



SPI Podcast Session #104 - The Dark Side of Online Business, Blogging and Success

show notes at: <http://www.smartpassiveincome.com/session104>

This is The Smart Passive Income Podcast with Pat Flynn Session #104.

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 two turntables and a microphone, Pat Flynn!

Hey, hey, what's up everybody! I'm so glad you're here and back with me today. And if this is your first time listening to the show, welcome. I'm just really excited that you're here because we're going to be talking about something that a lot of people don't really talk about in the online business, internet marketing, blogging space. And it's just going to be a conversation between you and me today.

I typically – well actually, for the most recent episodes, I've had a lot of guests on, great guests and they've shared a lot of amazing stories and a lot of tactics and strategies to help you with your online business. However, I wanted to talk just me today about something that is on my mind because a lot of it has been happening lately in different parts. And really what I'm going to be talking about here is the dark side of internet business and blogging.

And what I mean by that is a lot of us talk about how amazing it is to start an online business and to start a blog to potentially change people's lives and in turn change our own as well and be rewarded for actually making somebody else's life better, providing convenience to somebody through a product or perhaps information.

But it's not always pretty. And I think we all know that it's not going to be an easy journey and it's never something that happens overnight as far as success is concerned and there are a lot of ups and downs. However, I do want to talk specifically about a number of different things that could be considered the dark side of internet business.

And the reason why I want to talk about this is not just because there has been stuff happening in my business that I want to share that I think it is important to talk about but because if you're getting started or even if you have a business and you've been running it for a while, the best way to tackle these things and to sort of be prepared for these things is to understand that a) they exist, and b) how someone else has



potentially dealt with them or that at least somebody else has dealt with them so you don't feel like you are alone. And you aren't alone. And so, that's why I'm here for you today.

So I'm just going to go dive right into today's content. I'm going to bullet point a number of different things that I'm going to talk about that has happened in the past with my six years of doing online business that I think is really important to talk about.

I've mentioned a few of these things in blog posts from way back when I first started but I think it's important to pull these back out and actually, a lot of these have increased in scale at least for me. And as we are all growing our online businesses, you will notice that a lot of these things will become more difficult to deal with. And hopefully, we could talk through this together to not only understand that there are a lot of people that go through the same thing but to hopefully help provide you with a solution or a way to think about things that are happening with your business that might not be so pretty.

So the first thing I want to talk about and this isn't necessarily a dark thing but it is something a lot of people who are making the shift from working for somebody else to working for themselves that they don't think about and it's really important to know. And that is that you have to at least when you're first starting out, you have to make all the decisions in your business. You wear all the hats.

When I worked in an architecture firm, I was a drafter and I worked on Photoshop. That's all I did all day long and that was my only job. I didn't have to think about the legal aspects. I didn't have to think about finances. I didn't have to think about marketing. I didn't have to think about any of that stuff. My job was very specific and I did that job to the best of my ability.

But when I started to do business on my own, it opened up this whole new world that just really overwhelmed me. There were a lot of moving parts to the new online business that I had created at that time. And seriously, the best thing that I did was I talked to other people who were already doing what I was trying to set out to do.

So even though at first it might be overwhelming when you're starting your online business or even if you have an online business, now there are times when so many things are happening at the same time, you may not know what to do next or what decisions to make. The best thing to do is talk about it with other people, preferably,



other people who are already where you want to be, who have established online businesses or other people who are doing the same thing as you.

I mean you could talk about this stuff with your family, for example, if they don't really know what's going on. I mean they might be there for support. It might help you make decisions. But you really want the advice and the expertise and the wisdom of those who have already done it, so making connections with other people. And I say this over and over and over again. There is nothing more important than making connections because you cannot do this alone. And that was something I learned very quickly and it was thanks to a number of people in some mastermind groups I was in that I was able to get started and get off on the right foot.

So just know that you are going to have to make a lot of decisions that you wouldn't have had to make before. And as you grow and as your business expands, you're going to have to make new decisions. It's just like a lot of you know that I have two kids, a young daughter and a 4-year-old son. And I remember specifically when our son was born, April and I, my wife and I, we struggled with sleep and stuff because our son wasn't sleeping throughout the night. So we'd have to wake up in the middle of the night and do that whole thing.

Well then all of a sudden, once we felt like we started getting things under control, he started to sleep through the night, he started to not wail as much during the day then all of a sudden once we felt like we got things under control then he started teething and then all this other stuff started to happen. And then we had to make new decisions that we weren't prepared for as brand new parents.

And you're going to find the same thing when you start your business. And even as you grow and even when you get to a successful level, you are going to have to make new decisions. And a lot of these things I'm going to be talking about later in this particular episode.

So again, just keep a conscious mind that you have to make new decisions. And at first, you might have to make all the decisions but you don't have to make them all by yourself. Get help.

Now, the second thing is that – and I've talked about this many times especially when I talk about some of the biggest struggles that I had when I first started, it was actually overworking myself. I think when you're starting an online business or blogging, it could be so exciting that you can't think about doing anything but your online business or



your blog. And the issue is very serious especially if you have a spouse or other people in your life that you might be taking time away from. You need to really make a balance there. And for me, the biggest thing that helped was actually having a schedule.

Now, I know we always talk about breaking away from the 9-5, escaping the 9-5, and actually getting away from that schedule that's tying us down, you still need a schedule. If you don't have a schedule, you're going to drive yourself insane. You will either overwork yourself or not work enough. And you're going to confuse and blur those lines between personal stuff and work stuff.

And even if you're just on your own, you don't even have a spouse or kids or other people around you, you still need to create a schedule because I've seen it time and time again, people overworked themselves, they burned out, and the projects that they were so excited about, they don't get so excited about them.

And then it has become a chore and that's the worst thing. You don't want online business and blogging to feel like a chore. When you feel like that, you just – when you get that feeling, when you're like, "Uh! I have to write another blog post." I mean you've got to check yourself because you want to want to write a blog post, if you know what I mean.

So again, making sure that you're not overworking yourself, and I've seen it time and time again and you are spending time in places other than online business and blogging but at the same time, you want to make sure you have a schedule so that you do know when it's time to be in work mode and focused and things like that.

Now, another tough aspect of going out on your own, starting your online business, and starting a blog is – and this was huge for me. This was absolutely huge. I didn't – I felt lonely. And I think it's – I know it sounds weird but I enjoyed the part of my day when I was working the 9-5 job in an architecture firm when I got to chat with people next to me in the next cubicle or during lunch or whatever the case maybe. I needed those things during the day, those times to focus away from my work and just have a conversation with other people.

And yes, I know there's Skype and there's Twitter and Facebook and you're sort of having a conversation with other people but it's nothing like meeting in person and having a chat about something not related to work.



So you don't have other employees or other co-workers to chat with. And that was huge for me and I felt extremely lonely and I still do sometimes. But I'm very lucky to have mastermind groups, why I actually do get on the phone and I do go to conferences and I do meet with people here in my city in San Diego to chat with. And even though I don't do it every day, just knowing that those opportunities to talk to other people are coming up, that's huge for me. And I know it would be the same for you.

So I would recommend again, and I said this earlier, hooking up with other people as much as you can and that does wonders for getting rid of the sort of loneliness and the blues that can come along with internet business and blogging which of course if you feel that way, you're not going to want to do internet business and you're not going to want to blog anymore.

Now, along the same lines as far as something that I had when I was working 9-5 versus what I didn't have after I got let go, and that was employee benefits, the health insurance, the dental, and that whole thing, that was crazy to – I mean we take those things for granted when we're working 9-5 and then all of a sudden when we're on our own, we have to figure that stuff out.

Like I said, we have to make all the decisions and that was a tough one. There is the whole COBRA plan which is a plan that you can get on where you can pay a certain amount a month which is relatively high to keep the same plan that you had before if you got let go or weren't working anymore. But that was relatively expensive.

And a quick story and this was purely a matter of me not thinking things through all the way. And that's one of the tough parts about going off on your own is you're not going to be able to think about everything. And sometimes you might miss something but most of the time, you can recover from those things or the beauty of doing online business is that the risk is relatively low as far as how much money it might take to start and it's just a matter of putting the time and effort into it.

However, this story is crazy because when I my wife and I got married, we were so happy to find out that we were pregnant. We were pregnant and we were so happy and so excited. But that happiness sort of went away rather quickly when we discovered that we didn't have my wife under any insurance plan.



And so, things started to go crazy. We started to get her on private health insurance at the time and we couldn't because pregnancy was a preexisting condition. And because of that, she couldn't get on any plans and it was just crazy.

And after asking around and calling so many people and trying to figure this out, I had talked to my CPA who said, "Hey, why don't you get your wife to work for you in your business? You could have a business sort of group health plan and there are no restrictions as far as preexisting conditions when it comes to your business plan."

So we were all set to have that go through and it was literally a five to six-month process to get all of that set up. And we were cutting it really close. Our son was due mid-January. And so, January 1st is when that plan would have gone through. And then when he was born, he would have been covered and everything would have been great.

The only thing is my wife's water broke in December, late December. And it was just – oh man, it was – I vividly remember the entire process and everything. I mean I couldn't even – we weren't even prepared as far as putting the car seat in the car and all that stuff when we were going to leave the hospital. It was just nuts.

We were very fortunate that the pregnancy went well or that the labor went well. Everything went smooth and we were only in there for a couple of days. But because we didn't have insurance, because it was before the January 1st date when the insurance was going to kick in for my business and for her, it was still like \$8,000 to \$9,000 a day to be in the hospital.

And they do give a sort of a discount for those who don't have insurance and that was with the discounts. So we ended up paying – I don't remember the exact number, between \$15,000 and \$18,000 for those two days.

And we were very fortunate because he was almost a month early and if he had some problems, we would have been in there for much longer. That was a big reality check for me. So I always tell that story as much as I can to get people who are just starting out with business to understand the importance of just knowing all of that that needs to happen as far as health insurance and benefits and things like that. So just keep those things in mind.

And again, that's another thing to worry about when you're starting and going off on your own. So please keep those things in mind. It's very important. We got very lucky



however. I mean I could have gone bankrupt if we had to stay in the hospital for a couple of weeks like many newborn or early born babies do.

So now, we're going to get into – those were sort of the things that are different from when you do have a 9-5 job and you're working for somebody else versus working on your own. But now, I'm going to get into more of the specific things that are happening to me right now as a result of growing my business, putting myself out there. Again, so that you can understand that these things happen and be better prepared for when they happen to you.

And the first thing I want to talk about has been a huge issue, it is email. Email is crazy. I'm getting between 300 and 400 emails a day. Not just subscriptions and automatic emails and things like that but from people, up to 300 emails a day from people asking for help. It has been better since starting AskPat.com because a lot of those questions are the same and people are finding those questions or I'm able to provide those answers by just sharing link to AskPat.com and having them find the answer there. That was part of the purpose of creating AskPat.com.

But oh man, it's crazy. And I know for a lot of people who aren't – who don't have quite as big of an audience as I do, they are struggling with emails as well. And that's just something you have to be prepared for. And the tough part is that when I first started, I replied to every single email and I loved that because that personal touch is so important.

So if you're first starting out, I would recommend doing all you can to reply to every email. I mean that's time somebody took out of their day to send you a message to perhaps ask for help or to just say thanks. And you want to reply to show that you're on the other side and you are reading those emails. Now, I do read every single email that comes in. But if I were to answer every email that came in, I would not be available to write blog posts. I would not be available to record podcast episodes like this. I would not be available to be a husband and a father. That's just plain and simple what is happening now. I'm getting so much email.

And I'm not saying this to say or to make you feel bad for me. I don't want you to feel bad for me for getting email. It's one of those good problems to have because if you're getting a lot of emails that means you're – people know you're there as a resource. However, I feel terrible that I cannot answer each of them.



So there are ways that I have been working with, the systems that I have to alleviate the number of emails I get across all of my businesses actually. And so I'm going to share these things with you. Hopefully when you're starting out, you can implement a lot of these things or think about these things. And if you've grown to a point where email is a struggle for you then – I mean I'm still working on that and I'm just going to be honest with you, I'm still working on that.

Now, I have been throwing around the idea of having a VA, a virtual assistant help me filter through my emails. Perhaps be there to share links to questions that I've already answered before or to just reply and say thank you to those thank you emails that I get which I absolutely love. And again, I do read all of them just so I can only answer the emails that I need to answer.

And there's the question of, "Well, do I have this VA answer in my name or do I just have them answer as an assistant?" And I think if I were to go down that route which I'm thinking about, I'm actually talking to a lot of people who have a VA help them with their email, I wouldn't have my VA pretend to be me. That's – I don't dig that idea at all. But I do like the idea of perhaps having a VA filter through my emails and just sort of send me the ones that or allow me to only see the ones that I need to answer and that would I know help.

But there are a lot of strategies you can use without using a VA that can one. And one is similar to my solution with AskPat.com. AskPat.com has sort of become an FAQ. So you want to take your most frequently questions and have a way to quickly answer them or even better, answer them before people email you.

So on your contact page for example, you can have a list of your frequently asked questions and maybe even your top ten. I think you should know based on your emails that you get from your audience what those questions might be or if you're just starting out, you might have an idea of some of the most important questions that people have and you want to answer those questions on your contact page so that people can see them. They obviously go to your contact page looking for help or for an answer. You could share answers to questions that were already submitted by other people or that you know is on their mind then it's better for everybody. You don't get those emails and people get the answers right away instead of having to wait for you to answer them.

Now, another thing I've been doing that has been helping a little bit again but again, this has grown to a massive scale that this is even hard to deal with now is I mentioned on my contact page and I've very honest and upfront, "Hey, you could send me an



email. I do read them but I cannot reply to them as fast as I would like to. If you would like to reach me a little quicker, you can ping me on Twitter or on my Facebook page.”

And so, redirecting people out of my email into my social media streams helps in a couple of ways. One, if people see a question in my community on Twitter or on Facebook, more so on Facebook, a lot of times those people in my community, the amazing community of Smart Passive Income will answer those questions that come in for me before I even get there. And that’s really cool.

But I also love the idea especially on Twitter that people only have 140 characters. People only have 140 characters to ask a question. And they might ask in two or three tweets if it’s longer question but it sort of makes sure that I don’t get those massively long emails which come in and they still do come in, and it’s hard. Again, it’s hard. But those are some ways that I’ve been trying to alleviate emails.

And again, if any of you have any ideas or things that have been working for you, I mean I don’t know everything and I would love for you to help me out if you could in terms of email and a lot of these other things that you’ll hear me talk about in just a second.

But gosh, I want to reply to everybody so bad and I am exploring new ways and trying to be innovative with how I reply to emails and things like that using canned responses or [TextExpander](#) for the most common questions will help as well. But again, it is something I’m working on and it is a dark side because it does drive me nuts because I can’t answer them all.

But another strategy I’ve been using for emails, batch answering them. So I do not answer the emails as they come in typically. I will answer them in batches. So I’ll spend an hour every other day with so much time I have for email now, I spend an hour answering questions, boom, boom, boom, boom. I put myself in the right mindset to answer emails and boom, boom, boom I go through them and I batch process them as far as answering.

Now similarly, I get a particular type of email that is something you’re going to see once you start to become a little bit more successful. You’re going to build an audience and as a result of building that audience, people in and around your industry who are targeting the same audience will want to get in front of that traffic or they will want you to help them. And it’s tough. You’re going to get these JV offers or joint venture offers or you’re going to get emails from people who say, “Hey, I have this product that I



know is great for your audience. I would love for you to promote it for me and I will also give you a commission." And that is really hard.

I know that people out there have great products and you have to make a rule for yourself in order to be able to control those things because a lot of the products that come in from other people who want to get in front of your audience, a lot of them might be great but a lot of them might be not so great. And you have to remember, what is in it for your audience. How is this going to help your audience?

And a lot of times I am just not even going to consider these JV offers because I have other things I need to focus on and I know that the more I promote different things, the more I either confuse my audience and the more risk I take as far as promoting something that I've only just been introduced to.

You have to consider the fact that you are spending time to build trust with your audience and when a JV offer comes in and it might be really attractive especially the ones that say, "Hey, I'll give you a hundred percent commission." And the reason they do that is because they want you to get on board to get people to buy that product. And obviously, you would get a hundred percent commission but then more than likely, they're going to be promoting things to them in the future, there might be an upsell or a backend product that that person will make more money from.

But anyway, you' got to be careful because you built all these trust with them. The worst thing you could do is promote an offer just because of the commission and it will be a bad experience – if it's a bad experience for your audience member, it's not just going to be tied to that particular product and that product owner, it's going to be tied to you. And that trust is going to be gone and that is the most important thing that you have online is that trust that you have with your audience.

So I have a rule. I don't promote other people's products if I haven't used them before. And a lot of times when I say that, and that's my response, "I'm sorry. I can't promote your item. I've never used it before. I can't take that risk. I don't know what that product is about." A lot of times they'll say, "Oh well, I'll give you free access to it or here's a copy of my e-book or here's a log in name or username and password to get free access to it."

And typically I say, "I'm sorry. I don't have time right now. This isn't in my pipeline." And that's it. Now, if that product – if that person does a good job promoting that



product to me and saying how it's going to benefit my audience and it makes sense and it is something that I was looking for, I might explore that product and test it out.

That's how I got involved with [LeadPages](#). It just sounded amazing and it was a solution that I needed in my business and I wanted to check it out. I spend a lot of time with Clay and working through that product. Again, this is LeadPages and I feel in love with it so much that I'm now an advisor for the company and I'm just a huge fan of it and I'm happy to put my name next to it because I know Clay and his team are going to take care of everybody who picks up LeadPages.

And the cool thing about it is I know it could get people results and that's the most important thing. So again, trying to manage these JV offers that are going to come in, it's going to be difficult until you set these rules for yourself. Again, my rule is if I don't use it, if I haven't used it before, I'm not going to promote it. And if they offer me a free sort of preview of it or a free access to it, I'm not even going to consider that unless it's something that I absolutely need myself. So I would recommend doing the same for you too.

It helps when you know the person. And so I would recommend, if you have a product and you want to promote it on somebody else's blog and have a JV with somebody else, a joint venture partnership with somebody else, that you get to know that person first.

Seriously, these emails that come in, "Hey Pat, I know you don't me but I have this product. Here it is. Here's how much you can earn." I mean I don't know who you are so I think the best thing to do is try to get to know that person. And if you're receiving these offers in your inbox from people you don't know and they're not trying to get to know you first then again, I wouldn't consider those JV offers either.

OK. Next, I want talk about pressure. With over six years of consistent publishing of what I feel is high quality content here on Smart Passive Income, here on the podcast and on the blog, I'm feeling more and more pressured to deliver unique content every time I write or record something. And you're going to feel the same thing even when you just start. Sticking to a schedule but also delivering high quality content.

There's a lot of pressure there and a lot of it comes from those who you are delivering value to because they have a sort of expectation coming from you based on the precedent that you set. But I think a lot of the pressure also comes from ourselves. And



a lot of times, entrepreneurs will put so much pressure on themselves that they burn out or they tumble and fall apart.

And I think the best thing that you can do here is really be conscious about the goals that you're setting, how realistic they are and how – what happens when you don't meet those things? Obviously, it's important to try and meet the goals that you have and to create and set realistic goals. But when you don't meet those goals for whatever reason, that's not good but it's not bad either.

You want to obviously not try to fail but when failure comes your way, you have to understand that that's just part of the process and you either have to reassess how you're setting your goals or what you did to not meet your goal so that you can meet it the next time or perhaps you might have to make a pivot in your business too.

But with the pressure, I mean a lot of it comes from external but a lot of it comes internally as well and that's just one of those things that that seems to happen. It stresses a lot of people out. I know a lot of people who have started blogging who don't do it anymore because it became like almost a chore again like I had mentioned earlier. And you don't want it to get to that point.

And I think the best thing to do is just always make sure that you're having fun with it. Having fun with it and it takes a lot of pressure off of you as a content creator and always making sure that you are creating systems that alleviate these sort of bottlenecks in your process as well. That's where a lot of pressure comes from too. When you try to create content, there are maybe certain moments during that process where things get held up often and you have to understand what those points are in that process, those bottlenecks, so you can sort of open up these passage ways and make content creation a little easier for you or whatever it is you need to do in your business to relieve that pressure a little bit.

Now luckily and I know a lot people especially entrepreneurs, we often thrive under pressure. So pressure is not a bad thing. It's just something to again, be conscious about and to not have so much pressure that you paralyze yourself from actually moving forward.

Now along the same lines, there's the responsibility that comes with what you do as a content creator online, as somebody who owns an online business who is potentially influencing an audience, somebody else around the world. You have a responsibility and the more successful you get with your blog or your online business, I mean the more



responsibilities you take on. You become a leader. And I know I become a leader too as a result of that. I know I have more responsibilities.

I have an amazing, just incredibly supportive audience that will listen to my recommendations and take those recommendations but I can't recommend just any product. I can't just link to some random website. I can't say something without knowing how it will affect you, those of you listening or those of you who read my blog. And you have to understand that those responsibilities are going to come your way when you start blogging and also when you start to grow and become successful.

A lot of people can't handle that responsibility or a lot of people don't see it there or they don't realize it's there once they're there. So that's why I'm mentioning it because for me, I'm happy to take on that responsibility and put extra care into what I publish and recommend. But for some people, having that responsibility can be a little too much. So it's just again, it's something to keep in mind.

Now, I want to talk about something called the microscope effect. We all know a microscope is used to look deep inside something and analyze something. Well, the fact is the more influential, the more popular you become, the more people will analyze you, the more people will watch your every move, who will scrutinize everything you say or do. And this can be a good thing. This can be a good thing especially if at the top of your priority list is always providing value and putting your audience first or your customers first. That can be a good thing.

However because everybody is watching us, if we make a wrong move or say something that doesn't resonate with our audience or upset a few people, it could turn around and become negative for us and our brands and our reputation. And it's not like we have the paparazzi outside of our house all the time. I mean that's the extreme. These athletes and movie stars who – I mean they are literally watching every move and every step that these people take and that's crazy. I can't imagine that kind of lifestyle.

But today with social media and how quickly word gets spread in the blogosphere and online, we can get close to feeling that way. So you just have to be conscious that when you want to grow, you're also asking more people to analyze and watch you. And again, you could use that to your advantage by providing value and doing some amazing things that can help spread and grow your brand even further and help you generate more of an income.



However, it could also be a little scary because you make the wrong move and it could bite you in the butt. But if that happens – I said butt twice in a row, that’s weird. But if that happens, if you do happen to make the wrong move and you can’t expect yourself to be perfect all the time or at all really but if you say something that might upset your audience or just seems to get not the results or the response that you were looking for, I mean that is an opportunity for you to either man up, to apologize, or to kind of turn it around so that you can just be honest and authentic with your audience and say, “Oh, maybe I shouldn’t have said that.” Or you can turn those bad situations into good ones.

A lot of times what happens in our brand is a result of how we react to what we do, not just what we do. It’s sort of like that quote that is, “Life is ten percent what happens to us and ninety percent how we react to it.”

Now the next sort of unfortunate thing that happens when you start blogging and this can happen right when you start blogging or start an online business or anything where you are publishing an email address or have a contact form online and I think you might know where I’m going with this is spam, not the one you eat but the one you delete.

And a spam is a very, very prevalent problem in the online world. I don’t know why people do it. But we know it’s there. We get it in our email. We get it on our blogs. And over the course of the last six years, just on the Smart Passive Income blog, one of my many online assets, I’ve had over three million spam comments come through.

Now luckily, many of them or most of them, I would say ninety-nine percent of them have never seen the light of day. However, some do still spill through and it’s unfortunate and it’s just something that as you grow, you’re going to have to deal with more. And there are a few things you can do.

Now, I have an episode of Ask Pat that I’ll put in the show notes, if you go to SmartPassiveIncome.com/session104, you’ll see right there in the middle of the show notes a player for an Ask Pat episode that talks about – that answers a question that someone sent in via voicemail about how to control spam. And so, I’m not going to go over those exact tactics right now.

But again, that is another negative thing you have to worry about. When you create a business and you have a web property, more than likely you’re going to get spammed whether it’s a bot and somebody who’s just doing it automatically with a tool or



software or web application to make that happen or somebody who is actually in there posting those comments and promoting stuff in a way that is just not providing any value and it's just there for them. We see it on the social media. We see it on email. We see it on our sites as well. It's just one of those things that you have to understand that is going to happen. And like I said, the episode of Ask Pat that is on the show notes is there to help you deal with that.

So next, I want to talk about something and we're getting into the really dirty parts of internet business and blogging now, you're going to get to a point with your blog or your business where you produce a piece of content or you publish an article or you even come out with your own product, physical product. Somebody out there is going to copy it. Somebody is going to steal your idea and take it and use it and not give you credit for. It just happens and it's the worst thing in the world.

And like I remember people, when I first started blogging, who take my content, publish it on their own site and not even mention where the post came from. I found it through doing searches for my own content and seeing other people do it or post it. I've searched for videos that I published on YouTube and I've seen my own videos with my own voice published on somebody else's video channel on YouTube and then putting a link in the description for something that has nothing to do with anything the video is about or maybe it does but it's not anything I'd ever approved. And people are downloading my videos and putting it on YouTube as their own.

People are stealing my content. People are stealing my images using my name, my trademark on Facebook ads. This is what has been happening lately and it's driving me mad. It's absolutely driving me mad. And it takes a long time to try and stop those ads from showing so what happens is people either take a picture of mine that they find on my website or they just use an image and they use my name on it.

One time, somebody used an image of a woman who I would not want to show my kids, if you know what I mean, and put my name next to it and said something like, "Are you the next Pat Flynn?" with this image.

And I got a bunch of emails from all of you and I'm so thankful for all of you who showed me those things but I'm also very apologetic that you have to go to that level and have to let me know about it. Like that should not have to happen. I should not have to fix it but you should not have to let me know about it because it shouldn't happen.



It shouldn't happen but it will. And that's my point here. There are copycats out there. There are people who will steal your content and intellectual property. You can have trademarks in place, you can have systems and securities and password protections on your e-books but there will be copycats and people who steal your content and you just have to know that that exists.

Now, you should obviously do what you can to stop that from happening. But it's not going to solve all of those issues especially when you grow to a point where everybody is following you and you are under the microscope effect especially if you're doing things right because if you're only under the microscope effect and you're doing things right, people are going to see that and they're going to be like, "Oh, you're doing it right. I want to do it just like you."

And some people take that and then use that as inspiration to create their own things or to put their own voice on it or take it to the next level. And I get that. And that's fine. Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. I get that but copying for the sake of piggybacking off of somebody else's hard work without giving them credit, that's not OK. And I know you guys know that. I'm preaching to the choir here. But I'm just saying, it's going to happen and you have to expect it. So when it happens, don't feel like you're alone and don't get too upset but if you can, stop it.

And what I do on Facebook is either go to Facebook and I ask them and that takes a very long time because it's not very easy to reach them or I find out where those affiliate links are going to or what sites are being promoted using my ads on Facebook. And I'll go to those sites. I will go to Whois.com/whois and find who is ever behind that website and I'll email them.

Sometimes I even called a couple of people and I say, "Hey, I'm Pat Flynn. I see that you're using an ad on Facebook, stop." That's what I say. And I have an attorney just in case. It has never gotten to that point where I needed to have my attorney come step in and I don't want to have to do that because that's obviously very expensive. But sometimes people don't even know that they're not allowed to do that.

Now, I don't think that's the case. That's what they say, "Oh, I didn't know I was allowed to do that or I wasn't I allowed to do that." Yeah, right. They're just doing it and waiting for you to tell them to stop instead of actually asking permission to do it, which is a totally different story. And you can still say no if people ask permission and you're not comfortable lending people your content or your images or things like that.



It's your stuff and you have the right to make sure it's being put wherever you want it to be put.

As far as your content is concerned, in the past, I used to get really upset about people stealing my content and publishing it on their site. I would go to those people and I would tell them to stop. And more often than not, they would take those pieces of content down. But it's happening so often now, I just don't even worry about it. It's not worth my time. And I know that these people aren't going anywhere because of it. I do believe in karma and the people who copycat and steal, it's going to come back around to them.

Now going further, we're moving on to the next topic now. And again, these are just things I want to let you know about that it happens and this will happen too. You will get trolls. Trolls are the people on your site who leave nasty comments or they might email you or they might talk about you on other sites and say really nasty things about you. This is different from the people who may be respectful but telling you things that you could use or do to improve. People who may not agree with what you say or your opinions or how you are doing things but yet, they are still respectful and are saying those things because they want you to consider their thoughts and their opinions.

However, trolls are mostly in this game to stir up a conversation, a heated conversation to make you get on edge, to have you fall off your chair. That's what trolls are there for. And you have to understand that when I started getting trolls in my site, this was maybe three, four years ago like trolls who do really bad things and I'll tell you a couple of stories in just a second. It would eat me alive from the inside. I would get so upset. I would just think about these people and how nasty they were and what they were saying and I would get so defensive. I would go on the defensive and just reply to all their comments.

I would just get so upset and then I couldn't work anymore. I couldn't provide value to who I was supposed to be providing value to because I was spending all my time thinking about these people who I wasn't going to change their opinion. I wasn't going to make them stop by just commenting and replying to what they were saying. That's what they want. They want you to reply.

Now I remember back in high school, I used to get picked on. I was the little kid and I get picked on. And my best defense was just not reacting, not reacting. I get flicked in the ear or pushed from behind and I would just not do anything. And you know what? They stopped because it wasn't fun for them. If I had reacted and cried or did that



whole thing then they would have kept doing it. And understood that that was the sort of reaction which is what they wanted to doing those things to me. When they didn't get any reaction, they stopped.

Now online, you have the ability to not react and you should always take a deep breath before you react and reply to those nasty comments. But beyond that, you have to the ability because it's your own site, if it's happening on your own site, to delete those comments and you shouldn't feel bad about doing that. If it's not making you feel comfortable, if it's something disrespectful, I mean I feel like if there are any disrespectful comments on my site, I just delete them. I just absolutely delete them. It's my site. And your site is your site and you could do whatever you want with it. So you can kick people out. You can block them.

What I would do is take their email address which you can get in the backend when they leave a comment. Take their email address and put it in the black list on your WordPress settings or whatever platform that you use so that they can't leave anymore comments. But beyond that, you could take their IP address which you can also get and go to your hosting account and put them in the black list for your IP. So what happens is they won't even be able to access your site anymore. Once they figure that out, it's not going to be worth their time anymore.

And the interesting thing about trolls, I'm at a point now where I've grown a thick skin and you have to grow a thick skin in order to put yourself out there online. That's the scary thing. When you put yourself out there online, you – I don't want to say you're asking for it but you are allowing other people to see what you're doing and to judge you and you will be judged.

And you have to understand that not everybody is going to like what you put out. And I think that's good. You shouldn't want everybody to like what you put up because if you please everybody, I mean it probably means you're not taking bold enough actions. If you're just in the middle the whole and trying to please people on this side but also trying to please people on this side, I mean it just means you're not making that big of an impact. You don't have strong, bold decisions that may end up upsetting some people.

And of those people who you upset because of those clear, concrete actions or those clear, bold decisions that you make, out of those people, some of those people will become trolls, people who have something else going on in their life but then see what



you're doing because you're putting yourself out there and just start railing on you. And that will happen.

One guy in particular a while ago, he sort of stumbled upon my site and just because of myself putting myself out there more than any other person in this online marketing space by my income reports and all the things I was sharing, he just did not believe a word I said and used his forum and his sort of clout in the little space that he was in to only start a campaign against me. And what he did was he actually left a huge, I mean I would say, a 2000-word comment on one of my posts about how I was just a scammer, I was a liar, that none of this was true.

What was interesting to me was he said he had been doing online business for way more years than me and hadn't seen the same amount of results so it couldn't be possible. So I didn't obviously buy that argument and that was just flawed thinking. But that's just letting me know that this person wasn't really all there. And also, he said something about my shirts, "Oh, you couldn't possibly be making this much money if on your videos, you're just wearing vintage t-shirts that are old and look worn out." I know. It's crazy. But I mean these people are crazy.

And so what he did was he left this comment on my post, on one of my posts that was 2000 words long about all the stuff. And then all of a sudden, I replied to the comment. Typically, you want to ignore those people but this person was obviously misunderstood so I wanted to at least enlighten him on why his thinking was flawed and hopefully maybe see where he was coming from.

But then I started getting emails from a bunch of my friends online and the interesting pattern I noticed was these are all friends where I had either guest posted or had become a guest on their show. And all the emails from my friends said, "Hey Pat, there's this guy who left a 2000-word comment on my post about you and all these things that were just sound crazy." And I was like, "Oh man, this was guy was on a rampage." He copied and pasted his comment that was on my site and found everywhere that I was located online and pasted that comment, forums, blog posts, podcast episodes, the whole nine. And I couldn't believe that. I could not believe that. This person was just out to get me.

And I ended up wanting to chat with him on Skype but he didn't want to do that. So we were just chatting via email and I finally found out that he said, "You know, this is my style of marketing and I knew that if I were to take this approach, a lot of people would find me and come over to my site." And I was just like, "What? Are you serious?"



Oh gosh! Anyway, I started to talk more about what I did and more about the approach that I took with online business and I started to talk about how – I can't even talk about this anymore. It still bothers me.

And see, all this time I'm thinking I'm wasting this energy on this person. And luckily, this is part of the lesson of what might happen when you start to become successful online. So it's not a complete waste but I can already feel like internally I'm getting tighter and I'm just like – anyway, this person stopped what he was doing because I just stopped talking to him. And I don't even care anymore. I don't even care because I still get thank you emails. I still get thank you notes in my inbox, at my mailbox, handwritten letters. And that's what's important to me.

So I mean the big lesson here is trolls, they will come out of nowhere and take it as a good sign but also, don't give them the light of day. Don't give them any respect because they're not giving you any respect. And understand that every minute, every second that you spend thinking about these trolls is a second or a minute that you're not dedicating to those who will and should be benefiting from your content. So just think about that. That's something that Derek Halpern from Social Triggers said in one of his videos about trolls and haters and that has stuck with me ever since.

And finally, to finish up this episode, I want to talk about something that I've seen time and time again. And I'm also going to ask you for some help but I want you to be conscious about this because we're all here to become successful. We are all here and are growing our online businesses or just getting them started because we want them to succeed.

But I really want you to envision what life would be like when you do succeed because I have seen it. I have or had friends and people who I looked up to when I first started doing online business who I don't look up to anymore or they're not my friends anymore. And it's not because we just lost touch with each other or because we're all too busy. No. It's actually because they're not the same people.

Success changes a lot of people and it's unfortunate. And I want you to think about what would happen to you if you became successful because so many people – I mean we see this in big media all the time, these actresses and athletes who become incredibly successful and then they fall off the bandwagon.

I mean I'm not going to mention any names but there are people in the headlines today. I'm sure even if you're listening to this in the future, there are people in the



headlines that you know about who have become famous and then just have fallen off the wagon or have changed where they're not the same person. Success changes people. That's just what happens. You can't deny that.

When you become successful, you will change. When I became successful and I started generating an income online and started to become known in this world of online business and blogging, I did change too. The question is how will you change? When you have those opportunities, which ones will you take and which ones will you not take? And I think it depends on where you want to go.

And I think it's really important before you see success to understand what kind of success do you want? I think where people run into trouble is when they become successful overnight, for example. I mean that doesn't really happen but what I mean is they become successful faster than they can process it and they start to say yes to all these opportunities and start to buy these things without thinking about it and then they just crash and burn or they become different people because they let the success take them over. And you don't want to take – you don't want to let your success take you over. You want to take over your success, if that makes sense.

And so actually, I remember my wife and I, we had a deep conversation when I first started doing online business and I started to see significant income come in, we sat down and we talked about, "Well, what does this mean for our future? What are we going to do if we have a significant amount of money more than we had planned for? What is that going to mean for our family and our future?" And for us, we said, "OK, this is what we want as a family and for our future. If we happen to make more money, it's just going to happen faster but we're not going to change who we are, we are not going to change our values and why we do what we do, and always make sure family is at the forefront of everything."

And so far, things are going well. And that's why you'll hear me often on many podcast episodes talk about why my family is the why behind what I do. That's what keeps me straight. That's what keeps me from going out and buying these things that I don't need because do I need that for my family and how was that going to help my family? It's not.

Now, I'm not saying that your family has to be your why. Your why is your why and I can't tell you what your why is. You should know. But it's important to understand what that is and understand how success plays a role in your why. Again, I don't want you to



become successful without knowing beforehand what success should be like for you or your ideal success.

Let me ask you a question to finish up the show. The question is what does your perfect day look like? What does that day like? If you had a magic wand right now and you could just poof, be in your perfect day, what would you be doing right now? And I guarantee you, if I were to ask that question to the people who used to be my friends or the people I used to look up to who I don't even talk to or think about anymore because they just become different people, if I ask them that question before they became successful, it wouldn't match or align with what they're doing now. It wouldn't.

So my goal for you is to understand what your perfect day would be like and get things done to make that happen if you're not there already. And if you are, awesome. Make sure you keep it that way and don't change and become a person that you don't envision yourself being.

Now, I want to end the show by just saying thank you and that if you need help, I'm here for you as best as I can and the SPI community is here. We're all here together to help each other. If you go to [Facebook.com/SmartPassiveIncome](https://www.facebook.com/SmartPassiveIncome), join the Facebook community there. There are over 60,000 of us all trying to help each other out.

And I would love for you to, if you have anything to add to this episode because this is one of those where I feel like sometimes, the comments in a particular post or the comments in an episode will actually be more useful because they're your stories and your comments and your thoughts and so I want to hear what you have to say or if you have any stories as far as negative things that you've come across online by doing business online or blogging. Please feel free to leave a comment, [SmartPassiveIncome.com/season104](https://www.SmartPassiveIncome.com/season104). I'd love to hear from you there.

And I know we talk about all this negative stuff but I wouldn't trade what I do for the world. I'm so happy and so blessed to be where I'm at now and I just know that these things which we talked about in today's episode is just part of what happens at least today in the online world. And so again, I want you to understand that those things exist. But I don't want those things to stop you and hold you back from creating an awesome life and getting things done, from being happy and working toward that ideal day of yours.

Now to finish up, I want to thank our sponsors for this episode, this is Audiobooks.com. If you go to [Audiobooks.com/SPI](https://www.Audiobooks.com/SPI), you'll see where you can get a number of different



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Thank you so much for tuning in. Thank you so much for all the reviews on iTunes. And lastly, I want to leave you with this quote. And this is a Pat Flynn original for you so you can think about it moving forward and that is, "I would much rather live a life full of oh wells than a life full of what ifs." Thanks again and I'll see you in the next episode.

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