

Welcome back to the Flex Diet Podcast. I'm your host, Dr. Mike T. Nelson, and on this podcast, we talk about all things to increase strength, muscle performance, improve your body composition, and helpful, usually with longevity, all within a flexible framework without destroying your health. Today, we've got a little bit of a right turn.

We're talking with a Dr. Dan Pope. about the business of physical therapy and fitness training. Of course, we're meatheads. So we talk about fitness training here. Dr. Dan Pope is a doctorate in physical therapy, board certified orthopedic PT and a physical therapist. And he is also A meathead and likes great metal music too.

So what's not to like about him? I got to meet him at the NEC conference this past fall. Shout out to Jason Leiden and Conquer Athletes there. Was an awesome time and we thought, hey, we should have him on the podcast and continue this conversation. So we get into more of the business side, a little bit more of in person and more online business.

And we just reminisce about all the things we learned in school, which were great from the technical side, which you definitely need to be good at what you're doing. No questions asked. But both of us kind of shared a similar story that we didn't learn anything about marketing or communication or even how to write, or should you hire people to set up websites or how much of this stuff do you do yourself?

Um, so we get into all of that today in our conversation. Make sure to check out all of Dan's stuff. He is at fitnesspainfree.com We'll make sure to link to all of that and the program today is also brought to you by Element Which is my favorite electrolyte supplement. Today, I'm drinking the citrus version and my general rule of thumb for myself and clients is Some type of electrolyte in one liter of fluid in the morning And one liter of fluid with some type of electrolyte in the afternoon Obviously, you don't want to wait until 8 p.

m Before you go to bed to slam a liter of fluid. So be up whizzing all night using the bathroom But element's my favorite. It does higher sodium magnesium potassium I actually just really the taste like some stuff is overly sweet. You don't really want to You Drink it again. I've been drinking the different flavors they have for I think it's like three and a half years now.

It's well over three years and I still like it, which I can't say that about a lot of other beverage flavors. A lot of them I think are, there's something about them

where you get kind of what they call taste fatigue. They just don't really want any more of it, but I haven't ran into that element.

They've got different flavors too. So check them out below. I have the link there. And I believe you still get a free, eight pack sampler item with it too. So check them out. Big thanks to Dan for being on the podcast and enjoy this conversation more on the fitness and business side with Dr. Dan Pope.

[00:03:30] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Welcome back to the podcast. Thank you so much, Dr. Dan, for being here. I really appreciate it. Yeah, pumped to be here.

I had a good time hanging out with you.

[00:03:38] **Dr Dan Pope:** I know it was a

[00:03:39] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** couple of months ago, I guess, right?

[00:03:41] **Dr Dan Pope:** Yeah,

[00:03:41] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** then you see in October at Jason Leiden's place there in Milford, Connecticut. Yeah, it was cool. I really liked your presentation. I learned a lot. Oh, thank you. It was fun. Yeah, it was a good time. And I had read some of your stuff before, but it was the first time I got to meet you in, in person, which was, was very nice.

And it was cool to see, you know, physical therapists like yourself, Kelly Sturrett, who are talking about performance and not just like the sky is falling all the time. And this is also kind of related to our topic of the day of, How do you, for lack of a better word, sell things, even though I know when I say sell things, people are going to be like, Oh my God, a sales podcast.

I don't want to listen. But I think it's like, we're just talking before we hit record. I think there is a sub skill set within that of how do you explain to someone what the benefits are? And that may not necessarily be. Exactly what you do clinically day by day either. Does that kind of make sense? Yeah.

[00:04:45] **Dr Dan Pope:** Yeah, it's, that's a great point. Right. And it's interesting as I work at a place called champion physical therapy and performance big physical therapy, place sports performance. My boss is both kind of heavily involved in major league baseball. We see a ton of athletes and we also have a lot of, or kind of attractive to the newer graduate that wants to do a clinical affiliation or they do their internship with us, right?

And one of the things that happens and I hope the students don't mind it too much is that when they come there, we definitely try to do our best to be good mentors, teach them how to be better physical therapists. That's first and foremost. But the other thing they're kind of hit with is like.

We're going to record videos, right? We're going to show the world what we do. You're going to see the back end of my business. And what's a little bit interesting is that oftentimes students aren't trying to learn that off the bat. Some of them are, right? But that's not really the primary skill, but I always tell them like, you know, years later, this might become much more important to you as you start to open your own shop.

Right? So I tell them like doors open, you can always come back and try to learn. I don't know, I guess one of the things we were chatting about. Prior to recording is that a lot of physical therapists are kind of upset with what they do on a regular basis. They kind of sold this idea that physical therapy is a great profession.

You have your nine to five, you go home, you help people and that's all true. But you know, nowadays it's tremendously expensive to go through school. A lot of folks will graduate and they're forced to kind of work in a setting they don't want to work in just because they need to make more money. You know what I mean?

They're not seeing the patients they want. Oftentimes we're seeing a lot of people that are sedentary and they're not motivated and they're doing everything they can just to get them to move, right? When most people that are physical therapists love movement, they want to kind of program some cool stuff and get them doing some cool exercises, but literally they won't even like walk, right?

So that ends up being very frustrating for folks. Sometimes they end up burning out. The salaries don't necessarily match the amount of loans that you come out of school with. So eventually you kind of get to this point where you're just kind of unhappy with your profession. And one of the things that most of the physical therapists at champion have been able to do is learn how to work with the population we really want to be kind of valued for our time, right?

So we get to charge a little bit more, make a little bit more and we also have our own online businesses. So that's an additional revenue stream. Um, kind of see the patients we want to see and make our own schedule and our lives are good. They're pretty cool, but part of it is that if you want to develop that, you have to have a lot of marketing and sales skills. And I think for even just the average

person, we're getting bombarded with marketing and sales every second of our life.

It's like disgusting, right? Just kind of, you don't want to see it. It's ooey. It's gross. When you do see it. It's mostly the way

[00:07:28] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** most people do it.

[00:07:29] **Dr Dan Pope:** Yeah, for sure. It's slimy, you know, but for physical therapists, it's interesting, right? Because we do sell every single day. We're just selling this idea of exercise or physical therapy will help you and we have a ton of confidence.

We know it's a win win situation. If you do it, you're going to get better, right? It's going to help you. It's going to help me. And you have to really try to believe in yourself and what you're selling. If you're also trying to sell a course kind of like we do and you believe it's going to make someone better and it makes it a lot easier, but you do have to develop this skill, right?

And it's, and it's certainly a skill and it takes practice and repetition and education too. So, yeah.

[00:08:10] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah. And I, I agree with all that because I think it was interesting. So when I was at the University of Minnesota doing the labs, probably a 400 level exercise physics class, I would say even there back then, probably 50 60 percent of the people were pre physical therapy.

I did my undergrad a long time ago in the 90s at St. Scholastica in Duluth, Minnesota. A really good physical therapy program, and they only accept at that time something crazy like this. 25 people a year or something, some ridiculously small number. And the running joke of like an anatomy and physiology and every science class was everyone was free physical therapy.

And so I think it's interesting. There's a lot of interest in it, but then on the flip side, like you were saying, the handful of people I know who got done and graduated, they were kind of sort of shocked, like you said that, Oh, well now I'm working with general population who, Oh my God, like they don't do the exercises I tell them to do and I'm like, Yeah.

And so then it seems like they realize that there's this fast pivot to try to, you know, work with a different market. And then they realize exactly what you

said. Oh crap. Now I, how do I get people in like, Oh shit, I have to go learn how to sell stuff. Oh, I didn't go to school to learn how to sell stuff.

[00:09:24] **Dr Dan Pope:** And that

[00:09:26] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** seems to be an unfortunate path. I've seen a lot of people take, and the same thing happens with exercise fizza and other professions too.

[00:09:35] **Dr Dan Pope:** Yeah, for sure. So then you get these very frustrated physical therapists that are stuck in a career that. You know, it's unfortunate because now they have a ton of debt, and they're just, they feel trapped.

And that's not a place you want to be in. And I, you know, the other thing is I love physical therapy, and I think it can be great. And it can be very fulfilling. It just takes some additional skills and work that probably wasn't taught in school, you know.

[00:09:58] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah, where would you recommend people try to Acquire those skills.

Cause I feel like I kind of fell into a similar bucket. I got done. I was working for a medical device company for about 10 years and just, you know, started writing stuff. This is back when like blogs were good. And I feel like the only intelligent thing I did for marketing was I started a newsletter. I don't even remember what.

It made me do it. I think it was just forcing myself to, to write and create stuff. But other than that, I probably made every marketing mistake known to man, because I always felt like, ah, I don't know. I shouldn't tell people about what I'm doing. I just want to get content out. And then you realize once your income depends upon your livelihood.

So especially once I was looking at leaving there and eventually left. I was like, Oh, so I had to go out and hire a business guy who I was paying 2, 500 a month. And he was great. He was super helpful. I'd about piss myself to sleep every night cause I didn't have that much money to pay for it. But what I realized was the biggest thing he helped me with was just, just tweaking basic, you know, copy of my air quotes and just trying to get in the head of the person I was trying to get into the courses because I was still thinking, well, everybody knows this, everybody knows that, and this isn't interesting to anyone.

You soon realize that most of those things are not really true.

[00:11:22] **Dr Dan Pope:** That's funny. I think I had a similar, I don't know, start to you. And it's funny because I was just looking up to a lot of folks at the time. And I think it was, I was reading a lot of teen nation or testosterone on that or whatever you call it.

So I was reading Tony general core and Cressy and it's funny cause they're in my backyard now. I'm really close to Cressy and I'm friendly with Tony, which is

[00:11:44] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** great. It.

[00:11:45] **Dr Dan Pope:** Yeah, and then Mike, who's my boss now, read a lot of his stuff. He was one of the first to market guys. And I was like, you know what, I want to, I want to do this.

This seems cool, you know, I like sharing what I'm learning. So I just started blogging like you, because at the time, blogs were big, which is kind of hilarious, you know. And yeah, I, I also, I'm not even sure exactly why I got interested in it, but I was always into, you know, self help books, I guess, you know, and I eventually kind of bridged the gap into some marketing stuff because it's kind of similar.

And to be honest, I don't even know what the first book I read was. But I would listen to a podcast called I love marketing with Dean Jackson and Joe Polish.

[00:12:23] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah. Yeah. Joe Polish. Yeah. Yeah. You heard that

[00:12:25] **Dr Dan Pope:** guy.

[00:12:26] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Oh, Joe Polish is like old school, like, but he has like really Like really good stuff. I

[00:12:32] **Dr Dan Pope:** thought so.

And I started, you know, blogging, I started newsletter, which is kind of hilarious because I agree with you. That was probably the most powerful thing I ever did. And it still is, which is funny because that was over a decade ago at this point and just kind of started from there. I guess to backtrack and answer your question a little bit, one of the things I just talked to the students I work

with a little bit is to just figure out your goals, you know, because I think what you or I do, and you certainly can do this and I would say it's probably lucrative.

I don't know anything about your financial finances, but it's, it's worthwhile in the long term to do. But I think that people have to sit back and figure out what their long term goals are. Like, hey, do you want to be working with athletes? Is there a specific population you want to work with? Do you like doing one on one stuff?

Do you want to do like, I don't know, group training type things? Do you want to try to work with people online? What are your goals? Where do you see yourself doing that? Because we create courses, which is very different than maybe some of the other business models. So I always get people to try to think about what they want to accomplish long term.

So I think what happens to a lot of students is like, they see everyone's on social media, they're all posting stuff. They're like, I'm missing something. I gotta start posting stuff. They start posting stuff. Yeah, and like eventually they get tired of doing it and they don't they don't they're not growing or they're not growing towards anything, right?

So it's like what the heck am I even doing? And this is the opposite I did but you have to kind of begin with the end in mind, right? Like kind of your story my story. We loved what we were doing. We wanted to share We liked what other people were doing want to be like them so we start doing that whenever in my head was like eventually I'm going to have an online business where I sell courses and they're going to be these topics and these are going to my, my market and the people I work with.

I mean, if I did that in reverse, I'd probably be way further ahead of where I am now, but that's not really where you start, you know, and then you can start making kind of mini steps towards that goal, you know, and I think for a lot of, let's say new grads, the first thing is they want to basically get their skills kind of cemented as a physical therapist.

And you don't necessarily have to work in a sports clinic to start doing that. Just get a lot of reps. A lot of people start to develop your skills. Certainly it does help to be in a place has good mentors and maybe more of the population you want to see. But after you've really developed those skills for a few years, you can start to niche down a little bit, right?

So I always recommend people start with a given niche just because I think it's easier and then you really have to be part of this niche. So let's say I started mostly with CrossFit and just weightlifting in general, but mostly CrossFit. And I basically lived and breathed CrossFit. So I was in the gym all the time.

I coached there. When we had some sort of community get together, I was there, right? Everyone knew me. They knew I was a physical therapist. And then it's a very natural transition. If someone's hurt, they talk to you. And what's funny is that, When I was still CrossFit coaching at CrossFit Verve in Colorado, and this is about a decade ago.

It was pretty funny because I would teach a class, and one of the things we did in class I thought was a really smart thing is that we always asked if anyone had an injury before we started class. I said, do we need to modify anything, right? And it was always hilarious to me because no one would ever say anything, right?

[00:15:40] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Do they do the thing where they look at you and then they look around and see

[00:15:43] **Dr Dan Pope:** who else is raising their hand? They're doing like a pull up. They come off the pull up bar and they just do this. Like, how you doing? They're like, I'm good. I'm good, bro. I'm good. Exactly. And then after class, I'd have like this line, you know, would line up to ask me what's, you know, I was like, you should have said something before class.

What are you doing? And then it's, it's natural in that sense, right? They trust you and then you get to work with more of the people that you enjoy working with. Obviously there's a lot of strategies you can kind of do some weekend seminars if you want to. You can try to treat some of the coaches, which is really nice too.

You can kind of go from gym to gym, try to help the coaches out however you can. Yeah. And then from there you get the ball rolling. Eventually, you can start doing some more part time work where you're doing more cash based stuff. If you want to, you can kind of maintain that schedule. If you really want to, you can kind of branch out and decrease some of the outpatient in network work for insurance.

You know, basically, if you're in network, it means you accept insurance. If you're out of network, you largely don't handle it. The patient can just submit it themselves. Most of what I do is out of network. Just because I'm working with

people doing more like functional fitness type stuff and insurance doesn't care about that at all.

But eventually you can do a little less of what you don't like to do a little more of what you do like to do, right? And then at that point, it's kind of up to you. Do you want to open your own place? You want to work inside of a gym? Do you want to try to push your business to the next level? Do you want to try to hire more people?

There's all sorts of options there, right? And then if you're trying to be like yourself or me, it's a very different path. Right. You're trying to, I would say, first, identify a population that has a problem, right? And make sure that that problem is something that you're an expert solving, and it's not oversaturated, hopefully, right?

And then from there, you can start making content to try to attract this type of person and have, let's say, a newsletter or some sort of lead magnet where you get them into your system and eventually try to sell them this solution or something along those lines. So, very different kind of, Business strategies, but both of which are a nice way to start working towards a lifestyle that you enjoy more, you know

[00:17:46] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah, the things I I heard there too was A lifestyle that you actually enjoy.

I mean that if I were to pick like the number one reason I work for myself, that's probably that because I, when I was in the corporate thing for a while, it was, you realize that either your time or your money is always going to be fixed for the most part. Like there's some exceptions to that, but I'm like, okay, I can invest more time.

I might get a raise at the end of the year. Ooh, I might not. Ooh, our department only had allocated 6 percent total for raises. So. Ooh, I put all this effort in and I got the good pat on the back and yes, you did good, but oh, sorry, or, you know, budget's a little bit low this year. Or you may accrue more vacation time, but in some of the departments I worked in, we could only have two people gone out of the entire department at any one time.

I'm like, oh crap, so now I have to plan out my vacations a year ahead of time and schedule when no one else was there. And so I just kept running up into these kind of what I would call barriers Oh, crap. And for me, like, you know,

kiteboarding and windsurfing and stuff at that time, Oh, it's windy. Shit. I can't take the day off.

I have three weeks vacation, but I can't take, I can't take the time off. And so for me, it was just like, okay, how do I get out of this? And at least I can try to trade time for money. Right. And the running joke is when you start your own business, you get to pick whatever 70 to 90 hours a week you want to work, you know, but if I could move that around, I felt like I was.

Already winning, even if I wasn't making as much money. But I see the inverse of people who are just like, Oh, I just heard it's cool to be an entrepreneur and run your own business and that's what I want to do. It's like, Eh, like, why do you want to do that? Like, is it an impact thing? Is it an income thing?

Is it a time thing? There's no right or wrong. I think you have to figure that out first and then back up from there and, and decide like what it is you kind of want to do and then get the systems in place.

[00:19:44] **Dr Dan Pope:** Yeah. Really good point. Right. Cause people, otherwise you just kind of feel compelled to continue doing things, right.

Which maybe isn't really working towards an ultimate goal. I feel like it in some ways is probably should be part of education. It's like, all right, we're going to go into this. This, you know, this field, that field, this job, this job, you're like, well, wait a second. What do you kind of want to accomplish from the get go?

And then from there, let's start making decisions about where you're going. Probably should start in high school or maybe some education from your parents or something along those lines, you know? So

[00:20:14] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** yeah. And, and it's hard because like I never took a single business class. I never took an accounting class.

I never took a marketing class. I didn't really know anyone who was an entrepreneur other than like two family friends growing up. And so I think because of that for the longest time, my default was, Oh, you just, you just go work for someone. That's just kind of what you do. And having done that for a while, I started looking around and going, Oh, I don't, I don't have to do this.

And then the other part you brought up too, about just. There's never going to be a replacement for just being really, really good at what you do. And putting in the reps, if you're a trainer, you know, I worked at a, you know, average, you

know, fitness gym, worked on the floor for a while. I didn't like it, but I got a lot of good reps, you know, and just getting practice and then put a bunch of equipment in my garage, train people out of here for quite a while.

And just the continuation of you can slide by with not the best marking or hell even communication. But if you're really good at what you do, you're probably still going to be okay. You know, and I think a lot of times that that gets left. And, you know, like in your case, like just getting the reps, getting the practice, knowing what, Your customer wants being able to fix the problems, knowing what problems that are going to show up because you've seen this pattern 1700 times by year nine.

You know?

[00:21:35] **Dr Dan Pope:** Yeah, that is funny and super important. One of the things is a little sad and like Brett Contreras talks about this a lot and it is a little sad because kind of back when he was starting, cause I think when he was writing for T Nation, I was reading it. I think he was still an English teacher, right?

He was a math teacher. Yeah, the math teacher. And he was just. Like doing EMG studies out of his garage, right? Like I don't even know what he bought, like an EMG machine or rented it. And then he started like doing EMG work on glutes. Like he's just kind of like a psychopath getting started. But nowadays, and this is frustrating and I'm seeing this to a lot of my.

mentors, right? Is that you, if you're loud, kind of polarizing people like you, and you're good with marketing, you can become the expert in your industry. And back in the day, it's like, okay, Brett's case, he's like, all right, if you were a very, very good coach, and you had a very strong clientele, and you're working with a lot of Olympians, professional athletes, and basically, let's say, Some like, I don't know, media outlet, newspaper, writes an article about you.

And then it starts to grow from there. You had to be really good in order to be kind of acclaimed. And nowadays, a lot of folks are skipping that step. And I can't always say that I blame them because that's how the world works anymore. It works, unfortunately, up to a point. Exactly. So I, I detest social media.

I won't say that because I used to hate it, but it kept me from growing, right? Until I learned to embrace it and learn because we were. You know, providers first, we weren't entrepreneurs first, and what's comfortable is to do a good job. And what feels good is to do a good job with the people you want to work with.

And then learning a new skill feels terrible, right? And it's easy to kind of hate on folks that are good at it and don't have, let's say the skills to actually be a good trainer, but unfortunately the really good trainers that don't put any effort into social media. Or marketing or sales, they get left behind and that's unfortunate, but I think it is a world that we live in.

So we have to kind of embrace it.

[00:23:52] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah, I would agree with that. And it's, you've been around a long time too, just to see the changes over the years. I mean, I remember the first, God, I think it was the first article Eric Cressy ever wrote for T Nation. I remember reading his stuff before I even saw a picture of him before I ever met him in person or anything like that.

And I'm thinking like. This guy's got to be a trainer forever. He's got to be in his like forties or fifties. Then you find out he was like fucking 17 or 18 or something at the time. You're like, what the hell? You know, it's a grad student.

[00:24:22] **Dr Dan Pope:** I met him at a Joe DeFranco and Dave Tate and I want to say 2006 and I believe he was still in grad school and I don't think he even had his own kind of training business at that point.

I think he was just studying full time, you know? Yeah. Yeah. But yeah, a long time ago. But right. I think that one of the things that he did really well is that he kind of put the cart next to the horse. Right? Yeah. It's like, was he truly an expert at that stage? Like if I look back to where I was when I was a grad student, no, I didn't know what the hell I was talking about.

Yeah. He started to kind of push the things he, he did know. And I think that was good. And as he got better and he had more experience, he just continued to push and teach the things that he was learning more of. And I think he did a great job from that perspective. And that's what I try to encourage other people to do.

It's like, you may not know a lot, but if you read a research study and you're like, you know what? That was really helpful. This quote here, or this one part, this is what I took from it. Let's put that out in the world and it helps people. You do start to grow a little bit of like an audience, some trust and that type of thing.

And it's authentic. If you come out and you're a new grad and you're saying, I developed this new system for rehabbing low back. And someone looks at your

background, like a physical therapist who has like 10 years experience is like, who is this guy? It's ridiculous. The consumer might not know that. But yeah, I think that breeds resentment from people that have had some more experience and it's not a great way of going about it, you know?

So,

[00:25:57] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** yeah. And I think, you know, in Eric's case too, which I think he would probably admit that finding leverage through, you know, teenation at that time and just being able, and, you know, obviously Eric and Tony and all those guys are extremely prolific. And just having the right place in the right time to have an outlet where more people would see it too.

And I don't know if it was as crowded back then as it is now. And it just seems to me like content quality probably mattered a little bit more. And over the years it feels like that's kind of degraded back into this more circus sideshow type thing too. But, I would argue that, I know you sell courses, I sell courses.

I think There is still a fair amount of people who want to get, I'd say in air quotes, true education, pay for certifications, pay for courses, like pay to get better. And I would love to see some type of metric to see how the kind of dancing people on Instagram convert into courses. Because if I have one more random marker that I've never met in my entire life, who's like 16 years old, who sends me a DM who says, You need to do more 15 second videos to get people into your course.

I'm like, I don't know if a 15 second video is going to convert people into a 28 hour course. If it does, I'll be the first person on Instagram doing, you know, whatever. But I, I have my doubts.

[00:27:28] **Dr Dan Pope:** Yeah. I always wanted that too. One of the things I have, I'm a little lucky because I work with Mike Reinold, Dave Tilley.

And then I'm friendly with a lot of the people that have online businesses. So we get to see like what's going on behind the scenes. Nice. And yeah, and that's really nice. Right. But one of the things that we've kind of come to realize is that folks that have a huge audience can't always, or aren't always monetizing that audience.

You have these people that have tremendous audiences, but they're not really sure how to kind of capitalize on that. You know what I mean? And one of the things about my audience is that it's relatively small. So if you look at my

following versus, I don't know, like a squat you, right? My audience is way smaller and I really like Aaron's stuff.

I'm not trying to talk any smack whatsoever. I really don't know how he's doing financially at this point, but I'm targeting physical therapists, right? There is not that many physical therapists out there. There's a lot more people out there that exercise, right? So the market is enormous for people that exercise.

But the other piece is I'm selling something that's so niched down and specific to that physical therapist and solves a problem that they really need an answer to, that despite I have a, having a smaller audience, I'm still able to make a living doing it. And I would also encourage other folks that are trying to do the same to just find the audience and then try to serve them as best as you can.

Because just growing a big audience, I mean, the algorithm is designed so that when you put something out there, it has broad appeal. It doesn't have broad appeal, it's not going to spread and become viral. So if I'm trying to grow big, I want to put something out. That's going to be affecting a large group of people.

But the other part is that if I'm actually trying to sell a course, I need to be specific to that certain person. So I'm already at a disadvantage with the content that I'm creating. Right. In a day, it doesn't matter too much because I don't want. You know, it's funny because every once in a while I'll be talking to my Uncle Fred or something at Christmas and he's like, Dan, I went to your website and like, no, it wasn't for me.

I'm not sure what you're doing. I'm like, great. It's not for you, Uncle Fred. I didn't, I didn't need the website to serve you. You know what I mean? And so it does turn people away because it's designed for a physical therapist that wants to improve their skills or a coach that wants to improve their skills, work with injuries.

So a lot of ways I think that's okay but it kind of goes back to this idea of like, if you want to become successful. Right. And if the success is being able to, let's say, make enough money to support yourself, your family, whatever it is, then you have to create some sort of audience where you can sell something specific, you know, that hopefully solves their problems and having an enormous audience might not be the ticket, although that's what most people are trying to do, get more likes, get more following, whatever it is.

So,

[00:30:15] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** yeah. And I think having a smaller audience, like Kevin Kelly wrote an article called, you know, a thousand true fans. I don't know how old it is now, but. I've read that article multiple times. The first time I read it, I was just like, Oh, I actually feel hopeful. Like I don't need that many people to literally have a pretty good lifestyle.

Like you realize you don't need to have people know your name or even on Instagram or the small little niche following micro famous, whatever thing is, and still make a pretty good impact and, and be okay. And in some sense, it's actually less hassle, less tire kickers, less You know, ask holes in your inbox for stuff that they're never going to do.

That's not your target audience. Anyway, you don't know him from, you know, whoever I've had a few people where I'm like, you can just send me a question, but send it through the newsletter just so I can prioritize it. And I know it'll come to my inbox and I know it'll get through. And I've had a few people are like, well, I don't want to sign up to your newsletter.

I'm like, bro, you realize you could sign up, ask me a question. And then unsubscribe and I would probably never know it's just an easier way to filter people and in my head. I'm thinking if you don't want a free newsletter, like why should I take time out to answer your question? I'm not trying to be a dick.

I'm not trying to, you know, so I think having a smaller audience can be better. And then you want to talk to the people because at the end of the day, it's like, yeah, making more money is nice, but I think all of us want to feel like we're actually making an impact. And so you want to help those people who you know are out there doing good work or out there helping more people because that's like an amplifier.

To me that's like leverage. Like those people I'll help all day. You know, and it's the nice part of it, even going to conferences, you know, that everyone who went there paid money, gave up their time from work. They're there to learn. It's like, great. I'll talk to those people all day long as you want.

That's totally cool. Because I know that those people are committed. They have skin in the game and are working to, to get better.

[00:32:17] **Dr Dan Pope:** Yeah, for sure. You know, if, if you're spending money on something, you're much more likely to consume it. And my business model is kind of interesting because I try to put out so much free information for folks.

And you could probably learn the majority of what I teach in a lot of my courses and certifications just by consuming all the free stuff. Part of it is like, all right, if you spend some money on this course, you've devoted yourself, you have the time, you're probably going to sit down and consume it and learn, right?

Whereas if you just know that this information exists, but you don't have this pressure, right? You don't have that skin in the game yet, may or may not learn it. So yeah, funny.

[00:32:56] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And how do you do so most years? So how do you decide what to do for a newsletter versus social media? Do you have any?

Strategy there, or so in my case, my goal with social media is ironically to get people onto the newsletter.

[00:33:13] **Dr Dan Pope:** Yeah, well, completely, you know, and my kind of strategy from the get go is to get people on my newsletter. And I've been kind of fancy over the course of time with my funnels. If you've never heard of a funnel before for the listeners is that if you sign up, through my website.

Usually you'll sign up through a specific category. So let's say it's a shoulder related article. You may go onto my newsletter, but you're fed a series of emails are all shoulder related. So essentially I'm trying to educate you more about the shoulder, give you more stuff that you might like. And a lot of the reason behind that is I'm trying to help you as much as possible.

But try to build a relationship, right? Trying to give you the most valuable information as possible. And hopefully if you want to go deeper with me, I have a shoulder course, right? So I kind of push things from that perspective. I think social media in recent years, and it used to be my website, but it's funny, like website traffic over time has gone down and social media is going much, quite a bit more.

I still post on my website twice a week, every week, you know, I still very, very consistent with their blog posts, but their, their videos mostly most of my leads are coming from social media. And when I say leads, essentially, I have a lot of lead magnets. And what that means is that if you go on my Instagram right now, And you click on the majority of posts, but at least about 50 percent of them, at the end of each one, there's a call to action.

And it's basically related to the content you just consumed. So I may have a stat about rotator cuff tears, right? And you hopefully learn a little bit. There's a few clinical pearls within the post at the very end and say, Hey, do you want to learn more? I have a free guide on the rotator cuff, right? And then basically I trade.

People trade their email for this lead magnet and now you're in the newsletter and the goal behind the newsletter is a, it is a funnel. So hopefully people will take the next step and maybe buy a product, but they're going to hopefully be within my network now, right? And every week I stole this from Mike Ronald, who's my boss, but There's a lot of newsletters, right?

And email marketing a lot of folks will say is dead people don't really read their email so much anymore Although I don't think that's true. It's still like the large majority of my income comes from my newsletter I wanted to try to create something that people would actually read that I would actually read right?

Because how many newsletters come across and you're just like I don't care about this, right? Most of them unfortunately are Pretty atrocious. Yeah. Kind of garbage. Right. No one really wants to read them. So I've just tried my best to actually have this be something you can open up on a Sunday and learn some really good stuff.

Right. You can kind of, you know, it's funny because fitness pain free has become a media company, even though it's like, I'm a team of like one and then a couple of like contracted people. But it always has like a podcast, it has one YouTube video, it has a lot of social media, talks about new events that are going on.

If they don't apologize, eventually this will be on my newsletter at some point.

So I tried as best as possible, have it be almost like a magazine. We're excited for the next episode, right? You might not click on anything, but you'd really like to see what's in there. And hopefully you've got some like interesting clinical pearls in there. That you can get a little bit smarter each week and grow to become a better clinician.

So,

[00:36:31] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** yeah. Yeah. And I think that's key, right? Because you want to make it Usable at the same time and, you know, somewhat entertaining. I think like, I, I don't subscribe to too many newsletters now, but

I've been on and off a fair amount of people's lists and even, you know, people, especially more on the research side who I love dearly are great friends.

Oof, some of the reading bores me and I sit around and read the frigging PubMed for fun, you know? And it's, it's not that the information is bad. It's just, ah, not again. You know? And then you've got the other extreme where it's all entertainment and the stuff they have isn't even correct at all. And at least for myself, I try to ride the fine line of make it somewhat entertaining, try to deliver good information.

And then, especially this past year, I was just like, okay, because I kind of got a little bored writing for the newsletter. And the reason I got bored is I felt like, I had to sort of stay within one lane. And I'm like, ah, screw it. Like, if, if I don't enjoy the writing process, then no one's probably gonna enjoy reading it.

So I just said, okay make some of the emails sound a little bit more crazy. Like, which paradoxically takes me a lot longer to do, but then I was interested in it. Then I was like, Ooh, how can I make this sound better? How can I say this in a different way or tweak this line or change that line? And it made it more interesting for me too.

So I think if people are listening, you know, take a little bit of time, you know, put it into writing in some form, I think is not, Ever going to go out of style and just start wherever you're at. And if you're always kind of working on it, like it'll, it'll just get better over time.

[00:38:09] **Dr Dan Pope:** Yeah. I think to your point, you become more authentic as well, right?

So when I read. your newsletter, I feel like I'm hanging out with you almost. Oh, cool. Thank you. You kind of get a little tidbits. You had that one about metal music. I was like, I respond. I respond to newsletters. People always take it back. I think when I do that, I'm like, Oh, cool. I like metal music as well, you know, cause I will read through them.

But, you know, to your point, it's, it, it comes across. With your personality and your authenticity. And I think that's a good thing. And it sets you apart from others. You know, funny story. Do you know Dean Somerset? Oh yeah. I know Dean. Yeah. The, I call him the professional moose rider. Yeah. I said, hi. Yeah, he's great.

What's funny is that I read his stuff for a long time. And I never actually met him in person and we're writing a book together. And yeah, we finished up the rough draft and it's still like an editing process. It takes forever. We've been doing this for like a year now. It's crazy.

[00:39:04] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Books take forever.

[00:39:06] **Dr Dan Pope:** Yeah, it's my first one. So I'm, I don't really know much about how the process goes, but I met him in person and He has the same humor. Oh, yeah, it's it's very dry And then when he talks to you I would assume he would be joking the entire time and he does throw in a lot of jokes there But his facial expressions are not I'm joking around at all.

Yeah But it was funny because the first time I met I was like, I feel you know this guy like we're buddies I've been reading your stuff for a while I've heard people say that about Joe Rogan, like people don't know Joe Rogan, they just listen to him and they feel like Joe Rogan is their buddy, right?

Just because they're authentic, they give off their personality kind of deal. So I think that is valuable.

[00:39:47] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah. And especially in, I've never met, never met Joe, but his case fascinates me. Because he's so good at doing what he's doing and making people relate to him just for him being who he is, but on paper, you're like, no one should relate to this guy at all.

Like, multi millionaire, you know, is doing UFC commentary, doing weird, you know, smoking DMT on the weekend or whatever. Like, if you look at it on paper, you'd be like, this is not relatable to anyone on the planet, but yet he is. And that just fascinates me to no end.

[00:40:23] **Dr Dan Pope:** That is funny. He's like a jujitsu black belt, like a Taekwondo champion, you know?

But yeah, you can talk to him like he's a buddy. And it's funny because he really values that. It's funny on these podcasts, he's hanging out with his friends. Like you guys need to hang out with your friends more and you just have a good time, you know, and that really comes across. It's funny.

[00:40:44] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah. How often do you send?

Newsletters and for people listening, how do you decide that? Or what kind of, is there a process you go through?

[00:40:54] **Dr Dan Pope:** Yeah, that's a good point. You know, I think it depends entirely on your business probably. One of the things I do is I try to have once per week in terms of a newsletter. I think that's decent, but you have to have the content in order to do that, right?

So if you're producing one piece of content each week, you can say, okay, I do one newsletter per week. I've seen some folks do a little less frequently. So once a month or something along those lines, I think is okay. For me, I generally do once a week and then if I'm running a sale, I might do a couple extra emails on top of that.

But one of the things I've done more recently, and this is so I don't annoy my main newsletter, is that if I have, let's say my certification cause when my certification opens, I release a lot of emails with that. And if my traditional newsletter reader doesn't want to hear that stuff, I don't want them to have to.

So I've created like additional segments of my newsletter. So people that have shown interest, they go on to my waitlist, right? They sign up for my mini course. They get hit with a bunch of emails. And if they don't like that, they can still unsubscribe from that. So, I just don't want to be, you know, the thing is, what you said previously is that if you want to try to sell something, you actually have to sell something.

requires trying to convince someone writing multiple emails, right? I don't want people to be turned off from fitness pain free because I'm too salesy. But I think the fact of the matter is that you do have to sell in order to sell something, right? So at least for me, I will have different subsets where I email them more based on what they've shown me interest wise.

So if they've shown interest in like a shoulder course, then when I launched my shoulder course, they may get more emails. But largely I do once per week. And then when I have a sale, if someone is on a wait list for a product, I'll email them every single day and a couple of times on the last day, generally.

So I get most of my, I guess, strategies for that, starting from Jeff Walker. If you've ever heard him before he's kind of the, he's one of the first guys to put out a book about how to launch a product and he has an updated one recently. I think it was a couple of years old now at this point. Oh, interesting.

I have his original one and my boss read the new one and he said it's very similar, although I haven't read it. But that was really helpful for me. So, the readers are interested. Jeff Walker. I think it's called Launch or something along those lines.

[00:43:11] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Do you find most of your sales come through the newsletter versus social media?

[00:43:17] **Dr Dan Pope:** Well, it's interesting because, A, yes. A large majority of sales are coming through my newsletter. But in recent years, I've gotten a little bit better at trying to sell with social media particularly on Instagram, just because Instagram is going to be my, my biggest audience, my most engaged audience.

I've done this for the longest time. Although most of my leads come from social media in general. So you can make the argument overall that I might be getting most of my sales from social media because that's where they're coming from. It's just that my, my newsletter, when I released those emails, that's when people buy it.

What's sad and challenging about social media is if you put a post out that you're selling something, it flops a hundred percent.

[00:43:59] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah. I've noticed traction on those are just

[00:44:02] **Dr Dan Pope:** terrible, terrible. And there are some, some workarounds. So I've, you know, people who follow me have probably seen this, but I try to lead with value.

Right. Or something that's kind of interesting, right, motivating, give a little clinical context and then try to solve the problem with my course. It's on sale now. And what I'll do, at least for my certification, is that I have, one of the things that sucks is that as a student, you have a crazy amount of loans.

Right? And continuing education is something you really need at this point because people are trying to become better. It's just that they don't have the money for it. So I give people 800 off of my certification if you're a student, right? So what I've done a lot of is I will give a call to action for students say, Hey, 800 off and it'll be at the end of a valuable post.

Because if you just say, Hey, certification is open for enrollment and I do some of that and I've actually moved away from it. I might be used to getting, let's say

10 to 20, 000 people viewing that, but that'll go down to like 300, something crazy. Algorithm hates that. People don't like to be sold. So one of the ways I've gotten around that is value, very valuable content upfront that naturally segues into, Hey, I have the solution for you right now.

DM me. I'll send you more information and then I will try as much as possible to show people I'm a human being. So if they ask me a question via DMs, I do a video DM back and I say, Hey, what's going on John? Or sometimes the names are so freaking hard that I just like try the name and then afterwards, sorry, I know I botched it.

Yeah, the certification is over three weeks. You have lifetime access, whatever it is. Please let me know if you have any questions. I would love to have you on board or something along those lines. And I think it's. That has been very powerful because now you're basically face to face and showing people you do care and you want them to try to succeed, you know.

So I think that I've gotten a little bit better at trying to sell on social media. Although the large majority of my sales are still from my newsletter, but my newsletter gets bigger because of social media. So that's hard to know.

[00:46:12] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah. Yeah. And that's. Even with tracking, like, it's so hard to know, right?

So I've had the same thing. So on the last FlexDiet cert, I just put a series of numbers that said, you know, opening in, And knowing that my engagement, my views, they're just going to be utter, complete dog shit. But if somebody scans my account, I want that as almost a reminder, even if they're on the newsletter.

Right. So my thought of like back when you could do a lot more putting pixels on and tracking and retargeting, which you can, you can still do all that stuff now, but it's just a little bit more complicated than it used to be. Just that reminder of, oh yeah. You know, so I, I go back and forth with, should I just have it as a reminder, knowing my engagements can be crap and then just look at your total sales and go, I think that was better.

But even then, like people are like, Oh, but newsletters, you can, you know, track everything. I'm like, you can, but so if I had like this last round, I had four sales on the last day. My open rate was less. My click-throughs were basically almost non-existent. So by all metrics, that email sucked. But the last day I had four sales, so I don't know.

I got more sales, so I think we're good. It wasn't like everyone unsubscribed. Nobody sent me hate mail.

[00:47:32] **Dr Dan Pope:** Yeah, that is tough. It's kind of that scarcity thing. Who knows, right? It's, I've read some research that shows you have to be in front of someone somewhere between like seven to 10 times before, you know, a buying decision.

So, and that's hard because as a physical therapist doesn't like to sell, you're like, I got to get in front of this person 10 freaking times until they buy something. That's crazy. But yeah, it's like the more points of contact oftentimes, yeah, you might annoy people, but it also pushed them a little bit closer.

And I do this all the time. Like I try to think of myself and what my buying behaviors are, but I'll buy a course oftentimes because like it's someone I already like to listen to. I'm consuming their content and all of a sudden I get hit with a Facebook ad or Instagram ad that says sale ending, you know, six hours or something like that.

I'm like, you know what? I really like this guy and I've been considering buying this for a while. I know they sell this from time to time. I'm going to buy it right now. Right. And it's hard because did I, did he sell me with that ad? Kind of, but he sold me with years of me following him before. So it's like, and I'm not on this guy's newsletter either.

So it's kind of like, where did that sale come from? You know, it's hard to really know that. And like you said, you can pixel people and figure out where they're coming from that type of thing. You know? And then maybe it is like that ad must've been pretty powerful. And to be honest, I've read, I made the same exact ad that he made for my listeners and tried it.

I guess it's like, Oh, it worked for me. Yeah. Yeah. And you can see if they do sell right through Facebook, but it is tough. It's hard to track. It's hard to tell where people are coming from. At the end of the day, it's probably all important. I do the same thing. Like I, I'll plan out my entire sale for the week.

And I was like, all right, well, we got like 10 posts on Instagram, 10 story posts. Do they really need 10 more? Like, do I, do I need to hit them again? Right. And for that one person who sees that one slide, it may make the difference. You know what I mean? They're like, Oh, wow, this thing I have access to lifetime, right?

Lifetime access. And it might just be that one thing where like, Now I want this and that's hard, right? But yeah,

[00:49:34] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** yeah. And even like when you get into podcasting, that's even harder to figure out metrics, you know, because I just looked at my numbers, I use simple cast and I compare them to what Apple kind of has some numbers now internally.

And I'm like, these aren't even in the same ballpark, you know, so which one's right? I don't know, you know, and then it's like, did somebody download it? What if they never listened to it? How long did they listen? Like, what's considered a good listener, bad listener? And you look at like, you know, your growth numbers.

And so, After about six months. So the first six months when I launched it, I just didn't look at any numbers. Like, I don't care. I'm going to do this for a year, see how it goes. And then I started getting a little bit, probably too obsessed with numbers. And then I just, eventually we did some exit interviews with people who had bought the cert became one on one clients.

And it was fascinating because my, in my head, I thought, Oh, a podcast. This will be, you'll go out distributed via iTunes. It goes throughout all the players. Like this would be a good way to get people onto the newsletter. And what I realized was there's so many podcasts and stuff now. The distribution isn't as good as I expected it to be.

However, literally almost like 80 percent of the people we talked to who purchased something of higher value had listened to the podcast. So I then realized I'm like, Oh, so this isn't trying to get new people into your universe type thing. This is a conversion tool because like, like you said, they follow your content.

They like you, they listen more. They're like, Oh yeah, this guy or this guy, Oh, they have pretty good info. I'm going to buy a course from this Dan guy. I really liked this stuff. That was cool. And so then I didn't, I'm not as worried about the numbers now. Of course, do you want to reach more people and all that stuff?

That's great. But when I realized it was actually helping with. The conversions, then I was like, Oh, okay. So it's actually serving a slightly different purpose than what I thought.

[00:51:27] **Dr Dan Pope:** Yeah, that's a really good point, you know, and I should do a better job of trying to talk to the people who purchase and kind of see what drove them down the pathway of kind of engaging further.

Right. But I've heard the same exact thing. And it's funny because if you look at. Let's say Instagram a post goes out there and a big one might get let's say it's a really big one I get somewhere around 50 000 people engaging with it, right? That's enormous If I have a good podcast, what do I get like 500 people or something like that?

So it's not even close but People that are listening to a podcast And engaging with you and seeing the person that you are and the content you provide I think is exponentially more powerful and it's one of the reasons why i've really tried to capitalize more on youtube Because I think that video podcast where you're teaching someone like essentially when I create a video So that's about as close as an example of what you're going to get when you buy a course.

So I'm teaching you something on YouTube and if someone likes it, of course the same thing, but better. Right? And I think that's really powerful. A, the video piece of it, going deep, learning the personality and seeing what you're buying. Right? Because if I, you know, just, I'm like, Oh, I like this guy on Instagram.

Well, that's an interesting stat. I'm not thinking like, let's buy his course. Right. That's not kind of flowing through my mind, but if I have a specific question on topic and someone has a deep dive and I'm like, well, they have a full course on this and I'm like, Ooh, that looks juicy. You know? So I think there's something to what you had to say there, where you look at the numbers, you're like, why am I even podcasting?

This is so dumb. And then you realize like, Oh, this is actually super powerful. Those numbers don't reflect, you know, the power of this.

[00:53:09] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah. And then if you look at the aggregate numbers. You're like, Oh, that's pretty cool. You know, like, I don't even know what our aggregate numbers are, but it's getting close to, I think, 200, 000 or something like that, you know?

And if you think about that, if that is a real number, who knows in the podcast world, some people get that in the first five minutes of their show. But if you go, that's actually a lot of people, right? And if you even think about a newsletter, even if your newsletter is small, let's say you've got. 5, 000 people

on your newsletter, right, which you can, I would argue if they're high quality people, you could actually make a pretty good living doing that.

If you put 5, 000 people in a room for like a concert or something like that, and you have the potential of talking to that many people each time, it's way bigger than what it seems like, because I mean, I, I won't say his name. He's a good buddy. I was talking to him the other day and I said, Hey, you know, just out of curiosity, you know, how many people do you have on your newsletter?

It's like, ah, you know, it's kind of small, you know, it's like 105, 000. I'm like, Holy shit. You know, and his open rates were, you know, 47 percent in the 40%, you know, what's up, like, oh my God, you're crushing it, you know, whatever. But the people he hangs out with have a couple of million people on their newsletter list, you know?

So it's easy to get caught up in this. Oh, it's never enough. Thing and the reality is you're, you're probably better off than what you think.

[00:54:29] **Dr Dan Pope:** Yeah, for sure. And I, I've been collecting people on a newsletter for probably a little over a decade now, and I've collected probably somewhere in the ballpark of 20 but in terms of people that are actually around, it's closer to 10, 000, right?

Yeah. So, and I, I update, I do list hygiene. So I'm constantly trying to, you know, if people are not responding, I'll try to send them an email and say, do you still want to be on here? And I'll take them off the newsletter. Because you don't want to be sending people who aren't engaged. Plus you pay for those people to be on the newsletter.

But yeah, you don't need an enormous newsletter. Like you said, it's like a thousand true fans, a thousand people to pay you a thousand dollars. You're a millionaire, right? So yeah, it's one of those math things.

[00:55:14] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah. And as we get close to the end here, do. Do you have tell us a little more about your one year certification, who it's for.

And I'd be curious on the price point from two perspectives. One, do you have intermediate courses along the way? It was one of the things that I'm trying to figure out is I basically go from like zero or like a couple of smaller niche courses that are a couple hundred to, Hey, here's a certification that's like a thousand dollars, which probably not the best marketing strategy there.

Although it's, it's been okay. I'm not really complaining. So do you think you need. Kind of sort of a little bit of a stepping stone. And the second part of that is with all the massive amount of information that's coming out now, do you think bigger courses, certification type things will. Still be a thing into the future, or will it be kind of something that people may not think is worth paying for?

[00:56:13] **Dr Dan Pope:** Oh man, a bunch of really good questions there. I can only guess. I'm a big fan of it was Ryan Dice initially, but digital marketer, digitalmarketer.com. I bought a lot of courses through him to learn about marketing, which I highly recommend anyone trying to get into this game. He's

[00:56:32] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** got really good stuff.

[00:56:34] **Dr Dan Pope:** Yeah one of the things that he talks about is that if you're dating, right, on your first date, you're not like, hey, let's get married, like, that's probably not gonna happen, you know, or if you ask that, you're gonna scare the majority of people away, and that's the same idea, if the person's like, first point of contact is like, hey, buy this huge course, thousand bucks, they're probably like, well, you're a psychopath, like, So they obviously are big fans of trying to warm people up and offering small, low level offers.

And that is basically a qualified lead and then trying to eventually ascend those people. So having these stepping stones, I've kind of tried to do that with my business over the course of time. So I have multiple smaller courses, somewhere between a hundred and like 400, right? And I've also have a very, I consider low barrier to entry, but it's Subscription.

So I don't think subscriptions are a low barrier to entry anymore. People are kind of scared of putting their information for something that's recurring. But I offer probably my most, I would say for the money the most effective program is my insider service. Like I've been updating this for years and years and years.

The amount of content in there is ridiculous. You can get physical therapy CEUs, a bunch of them for a dollar, right? It's extremely cheap. And that is my entry point for folks that they want to kind of take a, the next step what I will say is that of all the courses I've offered, the certification, the insiders, like all of the mid price courses, I've made way more money on my certification over the course of time.

So what I've done is that I've just tried to make my certification better and sell that more. So there's something about the commitment of like a thousand bucks,

you know, I've messed around with kind of higher prices, low prices, but for me, that's worked out well. Right. And I can't say that's going to be the best for everyone, but when I've looked at my past, that's what's performed the best.

And I've just really. Made my efforts more towards growing that as a result, you know, There's another question there was the next one after that

[00:58:36] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah, do you think like people will still be willing to pay for higher level certification or I guess I get to say like higher level Education systems that are packaged.

[00:58:48] **Dr Dan Pope:** Yeah. I'm always scared of this. I don't know if scare is the right word. It is in a lot of ways, but I'm always looking for where is the next place to be if something shifts, right? And I think for someone like you or I. People are going to need to learn how to do specific things. We can always help with that, right?

But where are they moving? Do they want, let's say a podcast, they want something that's written, do they want a digital course, do they want to be taught in person is AI going to take this over the course of time, right? Are we going to have electrodes attached to our brain that feed this information to us at some point?

I think one of the things that's happening right now in. I'd say our industries I think for physical therapists, maybe a little bit less, is it's completely oversaturated with so many people doing this and that's made things a lot harder. You really have to stand out. We had an opportunity to chat with Kelly Starr the other day and what Kelly did was like incredible at the time.

He posted a video once a day,

[00:59:50] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** right? And that was like, holy God, nobody was doing video and nobody in his area was doing video period.

[00:59:56] **Dr Dan Pope:** And that was

[00:59:56] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** nuts.

[00:59:56] **Dr Dan Pope:** And at the time I was like a video every day. This guy's crazy. That's so much. I post like 10 to 15, sometimes more pieces of content on across all my social media every single day.

Right. And I have not blown up at all. Like Kelly has, I think it's just, it speaks to how things have changed. Right. And if you can be ahead of the wave. And you know where the eyeballs are going next and you do a really good job of capitalizing on that I think you can kind of win will I be able to sell courses for the rest of my life?

I hope so man. I love it. Like it's great I really enjoy doing it but I'm always keeping an eye on the trends. I always look at how much I'm making. I talk to my friends, how our sales been, how can we serve our audience better, right? Stay ahead of the competition. What are the other folks doing? Is something out there performing better?

Do we need to start trending towards what other folks are doing? That's challenging because I think most folks want to open up a sub shop and just like come in every day and sell the same sub and make a living. I think unfortunately for us. In a sub shop too, right? You probably have to keep innovating and I don't know what that next innovation is if I had to say it's it's basically Videos video podcasting I think a lot of the written word can still be powerful But it's more powerful to be in front of people.

I personally try to give as much value up front as I can. I'm giving it all away for free and hoping people like people like me enough to give me money essentially and organize the learning. And also try to potentially make money off of individual mentoring or consulting or something on those lines.

So I don't know. I hope so. I really like what I do. But we'll see. I'm sure it's going to change at some point. Hopefully we die first, so I don't have to worry about it.

[01:01:42] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah. Yeah, it's something I kind of worry about a little bit too, because it's, and I hope it doesn't change. And I go back and forth.

Some days I'm just like, Oh my God, what am I doing? What if this, if people decide they want to pay for this course, you know, it's like, Oh, I'll figure out something else to do. I'm sure I'll figure it out. But on the flip side is I like designing a course. I don't know if you'd agree with this or not is amazing and hair pulling and all that stuff at the same time, because you put.

So much time and effort into it. And you're trying to make it a complete system and the amount of time I put into it, and then just to film it and to get it done

and to have it released and to get the feedback and make it better. But in a weird sort of way, kind of like writing a book, like I like the, that type of process.

And if I could go back in time, like the biggest mistake I made is I should have paid for more complete systems up front and got really good and said person's system and then moved on to the next thing, instead of thinking I could. You know, piece all of these things together. And yes, it would have been more expensive, but I literally think that would have saved me.

Like years for sure.

[01:02:52] **Dr Dan Pope:** Oh big time and I'm cheap. I'm so freaking cheap, right? I'm also like a do it yourselfer bootstrap kind of guy too. Mm hmm One of my my biggest regrets I'll say is exactly what you said Like why the hell did I think I could figure this out? Yeah, my own better than expert who's already where I want to be that has this course that just took all of the information and said, boom, there it is.

You got it right there. So it is funny. And I think from a sales perspective, that's powerful for the person selling it. It's like, you're going to, and I say this in my market, we're going to accelerate your career. By five years in 12 weeks, right? And I truly believe that because I'm giving you all the tools that I've learned over the course of time and condensed it into this one event.

And there's been, oh gosh, I, I, do you follow Alex Hormozy at all?

[01:03:39] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah, I just started following some of his stuff again. I know last the. His early stuff years ago annoyed me, but I find myself actually liking most of his content now. And maybe it's just because his content pops up like every time I'm in social media.

So

[01:03:55] **Dr Dan Pope:** he's good at marketing. Oh yeah. And what I will, this is, there's been a lot of folks like Alex over the course of time, he's the most recent one. But just implementing several things that he's talked about has just really elevated my business to a new level, which is crazy because part of it is that YouTube just kind of starts serving you up these videos and you click on this, click on that.

If I had never clicked on his stuff, I'd be in a very different place right now, you know, than I was, you know, it's crazy. You had mentioned putting together a

certification is like one of the most frustrating things you had ever done. And I agree with that. When I first put together my certification, the first go around I put it all together.

I did so much sales work. I had all of these emails perfectly planned. All the social media was perfectly planned. All the ads were perfectly planned. I remember I launched it. And I was like five days into the launch and no one bought it. And I was like, are the links broken? What's going on? And like, I didn't do very well the very first time, right.

It was, and I tell you what, the amount of work that went into that and like the, the effort was so sad to see the back end, but I stuck with it and now it's by far the most lucrative thing I do. Right. And it's become much, much easier. cooler. It is tough though. I think as people, we don't like to continue pushing in a direction where we can kind of continually failed over the course of time if we stick with it.

I don't know. There's a lot of fruit at the end of it, right? So, yeah, I, I think that if you stick with it, and you're just stubborn, and you keep learning, and you just keep acquiring skills, you can succeed, right? For the average person. Mike, my boss always says this, I agree, I am not a hyper intelligent person, I've just learned.

Over the course of time and outworked other people I was kind of willing to do the things others aren't and one of the things that Makes me feel good And kind of stealing from Alex Ramos II if something's hard good. It's meant to be good or something is hard good It's meant to be hard like it's it's actually kind of delivering on what it's supposed to to give right?

And the other part is that if it's hard other people aren't gonna want to do it Like, Oh God, this is really hard. Great. Cause everyone else is not going to do it now. And I'm doing it. So when I do it, it's like, wow, look where Dan's at. And if I keep doing that over and over again, then someone here is trying to compete against me.

It's like, Holy God, look at all this stuff. Dan has done on there. Be able to do that. And it's like, I encourage people obviously to try to pursue their dreams. But I mean, for me, that puts me in a phenomenal place, right? Like, wow, Dan has put in all this work over the course of time, did all the hard work for someone who's just getting started.

That's very, very daunting. And it's beneficial for me. Right. But yeah, at the end of the day, you could do that as well. It's just gonna take a lot of time and effort and work.

[01:06:45] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah, I had put all the time and effort into the cert. I had everything outlined. But the intelligent thing I did is I tried to pre sell it.

And I literally, because the product I did before that was a complete utter freaking failure. I tried marketing it for six months, ended up super far in debt, did not work at all. It was too confusing. No one knew what the hell it was. So I went to the thing with Ryan Lee and he's like, well, maybe you should do a certification.

I was like, ah, I don't want to be one of those like douche bags out there, like selling the certification. And he's like, but trainers will pay for certification. They may not always necessarily pay for continuing information. And he's like. And you're one of the douchebags who actually has good information and has the background to actually teach it.

And I was like, Oh, okay, sure. Whatever. But even then I was so nervous. I, I launched it to my list and I said, okay, here's what it is. And it's going to be 250. And I think I had like 32 people purchase it, which is great. And then now I look back and go. Oh my God. I sold that for two. And they literally have like the same course now that's all been updated and everything else.

I just said, yeah, I just, just take the new one and everything. So I probably could have done it a little bit more expensive than that, but you don't know, right. And at least enough people said yes. I was like, good, I'm going to go ahead with this and, and finish it out. So that was good. Yeah. It's awesome.

Congrats, man. That's cool. Thank you. Yeah. Yeah. Last question here. And then we'll have, have you talk about your certification where people can get ahold of you, follow you, all that wonderful, cool stuff. If someone is trying to transition, we'll say, into an online business, this could be, you know, kind of private physical therapy stuff, this could be fitness training, out of all the stuff you know now, what would be kind of like your top four things that you would kind of tell yourself when you started, or kind of the four things you wish you knew at that point that you know now?

[01:08:36] **Dr Dan Pope:** Yeah, I think the big one is to find a mentor, find someone that's in the place where you want to be, right? For me, I had an

opportunity to work with, the guy's name is Mike Reino, he's my boss, he's a physical therapist, and I wanted to become a bit of physical therapist, so that's one of the main reasons I ended up working with him, but probably a bigger reason is that I wanted to learn how he ran his online business, because I did the same thing, right?

So I had the opportunity to both learn how to be a better clinician, As well as to grow my online business. And he was one of the best in the, I still, he's one of the, I still think he's one of the best in the business at this point. And I've had the opportunity to collaborate with him several times.

We're currently working on a mentoring thing right now, which is really cool too. So I would say that you want to try to find someone that's in the shoes of where you want to go. Right. And maybe even before that. I think first you got to figure out what you want, right? I think that's daunting but it is important.

So if you want to work in a specific population, right? If you want to work a certain set of hours, make a certain amount of money, you know, live somewhere specific kind of have an impact, right? Because I think that is one of those things that It's hard to measure if you're having an impact and you're helping people, that's a tremendous thing.

It feels great. Right? Is that what you're trying to chase? Are you trying to chase money? And then write some of this stuff down. Start working on it. And the other thing I tell students is that you'll figure this out over the course of time. I mean, every year I sit down and think, and I do this more often every year, but like, am I moving in the right direction?

Right. Are these still my goals? Am I, am I still going where I want to be? And it's fine if that changes. If you change every day and you're just completely changing your business model every week or that's, that's not good, right? But I think it's okay to come up with something, work towards it for a period of time.

If it's not in the right direction or you maybe want to change a little bit, then that's fine to do that. <https://otter.ai> And I spent a lot of time trying to figure things out myself when I shouldn't have so this sounds a lot like a sales pitch, but I think you should buy Courses from people who are doing what you want to do and they've laid out how to get there You know, that's like a no brainer But yeah, you know, the money was a big thing for me.

But the other part is that if, if eventually it's gonna put you in a place where you're happy or make more income you know, a lot of courses will teach how to

make more, more money. And I think they're successful because I don't even know where I heard this the first time, but you're selling money at a discount, right?

Buy a thousand dollars course, you make 10,000, whatever it is. So, it makes sense. You just have to put the time and effort into it. So I would say those are my three big ones. Yeah.

[01:11:10] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Awesome. And the fourth one, would you say communication via direct like a newsletter? I'm putting words in your mouth now.

I

[01:11:16] **Dr Dan Pope:** think, I think newsletters are super duper powerful. When people ask me when they're, when they have a social media following, right, and they're trying to build a social media following, one of the first pieces of advice I give them is to start a newsletter, right? Start collecting people to a newsletter.

I usually tell them like, what is your target market? Who do you like to work with? Do you have any idea about what type of product you want to sell? Right? And it's something that's super value is create an avatar, right? I'm sorry, I'm kind of, you know, going off on a different topic here, but figure out the exact person you want to serve, right?

What do they look like? What age are they? You know, what do they like to consume? Which websites they go to magazines? Do you like working out? Where do they work out? What are their problems? You know, what are their hopes, their dreams, their fears, right? And then you can basically make your social media wrapped around what that person is, you're talking directly to them, right?

If I wanted to sell some, something to you specifically, I would want to know more about you. Specifically, right? So the idea is you have this avatar you try to serve them and then if you have a specific You know problem that you solve you package it up and eventually you sell it to those folks. So Yeah, you got to find a niche and figure out those problems But yeah, find a market and then serve them fully and then hopefully you'll be able to profit, you know,

[01:12:35] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** awesome And where can people find more about you?

Website, tell us about the certifications, all the wonderful stuff, how they can get out of your newsletter. Well,

[01:12:44] **Dr Dan Pope:** fitnesspainfree. com is my hub. My biggest social media platforms are Instagram and YouTube. I'm currently going bananas with YouTube. I have a crazy amount of content going there. I like the, the platform quite a bit.

Let's hope I don't get shut down like Mark Bell's power project.

[01:13:01] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Right. I saw that and I was just like going, Oh my God. I, I actually went in and I'm trying to back up my YouTube channel as we speak. I mean, I've got it backed up on a couple of drives, but I would have to go find those drives and anyway.

[01:13:14] **Dr Dan Pope:** Yeah, for sure. If people are interested in my certification the way I kind of sell it is that if you want a university degree in working for, working with painful athletes in the gym, that's basically what I sell, right? If you go to my website and download my mini course on my homepage, there'll be a place to do that.

If you really want, I can send that information to you and also find that on my Instagram, my highlights. It says mini course but that's the best way to learn more. You go into my funnel and I'll just email you to death until you buy my course. Just kidding, but it will launch again in another two months, two to three months.

So if you're interested, that's the next enrollment period. So not sure when you're going to release this podcast, but you know, maybe the timelines will match up.

[01:13:57] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah. Awesome. Well, thank you so much for all your time and all the content you put out. And it's, yeah, you do have like a lot of really good content, which is nice.

So even if people are just interested in that. Yeah. Like I usually tell my advice to people is just pick a few people or even just one or two people in each area and just kind of follow them. Like you don't have to be updated on this. There's a lot of great physical therapists, but in my opinion, just pick a couple and just try to learn their stuff really well.

Buy their system, pay them the money, like learn their system, learn how to do it. And once you've implemented that, you get your reps in. Yeah. Then maybe move on, you know, learn from someone else that that's great. I think that is. Much better than, like we said, I was trying to run around, piece everything together because I was too cheap to pay for anything.

[01:14:44] **Dr Dan Pope:** Yeah, I agree with you. I, I, a lot of students have that problem. They're basically listening and they're following like, like basically like an extreme Republican, extreme Democrat. And they're trying to take that information and figure like, how am I going to come up with a system when everything is at parallel, right?

It just. So pick a couple of people you jive with and learn from them. It doesn't have to be me, but you know, I think that is great advice. Awesome. Thank you so much. Really appreciate it. Yeah. All right. Thank you for having me on there. I I was always looking forward to this since we first chatted a couple of months ago and it's happened.

So cool. Yeah. Thank you so much.

Huge thanks to Dr. Dan Pope for being on the podcast and breaking down a lot of the business stuff there, which is great. I know it's a little bit off topic, but I think it's one of those things that is super important that one of the things I try to do is people like Dan and others who are really trying to make a difference and make an impact and have great information.

I want to make sure that gets out to as many people as possible. Hopefully we can drown out all the other crazy gurus and all the other noise online so that everybody wins in the end. So make sure to check out all of his information, we'll link to it there, or on his social media to his website, which is [fitnesspainfree.com](#).

If you're interested in looking for an electrolyte supplement, my favorite is Element, which is L M N T. Check them out below. I really enjoy them. I, we will be headed down probably in South Padre when this is out, or at least coming back from there. And in warmer environments, I find drinking electrolytes with fluid makes a huge difference.

I know that sounds like really common sense and most people probably know that, but it's one of those things that I've realized a lot of the fatigue I had was just being dehydrated. And also if you're on the water, so like I would be kiteboarding, you lose more fluid. You don't really realize it. It's one thing if

you're in kind of a closed environment and you're sweating a lot and you notice it, but And those other hot environments, I find you don't notice it quite as much.

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Thank you so much for listening. And we really appreciate it. Talk to all of you next week

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