



Transcript

Episode 035

“The one with John Carlton”

ilovemarketing.com

- DJ Hey everybody, it's Dean Jackson.
- JP And the infamous Joe Polish. That is my name I believe.
- DJ I love it. I love it when you say that. And guess who we've got on the phone with us today?
- JP The notorious John Carlton.
- DJ Wow. I like that, the infamous Joe Polish, the notorious John Carlton.
- JP And Deano. It's like the outlaws of direct response marketing. This is good.
- DJ Perfect.
- JP Okay. Dean, usually you start, and I'm going to let you do that again, so go ahead. Set this bad boy up because all of our I Love Marketing listeners are in for a total treat, so go ahead. What are they – what's going to happen?
- DJ Here's the thing is that I can't believe that it's taken us 34 episodes to get John Carlton on the phone with us here, but we've had some amazing guest on the phone here, but what we've have today is we've got John Carlton, who has really been in the marketing world on the front lines for longer than both John and I have, but...
- JP 30 years.
- DJ But at the feet of two of the greatest marketers, J Abraham, and even more closely with Gary Halbert, so John's got some incredible experience and tales from the front lines, and I know we're going to get some great insights from him, so we're really happy to have you, John.
- JC I'm glad to be here. I was kind of insulted too that you guys had taken so long to get around to talking to me, but I think I'll get over it.
- JP Let me say a couple of things about John, just to kind of set this up. If you've never heard of John before, I'm going to ask John to actually explain who the hell he is and what he knows, and all that. Me and Dean are going to ask him different questions about that. What I will say I I've known John for a long time. He was probably Gary Halbert's closest friend that I'm aware of in the marketing business, and maybe just in life, and I met John through the ways that I actually met Gary Halbert. We've known each other for many, many years. I think he's got a degree in psychology.
- JP Yes. And what I will say to all the listeners is he's truly one of the smartest marketing minds on the planet, and I would highly encourage you to really pay attention to everything we're going to share in I Love Marketing, and hopefully after this, you will read John's blog, which is at john-carltonblog, is it?
- JC No, john-carlton.com. Thanks.

- JP And we're just going to get into it. We're going to get into the psychology of marketing, what marketing is, all that sort of stuff, but John is really an expert in just understanding human behavior, human motivations, knowing how to persuade, and this goes way beyond marketing, and copywriting, which are two of his biggest skill sets, but there's only so much we can talk about today, and a very special treat for those of you that are coming to our I Love Marketing live event, which is going to take place here in a couple of weeks from the time we're recording this. John will be there, and he will be speaking on the third day, which is a special day that we're doing for my clients and Dean's clients. And so those of you that are coming – and I know a lot of our listeners are, you will have an opportunity to meet John in person. So, this is perfect. So, you want to ask the first question, Dean, or would you like me to?
- DJ I always want to hear the very beginning. Joe and I, we started up this whole broadcast, the very first episode, we started talking about the very first time we knew we had fallen in love with marketing, and I'd love to hear from you how it started for you, because you've got, like you said, over 30 years of marketing experience, and I'd love to hear the highlights, the biggest insights that you've had over that time?
- JC That's a beautiful question, Dean, and it kind of cuts to the heart of why I wound up in this kind of quasi guru position here later in life. Marketing to me was a savior. Joe, I think you and I kind of share this; we were taking similar paths, but I was nowhere. When I began my marketing career, I was living out of my car and sleeping on friends' couches. I had lost my job in Silicon Valley as a commercial artist, lost my place to live and my girlfriend, who as soon as I lost my job, I lost her, all within like a month or so, and I was just cast out of the world, and I started some epiphanies that if I was going to change my life –and I was like in my early thirties at this time, so I had spent a long time being an original slacker. And Think and Grow Rich literally fell into my lap, and I started pursuing these avenues of marketing, and for me, the main thing that happened was I decided that I was going to become a freelance copywriter before having met a freelance copywriter, before even understanding what the gig was, other than I suspected that if I learned how to write, that there would be businessmen out there who needed what I had. Because I had been on the artist's side of it; I had been a commercial artist, putting together catalogues, direct mail catalogues, but not doing any of the writing. So, I really had no clue when I was going out, so I needed to educate myself as I went. So, just to compact this, I was in Los Angeles, and I learned how to speed read, I went to the library and read everything in the Dewey Decimal System from I think 600 to 900, which is marketing, sales, writing, salesmanship, business, all that stuff, and just ploughed through it thinking that this was going to get me up to speed when I got my act together, went out and started knocking on the doors of agencies in Los Angeles to tell them I'm a freelancer and do you need any writing done? And the odd thing that happened guys, was that instead of catching me up to what the people who already had jobs in advertising, the guys in charge of advertising agencies, and the writers, the art directors, instead of catching me up, doing that stint at the library for two weeks, speed reading through all the stuff, put me light years ahead of everyone, because the first realization I had was that nobody studies marketing, and I realized that if I studied marketing, I had an opportunity, and it was such a simple way of doing this. I had an opportunity to zoom ahead, to really get going on this thing. So,

I've lost all my fear that I was going to be this newbie wandering out into a field of experts who were going to clean my clock and laugh at me and stuff, and instead, very quickly, I waltzed in with some real swagger into these business meetings with long time agency heads and stuff. They just will let them know what was going on and I very quickly became a go to copywriter in Los Angeles. Through that, I met Jay Abraham. When I first met Jay Abraham the reason I went over to his office was I was going to hit him, and try to knock him out, because he had advertised in Los Angeles Times that he needed writers, and he asked for people to write in, and after two weeks of waiting – I did write in. I didn't know who Jay was; nobody did at the time. He was under the radar. And he sent me back my samples, and I curt little note saying, "You're not right for the kind of advertising or the kind of marketing that I do. Why don't you read some Claude Hopkins, and Think and Grow Rich, and listed a few books," which I had already read multiple times. I read Think and Grow Rich five times in my first year. I read Claude Hopkins monthly. There was only two Claude Hopkins books, and I read both of them constantly. So, obviously Jay had never looked at my stuff. So, I found out he lived nearby, I hopped in my car before thinking, and went over there with the idea that I was going to confront this bastard, and still not knowing who he was. And I was intercepted by the office manager who sat down, we started listening, I got to meet Jay, we actually got along great, and I traded for the next couple of years free writing to Jay in exchange for free run of his office, and that's where I got to learn how high end consulting goes on, what Jay was doing. I met Gary Halbert at Jay's divorce party, and as I've said, when I met Gary Halbert, he was the most arrogant and full of himself guy I had ever met in my life, and we hit it off immediately, and I turned my back on what was a budding career. I actually literally turned my back on a million dollar career as a copywriter, and what's called the A list, which is the largest mailers in the world. Because Gary offered me a chance to go off with him into the more entrepreneurial side, and it took me a heartbeat to decide. I went away from the corporate angle and wandered off with Gary, and he became my mentor, and later my friend and partner. And through all of this, just to round out this story I've told, is I took notes the entire way because I just got in the habit of keeping a journal and plotting my path and keeping notes on how I was doing, and those notes, and the fact that I kept kind of testing things in the real world, meant that after about 10 or 15 years of doing this, I suddenly knew enough to be able to legitimately sit down in front of anyone else, whether they were a veteran, or especially a rookie, and give them solid advice on what they should do, on what worked for me, what didn't work for me, what the pitfalls were, and maybe help them shortcut their adventure either as an entrepreneur or as a freelance writer, or as a combination of the two. I think I kind of over answered that question, but falling in love with marketing for me, and Joe, I'd be curious if you agree with this, it really saved my life. And I made a vow in my first year as a freelancer, because I was going month to month, guys. I mean I had one month's rent left in my account, and a rattle trap car, and I was working on a typewriter with a sticky F key, and I had no clue what I was going to do, and I had to invent it fast, and I did it in the first month. And I vowed that if I made this work, I was going to be generous, and I was going to help as many people as I could to break through this initial veil of just not knowing what to do next, not knowing what the first step is and what the next step is, and once I figured that out – and that's what I based my career as a consultant and a teacher on, is helping people get through that first step.

- DJ I think we would be thrilled to hear when you say that you got your initial education by going to a library, because he's very fond of saying there's no excuse for being broke because in every town there's a big building with lots of books called the library that you can go in for free. I love that you even know the Dewey Decimal numbers from 600 and 900, and that's where you focused, just go there.
- JC Now that I've said that, I probably need to hop on Google and double check on that. Joe, wouldn't you say that marketing actually saved your life too?
- JP Yeah. In a lot of ways, I've always said marketers are saviors because I take it very seriously that the people in the world that know how to communicate and persuade others to follow a certain path are the ones that blaze the trails, are the ones that put inventions and good things into people's hands, and without them the world would be lost and hopeless. I believe that marketing not only saved my life – and that's not to say I wouldn't be surviving and I wouldn't be doing some ridiculous job or something, but not only did I believe it saved my life, I believe it made my life because it gave me insights and perspective and gave me a plan and a path, and to use some Dan Sullivan words, once I learned marketing, it really gave me direction, confidence and capabilities, because I didn't really have any. When you go back to my original business venture that I stayed with for more than three months was my carpet cleaning company, I still was dead broke for the first couple of years, and I was just trying to figure out how to make the business work, and had it not been for marketing, I would have had the technical skills of how to clean a carpet and get paid low wages, but for the most part...
- JC But you wouldn't have that breakthrough moment.
- JP No, not at all. And that breakthrough moment came from reading Gary Halbert's newsletter and getting the whole concept for one, and understanding the difference between sales and marketing, that no matter how good of a sales person you are, you're limited by the clock in that marketing is the ultimate leverage, and then learning how to can and clone myself through a sales letter, and through marketing methods that still work very well in today's day and age with the internet and everything, that wasn't around when I first learned this. So, marketing is everything. One thing I wanted to ask you, because I've said...
- JC Hold that thought on just one thing. I just popped onto Google and put in Dewey Decimal System, marketing, sales and advertising, and the fourth reference is an interview on AWAI with me.
- DJ That's fantastic.
- JC Yeah, marketing is 658.8 and advertising is 659.1. So, yeah, it was between 600 and 800.
- JP I don't even know what I was going to say, other than marketing is so critical and so important, and – okay, I know what it was. You have a degree in psychology, and I believe marketing is applied psychology, and I wanted to get your perspective on that. Because some people think of marketing as hype and headlines and whatever they think of it as. I think of it as ...

JC This is my favorite subject about advertising because I had a formal education in psychology. I graduated in 1974. Yes, I know. That was a long time ago. I'm still a hip, clever dude. I'm not an old guy, but it was a long freaking time ago. The thing is, most of what I learned in that stage of psychology is either obsolete, has been proven wrong or has just faded into time, and this is before NLP was even a glimmer in what's his face's eye, and I came out of that thinking that was a big waste of time because it wasn't applicable. So, on the side, I have had a habit- this will all tie in, guys – I have had a habit since I've been able to read, to go to the newspaper, and I had two favorite parts of the local newspaper, which was letters to the editor and Dear Abbey, or Anne Landers, which was the advice columns – actually, I think they're still around. And what they did was that was kind of street level psychology. Anne Landers and Dear Abbey, those old advice columns, people would ask questions and even as a kid I started realizing that this meant that there were people out there that are just as clueless as I am, and an even bigger revelation, more clueless than I am. So, that was helpful to me. But the letters to the editor was like an insight into what would motivate a person get so excited about something that they're going to sit down at the typewriter, type out a letter, put a stamp on an envelope, mail it into the editor, because they're either that mad, or that happy, or that interested in a certain subject. So, by the time I had gone into – you actually started looking at how to persuade people through writing, and how to reach people and how to communicate with them, I had already had a little bit of street level psychology, and I started hanging around with guys who had street level salesmanship, both Gary Halbert and Jay Abraham had done door to door advertising. So, that's where you are staring somebody in the face, a total stranger that you've just knocked on their door, and you start to learn real quick about what's going to work, what's not going to work, and how to carefully go through the steps of persuasion. Gary Halbert, for example, if he didn't make a sale, I think he was selling encyclopedias, I can't remember. He had a trunk load of product, and if he didn't make a sale sometimes, he was going to sleep in the car that night. So, you're talking about the motivations that guys started using or knew through the ages that often weren't written about because what I found is that what I learned from these street wise salesmen didn't often jibe with a lot of the marketing books that I was reading, which were more academic, which were more about these kind of airy fairy kind of ideas of how to do it and stuff, and I realized...

DJ Theories.

JC Yeah, theories and stuff. And started realizing to heck with that stuff, to heck with academics. I got a little bit out of academia as far as psychology goes, and I have a lot of respect for guys who spend their lives studying it, but for marketers, the real stuff is where the rubber meets the road, which is in the street, which is dealing with people face to face. So, I started interviewing guys, and I found those few books out there where there are people with street level psych chops, even some of them don't realize it. And I developed this saying back when I first started teaching people how to write, that I would rather take an illiterate streetwise salesman, and teach him how to write, rather than try to teach an English professor how to sell, because the basic stuff is how to sell; it's salesmanship. The way that salesmanship is communicated, either through the verbal word, through the written word, online, video, on TV, on the radio, those are just vehicles for the basic persuasiveness. Once you understand that, that there's no magic in the media, in the medium that carries the message; the magic

is in the message, is in the persuasive value of what you're saying. So, again, I would rather deal with somebody who was illiterate, and teach them how to write, than somebody who knew how to "write" and try to teach him how to sell, because that's a harder path to hoe. Does that make sense?

JP Makes total sense. And Dean, do me a favor and don't talk while I'm trying to talk here, okay.

DJ Okay.

JC I can't tell you guys apart.

JP We were talking before the call that we're starting to mind meld, and I don't think we look like each other yet, but nonetheless. There is a huge difference between writing correctly – I guess when I say correctly, I mean to get As in school, versus writing to sell. And a lot of people refer to you as one of the greatest writers in the world. I hear that all the time from people in the marketing world, one of the greatest copywriters, you're one of the highest priced copywriters whenever people can hire you, and you even take on clients and all that stuff.

JC That, by the way, Joe, was Gary Halbert's and my biggest competition, was we had the marketing side down, and there are two kinds of really good copywriters out there, the ones who know how to sell, and then the ones who know how to sell and are also excellent writers. Now, I'm not going to name names, but Gary and I were very concerned with the art, the craft of writing, much more so than other marketers, who are also extremely successful. And the reason it's kind of an inside thing is that a lot of writers, there is a different camp of people who care about the writing, as opposed to people who look at writing as a way to get their message out. And this has nothing to do with how successful you are; this has to do with how you feel about the craft of writing, about the brotherhood of scribes that goes back to the guys doing hieroglyphics in the Egyptian tombs, and back to Sumerian Cuneiform clay tablets, and stuff. There's something about that. And Gary and I used to really care about the writing, and a compliment from him on something I wrote carried so much more weight than the money coming in. I say this because you don't need to be this kind of writer; you don't need to love the craft of writing, but when you do, that can be an advantage, as long as you pay more attention to how to sell first, if that makes sense. So, keep the novel in the bottom drawer until you've got your business cooking, and then you can go back and write the great American novel.

JP I love that too because I actually – and I feel like a complete dumbass around certain types of individuals, because I have to really think about what is a noun, what is an adjective, what is a verb. Honest to God. I'm like what is that?

JC Joe, totally relax about that. Back when I was in school, I got shuttled out of English classes only because I was writing stories on my own. I wasn't good at it, but I was obsessed with sci fi and horror, and Edgar Allan Poe and Bradbury and Isaac Asimov, and I tried to write those stories. So, the teachers were so impressed, they put me in a corner and said, "You just write today." So, I don't know anything about grammar. I never learned about transitive verbs, I never learned the difference between a pronoun and a noun. Anything I know about that I learned on my own way after the fact as an

adult. Gary wasn't up on that stuff too. So, the stuff we write will make an English teacher faint because I use a lot of slang; I make up my own grammar rules. I'm the guy that invented using the three dot ellipses a lot, and having half sentences as a paragraph, and moving down, especially online, to give a lot of eye relief to stuff. I just make up stuff. I've got rid of semi colons. I haven't used a semi colon in 30 years, and that freaks out English professors because the semi colon is a huge part of grammar. So, you don't have to understand grammar or know that stuff. When I talk about writing, I'm talking about the high end communication value of choosing that right word. One of my freebie things that I give out, Joe, that I know you know is out there is called Power Words; it's a report I slapped together. I just went through a lot of the stuff that I'd written, and pulled out what were I considered power words and power phrases. So, the one example I give is that use a freaking thesaurus. This is rule number one for anybody listening to this, go out and buy a real thesaurus. Don't use the one online with your software where they're using the PC, go out and buy a book, a thesaurus; the Heritage thesaurus is fine, the Miriam Webster is fine. Have that. The top writers all have a thesaurus nearby that'd dog eared, and the reason is that by choosing the right word, a single change of words from a boring dull word to an action verb, can change everything. I had a quote from Lisa Wagner saying that one word change in a headline, like transformed results in an ad she was running before, just to bring it home. And that power word thing was – I'm sorry, Dean, go ahead.

JP No, talk over, man. I don't want to hear Dean.

DJ You and I had a conversation with Neil Strauss about that, about the use of words, words that have like a real feeling to them.

JC Yeah, Dean. And one of the examples I give, because I don't have the power words here, but take the word "walk". Words like that, walk is boring; I walk down the street. How about, "I floated down the street in a cloud of bliss"? How about, "I waltzed down the street"?

DJ You just used the word swagger is another one of those words.

JP I want to see...

DJ Transitive verbs are Joe's favorite kind.

JC What's that?

DJ Talking about transitive verbs.

JP Are you trying to be funny? Are you trying to make me look dumb or something Dean? This is not cool.

JC Joe, there is no such thing as a transvestite verb, so just ...

DJ Transvestite verb. <laughter>

JC Why don't you jackasses continue, let's go.

- DJ John, you know what would be great is if you shared – when you left your fast track career and you went off to follow this path of the entrepreneurial coach of Gary Halbert, I bet you’ve told Joe and I some of the stories that – I’d love to hear your favorite story, almost like a case study for some of the projects that you worked on with Gary, and some of the lessons that you learned from doing that.
- JC You know what most of the lessons came from with Gary was the word road dog has been around for a lot, but Gary transformed that word, and let me just tell you a quick story about Gary. The first day I showed up at his office, which was down on Sunset Boulevard, right across from the Roxy in the 9000 building, near the whisky and down near North Hollywood, a very famous part of North Hollywood. The first day I showed up, he says, okay, I want you to write an ad to I think it was the diet market, and he gave me a few things, and he put me in a separate room, a separate office he had, that had a metal desk and metal chair, a single legal pad and a pencil, and he wanted me to sit down and start writing. And I’m working on a computer at this point, even though it was 1988 I think, or late ’87, I was already working on a PC, and I needed material. I couldn’t sit down and write like that, which is what he wanted me to do. So, anyway, I sat there, and I was biting the pencil and saying, okay, I started going through some headlines, and then the door bursts open after about 15 minutes, and there was Gary, and he goes, “Come on,” and I have to follow him down to the parking garage, we hop in his car and we just drive around Hollywood, we’re driving aimlessly, and he’s talking. And what he’s talking about is he’s talking about another ad he’s writing and he’s going over headlines and ideas, and then we talk about life, we talk about chasing girls and how fun it was to be young, and then we talk about modern things, we shared gossip about stuff, and then we’d get back to the advertising, and we started doing this. And I realized he was kind of looping in what he was talking about as far as the advertising stuff goes, and his tactic at doing this meant that he was obsessing on things, and I learned that there is no such thing as sitting down and having a genius headline just kind of pop out at you; it’s hard work. It may look effortless, and it may be going on inside the head of a great marketer, but it’s not effortless; there’s a lot going on in there. There is total concentration, and if you’re not doing it on paper, then you’re doing it in your head, which is what Gary did; shifting a single word around, shifting around the angle, so whether the how to headline becomes a why headline, why are people, blah, blah. Or it may do something like this. And I realized on that first riding around that this was where I was going to get the book of my mentoring. Now, he didn’t sit down and say, “I’m going to mentor you. Okay, here’s an hour and I’m going to teach you this.” It was me working alongside of him and taking notes and figuring it out. That’s where the mentoring came along. Now, the punch line to this is that we drove around for about two hours. We got back to the office, he went into his main office, and I went back to my little cubbyhole with the metal desk and the single pad of legal size paper, and I started writing. Two minutes later, the door bursts open and there’s Gary, and he says, “You got that ad yet?” I said, “Gary, I just spent two hours with you on the road,” and he goes, “Excuses, excuses,” and walked out. And I realized, okay, I’m going to have to sacrifice to do this, and I made a decision, which I urge all entrepreneurs out there who are at that stage where they feel they do need to learn, that they either need distance, mentoring, they need courses, they need something to grow. The total focus and the sacrifice required for this does not mean you need to change your life totally, but you do need to be there and be on the alert for

opportunity when it comes. Because opportunity, as I found - I think you guys will agree with me – comes often as a whisper on the wind, or as a seemingly funny thing, or something disconnected to what lesson you get out of that. And I had already kind of perfected that by figuring it out or doing the reading at the library, and figuring things out on my own. I'd been on my own for five years at that point, and had broken the code on figuring stuff out, and it's focus; don't want for opportunity to come up and say, "Hi, I'm opportunity. I would like to take you off to another wonderful world where making money is easier and you'll be happy." It doesn't work that way. It's more you have to catch it at a point where sometimes again it's a whisper on the wind, and you've got to follow through, and you may have to make a few sacrifices. I encounter so many entrepreneurs who went to adopt the attitude of a veteran entrepreneur, which is screw this, screw that, I don't need these guys, and I'll go alone, and I want to get straight to the big guys. They don't want to pay their dues. And everybody I know who has made it in marketing has paid some dues, has worked their way up. There are shortcuts, but those shortcuts are read this and read this, then talk to this guy, take this course, do this thing. And it's not talking once you say this is what I'm going to do, I'm going to do this. So, I had a choice when I was at Gary Halbert's office to hang around what was going to be the adventure of my life in business. And not always in a good way; it was going to challenge me, it was going to frustrate me, and I was going to have to be on my freaking toes the entire time. Fortunately, I was in my late thirties and I was ready and willing, and actually I would do it again today if I had at least an inkling of where it was going to go. But it was like, okay, game on, let's go. And Gary provided some of the most wonderful adventures in marketing that I've ever had, and I think both Joe and Dean have had relationships with him and will back me up on that. Unpredictable, strange, wonderful, weird and not always the lesson that you take away from is not always the lesson Gary thought he was delivering or thought was happening; it was often from observation as well as direct contact. That's a little off base, but I think a lot of people who are listening to this are looking for ways to implement what they're learning here. You guys are interviewing great guys. You guys are delivering this great, fabulous stuff, but a lot of times, I think – and maybe you guys have addressed this – but the question is what do I do with this now? And sometimes you don't have an easy answer to that. Sometimes you've got to put it in the back of your head, you've got to make it active, but the sooner you act on stuff that you hear, if somebody recommends a book, go get the damn book and open it up and at least look at it, at least do something like that. If somebody recommends a tactic, try it out, get going. Implementing stuff will help you learn and advance much faster than anything else. It's like immersion language learning; the best way to learn Spanish is to go live in Mexico for a while, and just live or die on how well you can explain yourself to the *0.32.17 as they're hauling you off to the *0.32.18.

DJ What you think about what you get when you buy a book for \$20, \$25 or \$15, you know what it goes into writing a book like that and you know the years of experience that the person has had in writing it, and then the actual amount of time that it took for them to write it, and you can get all of that for \$20, it's like crazy. It's one of the most amazing things. Or like you just said, you can get it for free by going to the library.

JC Yeah. Or Dean, the other side to that is a rule that I developed earlier on which was giving myself permission at any point with a book, or a video or DVD or anything,

any learning thing, to at the point that I realized this guy has nothing to say to me or I've already got what he needs to say to me, or he's boring the shit out of me. I give myself permission to slam the book shut, bounce it off the two walls, and into the trash can and I'm done. I can't tell you how many people I know that once they crack a book, they somehow can't go to another book until they've finished that book. So, a book will stay on their desk or on their night stand for a year and a half, and they can't move on because they haven't finished that book.

DJ While they're trying to grind through the book, yeah.

JC Don't do it, guys. Books are learning materials. Sometimes you get – if you get one idea from a book, you've scored. That's huge. And if you get two or three, then those are the books I think, like the Claude Hopkins, it's just every page is whoa, and those are so rare that you want to read those, and read those over again. So, it's better to pick up Claude Hopkins again right now if you're not sure what to read, than to go off and buy the latest how to sell whatever from Barnes and Noble, something like that. You can't lose by re-reading the great stuff, which includes my book, *The Marketing Rebel*, by the way, which transformed a number of people who didn't know what to do as far as incorporating writing into their marketing, or how important the writing is.

JP Are you guys – can you just mellow out here, we don't want *0:34:29.

DJ Joe, are you still here?

JP I want to interject something here. Let me point out something that I think was really important that you said in the beginning, which is you went off and you worked for free for Jay Abraham.

JC Yeah.

JP You took a lot of notes. You went off with Gary. You talked about paying the dues, and frankly, I don't know anyone that is really successful that wouldn't be willing to do those things, and there is a lot of people that listen to our *I Love Marketing* podcast, and a few of them will do those things; a vast majority will not, and they will constantly wonder why they're not getting to where they want to go. And I absolutely am a big fan of shortening the learning curve, jumping over your industry, creative destruction, speeding up the process. There's lots of tricks and tactics and methodologies that absolutely can put you further ahead of everyone else, some are totally ethical, legal and moral, others are dirty, scoundrel tricks. The bottom line is it's a mindset though; how badly do you want it? And my question for you is what the hell were you pursuing? When you were in your thirties, you were in a place where you were ready, everyone has heard when the student's ready the teacher will appear. What were you pursuing? Have you ever thought about what your drive was? Because I constantly think about that drive of entrepreneurs. What the hell makes them do what it is they do? Why do they take more risks than the average person, that sort of stuff?

JC Well, there's two answers to that. One is the answer that I'd like everybody to think kindly on me about, which is that I found a place in life, and that – I was a slacker

throughout my twenties, and anybody that's a slacker and is tired of being a slacker, because I had some fun too, but I never found my place. I never felt I was a functioning element of society on any level. Now, for a while, I got to fool myself thinking I was like some beatnik rebel kind of guy, and that was my job, but it wasn't; that was all about avoiding responsibility, avoiding to settle down, because I wasn't writing novels. I was just living the lifestyle of partying too much and stuff like that. So, what marketing brought to me was this notion of actually being a part of something, of becoming not just a cog, and not just a brick in the foundation, but actually part of the mortar of the entire building, and so it brought me a sense of belonging that was honest and true. When you are a successful entrepreneur, you really can sit back, and I have my problems with the government; I'm not going to talk politics and stuff, and I was a political junkie for a long time, and I'm all over the map politically. But I do get teary on July 4 when I think about how I owe it to all the other guys like me throughout history who never had an opportunity to say, "You know what, to heck with my feudal lord and master in the kingdom, and I'm going to stop slinging mud here for him, and I'm going to do what I want to do." And for all those guys who never was even able to have that thought in their head, I owe it to them to follow through and actually take advantage of these opportunities that I had as a modern guy in the western world where entrepreneurs can survive if you do the right things, if you do your due diligence. Now, that's the nice side. The other side to this, Joe, is a lot of what I call negative motivation. One of the first copywriters I ever met was a staff copywriter at this catalogue I was at in Silicon Valley, and I was a lowly paste up artist. Now, she wasn't a freelancer, her job was there at the catalogue, and I went up to her one day and I said, "I think I could do this writing, this writing stuff. Would you be willing to just kind of show me a couple of things, or send me a direction of something?" And she sat back, sighed, rolled her eyes and said, "John, it's really hard. You'll never figure it out," and she was done with me. And that pissed me off so much that I stole her a copy of John Caples, *Tested Advertising Methods*, and read enough of it before she stole it back that I realized I could figure this out, and the answer, at least at the beginning, was probably going to be through books and things like that, because the first copywriter I met was a jerk. I can't tell you, I know her name, and I'm not going to say her name because she's probably still alive, she's probably back in New York somewhere slaving away at an agency as a lowly slogan writing copywriter, but I thought about her often in those first 20 years when things would get a little rocky, especially in the first five years. I'm going to show her, I'm going to show her up. I don't even need to ever meet her again or even know that she acknowledged my success or anything; it was for me; it was inside my head. I had been challenged by this woman who didn't even realize she was throwing down a gauntlet, and the negative motivation got me through more tough times late at night trying to meet a deadline, no, I'm not giving up because I'm going to show her that I can do this. And I told people a lot, I've written newsos about this. If you have some negative motivation, an ex wife, parent, teacher, somebody who told you can't do something, use that, because it's some of the most potent motivation mojo around is to just take a stand, draw a line in the sand, and you're not going to physically fight this person, and they never need to know what's happening; you use that internally, that negative motivation can drive you really, really far. So, wanting to be a millionaire is kind of pulling you, this negative motivation. That's like an engine behind you, pushing as hard as they can.

JP I love it. I mean that's fantastic. It would be silly for me not to ask you this because it's constantly being brought up by people as technology accelerates at dizzying speeds. What has changed in marketing and advertising and how you sell from the length of copy to the different sort of delivery systems? I still think of copy as not just words in print, but video and audio, and with all the technology, so many people are out there saying the old ways of marketing don't work anymore, and you've heard this a million times, the long copy versus short copy. What are the things that have changed, and what are the principles that you believe will always be the same, because here we are in a day and age where there is massive amounts of ways to deliver packaging, communicate and messages and there is social media and there is still online and offline and all that. I want to get your perspective on all this?

JC Okay. I have written multiple newsletter and blog posts, and acres of trees have died with me talking about this very thing. Let me talk about the two main points of this, which should answer your question succinctly I hope. The first part is that a lot of people think we are some advanced species that are out of the jungle and into the paved world and we need to change a lot of the things we're doing, and the advantage that an old school marketer – and by old school, I don't mean old age wise, I mean thinking in older terms – the old school marketer has an advantage because the truth is, we haven't left the jungle; we still have one foot in the jungle. And the people who understand human psychology at its most basic know that we're talking about Maslow hierarchy stuff of hierarchy of needs, people are driven by fear and greed mostly. There's a lot of things going on behind the façade of civilization and the thing that never changes is that as humans, we are essentially frail, fragile, vulnerable, scared bags of goo, wandering through a world bent on destroying us in a lot of ways. So, in advertising and marketing, most often, you are dealing with a prospect who is in some level of trauma, and people tend to forget this. That's why we have happy commercials on TV and stuff. They want to try and get you happily thinking about buying a new Toyota, but really people mostly buy a new car when their old car has collapsed or they're in some level of trauma; it might be a low level of trauma, you need to buy nails before you can finish the playhouse for your daughter out back, and that's not going to keep you up at night, but you can't finish until you get that done, so you've got to research and hopefully find someone who markets nails and get the nails. Or it could be a health crisis, which is a high level of trauma, and you're looking for information you can trust and credibility in the person that all of this depends on the message that you are delivering as the marketer. Now, what has changed is I'm going to say something different than what you thought I was going to say. One of the things that Gary Halbert and I used to talk about back in the nineties was how great it was back in the fifties, before either of us were around in the marketplace, for entrepreneurs. That's when Playboy got started with a \$300 injection of money into the publishing, and you could create your own publishing empire with very little interference and very little trouble. That stopped in the sixties and the seventies, and it became a mover and shaker game; you couldn't be an entrepreneur and get anywhere in the publishing field. TV was the same way back in the fifties. There were guys like Ernie Kovac, people who essentially were doing their own infomercials and they buy their own time, and do stuff, and you couldn't do that on network TV. Now, what happened was cable changed TV by allowing people to be that bootstrapped, that do it on your own, that do it yourself home made commercial, could be done on cable, and Gary and I wrote some of the first infomercials that went out in the mid to late eighties, before that changed again. But when the web came,

the first thing I realized was that it was like the fifties all over again as far as for the little guy to be able to create his own network, his own – you could have your own TV show right now online. You can do it. You can spend as much time or as little time on it. You can have as much fun or make it as serious as you want. Most of us in marketing, in information marketing, we're publishers; there are no walls, nobody stopping between your desire to publish either books, magazines, blogs, entire courses, video shows, anything. There's nothing standing between you and doing it, and having a huge audience there willing to watch it and possibly pay for stuff, and actually support your lifestyle; nothing except small bits of hardware. As soon as I realized that's what the web was coming along with, and this was in the late nineties, I just realized we were taking a turn for the better as far as an entrepreneurial society. And we saw the explosion of entrepreneurs in the early 2000s when credit cards became viable. I knew we were turning a corner when my 89 year old father started buying his prescriptions from New Zealand via the web, and using his credit card. Okay. We just hit that point; things are going to really start rocking now, and they have. So, for me, this is again getting back to that, the little guy kind of – you don't need a lot of money, you don't need a big daddy behind you, you don't need a corporate structure, you don't need – if you've got a good idea, and you've got the heart and the motivation, and you're willing to take the time and focus and do it, and you've got something to say, all the avenues are open. And how many guys do we know, just between the three of us, who without the web, would be unknowns and probably working for the man somewhere in a job in a cubbyhole somewhere. And instead, they are with their ADD and with their rebellious attitudes, and the refusal to wear ties, and wanting to be barefoot and do all this stuff, and they're thriving online, as opposed to having to stuff themselves into a suit and tie every day and go off to a cubby hole.

JP I love it. That's fantastic. Okay. So, we're getting close to the time where we're going to wrap up. Now, the beauty is anyone that comes to our I Love Marketing event or watches it live over the internet, or you're going to be part of the product too because we're going to record videos and all that, get to meet you in person which will be super cool, so if you still have time, the go to ilovemarketinglive.com, or just ilovemarketing.com, there should be a link you can find information, get your butt to our conference, meet John in person and me and Dean of course. Who in their right mind would want to miss this? So, having said that, me and Dean and you, along with Kevin and [Bon] *0:47:58 Halbert have...

JC Dean and John and I.

JP Thank you for correcting me. I appreciate that.

JC Or the main dude, the big dude and moi.

JP We're the ones that are actually keeping Gary Halbert's message out into the world, and I mean I learned marketing through reading my first Gary Halbert newsletter, and what did you learn from Halbert?

JC Me?

JP What do you think are the most important things you learned from Gary?

- JC I wish you'd told me this before we had the call because this requires some thinking. I don't want to be flip, but it really was attitude. The reason I turned my back on a very lucrative corporatesque career, and went off with Gary into the unknown with no guarantees at all was because I got to be myself around him. We laughed more than we cried, we weren't afraid to blunder out there and come back with pie on our face, or egg on our face, I guess is the right term, and we tried stuff, and it was spear metal and it was raucous and fun, and it's like I had a choice of going off in a really nice limo and going into the city, or going with Gary and getting on a rocket ship that we weren't even sure it was going to take off and go into another world. And that attitude, that sense of – I won't swear on this, but that attitude of screw it, we're just going to do it because – the one thing you learn is that once you learn how to conquer challenges, a lot of the fear goes away when you constantly come across new stuff. So, some entrepreneurs, God bless them – and it's fine to do this – find a groove that they're in where they're comfortable and they learn, they become masters at it, and they're really good at it, and that's what they do. Other entrepreneurs – I think this more defines the idea of the entrepreneur – just embraces the unknown because you have some basic skills; you know how to sell. Remember Gary's famous line, there is no problem in the world that can't be solved with a damn fine sales letter. Knowing that, you are armed with the power of the pen, you know, Shakespeare said the power of the pen trumps the sword – I don't know what the actual quote is. And it's true.
- DJ The pen is mightier than the sword.
- JC Yeah, the pen is mightier – I think mine was more poetic. But once you know that, I mean you guys know that. Are you guys really fearful of almost anything? It's not a physical threat that we have going out there, except going broke, but the intellectual threats that are out there stop so many people, it's like a big stop sign that says stop, if you take one step further, you are entering fearful dark territories where there is no guarantee of anything good happening and bad things may happen, and nobody else has trod here before and stuff. And Gary and I, he was the first guy I met that was like me, that just rubbed our hands together, "Let's do it. Let's go charging like a bull into a china shop and just see what happens, and if it's bad we'll learn something, if it's good, we'll reap the rewards, and let the chips fall where they may – and I'm out of anecdotes.
- JP That's great. Dean, there is so much more we could talk with John about. This is certainly not going to be the last I Love Marketing conversation we have with John.
- JC Just let me say I'm really looking forward to this event you guys are putting on. The minute you told me about it, before you even finished telling me about it, I knew I was going to try to be there. Now, I am manipulating my schedule so that I'm going to fly out. I've got a really tight schedule, but I'm doing this. The easiest thing for me to do would be to not come, just say, "Joe, I'm tied up. I can't go." No way. You and Dean put something on, that's something to go to. That is not an event to be missed. So, anybody out there who is like waffling, just get over your bad self, stop it. This is one of those whispers in the wind opportunities that if you're thinking you can't go – I'll tell one quick story guys, and then I'm done. Back in 1969, I knew a guy who had a chance to go see a Jimmy Hendrix concert. He didn't go. Something

important came up and he couldn't go. Jimmy died the next year and he was never able to see him, and I asked him – he told me this story in the late seventies, and he told me the story like this, he says, “You know, I had a free ticket to go see Jimmy Hendrix, I didn't go because something really important comes up. To this day, I remember never seeing Jimmy Hendrix, and I haven't got a clue what was so damned important that I couldn't go.” And I never – those are the kind of lessons that I wrote down and they're central to my philosophy of life, and what I try to teach other people. So, I know you've got real important stuff to do and you can't come to this, and there's a thousand good reasons not to go. There's only one good reason to go, and that's because Dean and Joe will never steer you wrong, and the thing is going to rock.

JP Thank you. I really appreciate that. And yes, I think we definitely will fulfill on that for all of the people attending. John, there is an endless amount of capabilities that someone can gain from your blog, your newsletters, everything you've written is just filled with tremendous wisdom. It's not only entertaining and great writing, but it gives people real skills, and I have made a tremendous amount of money as a result of following your advice. You're one of the best people in the world as a sounding board to run any sort of marketing challenges through, you understand so much about this business. How do people really learn from you? What are the best ways that you would recommend our listeners that they've now been introduced to John Carlton, the I Love Marketing to pursue learning from you?

JC The best thing to do is go over to john-carlton.com, and opt in so you're on my list. So, as things come up, I will alert you to blog posts. The blog is the main doorway to my world. I will stay in touch with you, I will let you know about opportunities coming up then things, and there are something like seven years of free archives on the blog; it's a free blog. That's a little library for you too, a little virtual library to dive in, have some fun looking at stuff. I hold back not a bit in it, and by opting in, you will know when new blog posts are up and you will get alerts when I'm doing things that I think are important, and if I have anything available that you might like. So, that's the best place to go.

JP Awesome. Dean, anything else you would like to ask before we call it a wrap?

DJ I'm looking forward to seeing you in Phoenix.

JC Always a pleasure hanging out with you guys and I really look forward to it. So, that was pretty – I was walking the whole time I was talking, guys, so if I was out of breath, it was mostly – that's how I think the best, I was on my feet. For Gary it's driving around, for me it's on my feet walking around. Find your groove, that's probably something you can tattoo on your forearm for the rest of your life. Find your groove and ride it for all it's worth.

JP To all of our I Love Marketing listeners, please give us your comments on the ilovemarketing.com site, and we look forward to seeing a lot of you at our live event. It's ilovemarketinglive.com, and for whatever ridiculous reason you simply can't be there in person, or you happen to hear this episode after it's taken place, then get a copy of the videos, and that is it. So, thank you John and Dean, you're a very handsome fellow.

END OF TRANSCRIPT