats the title thumbnail they just clicked on . . . That's a sure way to have a really steep drop in audience retention, of abandonment right at the beginning of that video. As opposed to a video I did last week. I'm thinking . . . to remember off the top my head, but it was “How to . . .”, something about how to earn a thousand dollars on . . . “How many subscribers you need to earn a thousand dollars.” That's what it was. And so I opened it up, actually, with a story and several stories real quick. I just crammed them all in there into about 20 seconds, I told three stories real quick. And that video's doing better than my videos normally do. And I think in large part because I took my own advice, opened it up with a few stories, then did a quick welcome and intro and got right into more stories that were actual stories about people who have a few thousand subscribers making two million dollars a year on YouTube or my case. I told my story briefly. I had three thousand subscribers. It was generating around ten thousand dollars a month, not through ad revenue. It was all through selling my value proposition in other ways, but telling those stories, people are like, “Oh yeah, me too. I want that. I'm the character. I can't have that. How do I get that?” So telling both your audience and your story simultaneously.

Pat: I love that. Thank you for that. And before we wrap up here, one final question for you, Tim. Let me just prime in this by asking you, how many kids do you have?

Tim: My wife and I had seven kids in eight years.

Pat: That's a lot of little ones running around.

Tim: Did you hear some of them earlier? Sorry.

Pat: No.

- Tim: Okay, good.
- Pat: I'm just very curious because even with just two kids on my end, it can be very difficult to find the time to do what I need and want to do for my business. And so I'm curious to know how you stay on top of your work and stay present as a father and a husband.
- Tim: Ooh, that's like a whole new episode right there. None of it is easy. I would maybe summarize it. Let me first say that we didn't set off to have seven kids. It just happened. You guys know how that works. So we just ended up with seven. We're very thankful for it, and we've tried different ways of controlling that and none of them worked. We still got pregnant anyway. So we're thankful for it, but I've learned actually . . . I know a lot of people they're like one, two kids, three kids, four kids is a big family. How do you do it with seven? And it's the same thing I think. It's the same principle about how do you grow a larger business, which is when you're a small business, it's easy for you to have all the systems and processes and everything in your head and you just do it. But as you grow, you really need to get those SOPs, those Standard Operating Procedures written down step by step. Have like an employee handbook and all that kind of stuff. And so I found the way a business grows larger, it's like you actually just need better systems because as your business grows, your systems breakdown. And the same thing's been true with a family. It's like when you get to two kids, you can keep the same systems you're used to having. When you get to three, you have to switch from one on one to zone defense and a lot of those systems break down.
- Pat: Yeah.
- Tim: You got four, and especially when you get to seven. Anything over four, actually. Thinking of four plus kids, like the system—you're forced to work through some of those systems. So if you were going to take your systems that you use with two kids and apply it to seven, it would totally drive you—it would break. And that's where people are like, “I can't have more kids because I can't handle the two I

have.” It's like, well, you just need to work through some of that stuff. But if you had more, you'd be forced to figure it out and you would.

Pat: Right.

Tim: So in terms of time management, part of it is . . . When I first started this, we had much fewer kids and I gave it more time back then. I don't work full time. I haven't worked full time for a few years now, just to be totally honest. I don't know if I should say that out loud or not, but I track my time and I work typically around twenty-five to thirty hours a week. And part of that is due now because of all the systems we put in place. And now I have a team of ten people who work for me and who can implement those systems by serving our clients and working with them. And so I spend each of my mornings homeschooling our kids and then I start work around eleven, and depending on the day, some days I'll quit around dinnertime, around five, other days, I'll quit at five and then come back in the evening while my wife goes out grocery shopping or something like that.

Tim: But I've always believed that I'm not building a business for the sake of building a big business. I know it's easy to get trapped and hung up in, the goal of my business is to grow it to be as big as possible and as successful as possible. But I read a really good book called *Built To Sell*. Have you read that one by any chance?

Pat: Yeah.

Tim: And so he told a story in there. He's like, just take the amount of money . . . And I'm changing the story, but I got the inspiration from the book, which is like, write down the amount of money you'd be willing to sell your business for, seal an envelope, put it someplace. And then when you get an offer to sell, take it out and if you're at that amount, just sell. And I took that for me as like, what's the amount of money that our family would need to earn in order for our family to be sustainable, for us not to feel stressed, and for us to achieve the goals that we have? And we're at that number, we're actually past that number, and I don't feel like I have a submission to grow the business to become this bigger multimillion-dollar enterprise. I keep

working on it. I don't want it to decline. I want to manage well what I have and continue to grow it, but not at the expense of my family. So for me, it's like the family comes first. And my wife was pregnant with some kids, I backed off like ten to fifteen hours a week and revenue went down. It did, but that was okay. My family comes first. So rather than thinking about balance, I think more in terms of priorities. And at some point different seasons of life that red line moves up and down and there's some times anything below the red line just doesn't happen and that's just the way it is, you know? So I don't know if that helps or not.

Pat: Yeah. Thank you for sharing that Tim. No, that's really helpful to know and I think a very important message that people need to hear sometimes as we get lost in the growth and scale of our business, and all the fun that that includes. You can always build new businesses, you can always make more money later, but family stuff, and especially with kids, they're only young once. And so I'm a hundred percent with you there, Tim.

Tim: Yeah.

Pat: Dude, this has been fantastic. Thank you so much for sharing all your wisdom with us and the inspiration and especially a lot of the stuff that you shared in particular about my channel, and I'll definitely be reaching back out to you to get some additional consultation as well as we continue to grow the channel and redefine and hone in on what the messaging is exactly. Where should people go to find out more info and get all the good things that you have to offer?

Tim: Yeah, we got multiple videos every week at youtube.com/videocreators. You can learn more about growing your YouTube audience as well as a weekly podcast of my own. You can just search iTunes for [Video Creators](#), Tim Schmoyer and it should pop up right there.

Pat: Cool. Yeah. Go listen to it now. And Tim, thanks so much for your time today and all the best.

Tim: Yeah, thanks for having me.

Pat: All right, hope you enjoyed that episode with Tim Schmoyer. Again, you can find him on YouTube at Video Creators and download his podcast. You can get some great YouTube and video creation content on the go for you as well. So that's also Video Creators on Apple or wherever you're listening to podcasts. Again, Tim, thank you so much for the inspiration and just, I'm so inspired to continue to grow my YouTube channel and fine-tune exactly why I'm there and what I could do to help more people. And like you said, make a bigger impact, which is why everybody who's listening to the show is listening. And so I appreciate you coming on and helping to share that mission with me and for everybody who wants to get the show notes and everything else Tim has mentioned and is going on.

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