

THE **small** BUSINESS BIG **MARKETING**

show

INSANELY EFFECTIVE
MARKETING

Episode #456

How mindfulness
changed Ray Good's
business (and
personal) life for good



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Ray Good Interview Transcription

Tim

I started off by asking Ray to describe his crazy life as a dj.

Ray

Well pretty crazy yeah. As you just mentioned I made on the list of the world's top 100 djs. But also at the same time I was building up an empire. I was running a large scale rave parties in Sydney and dance parties. I had weekly club nights going. I had my own import record store and record label as well. So this is quite an early age I guess this is early 90s I was probably about 22 23. I'm living the dream and juggling a lot. It was inevitable I guess. I was going to burn out and it's also the first time I've really faced stress and anxiety in what I was doing.

Tim

Tell us about your lowest moment I mean sounds like a pretty good time. I mean you're probably having a ball.

Ray

Yeah I mean I was it was amazing. I was getting paid some money to go around basically play records to people up all night and it was amazing it was an amazing career. But there's another side to it that a lot of people don't say. Obviously the late nights back then people were smoking in clubs and there's a lot of stress. I mean promoting was extremely stressful. You'd put on an event and you could easily lose 50 60 grand in a night so there was a lot of stress that goes with that and I start to feel that. My health started to suffer mentally and physically and I needed to try and find a way to try and balance it out. So a friend told me about a meditation class. I never knew anything about meditation I thought it was all crystals candles and sandals. And I went along and yeah they changed my life forever. I've had daily meditation practice for 27 years.

Tim

Wow. So that rolled off the tongue very easily we've gone from an incredible period of your life in the 90s to I guess something you didn't use the word break down but I guess there was a dark moment where you hit rock bottom?

Ray

Yeah I think as an entrepreneur or anyone that's in business we all have to face anxieties always in the background. It's part of being an entrepreneur I guess and being in business and but also I was getting some problems in my sleep and I was constantly getting run down and I really had to find a way to balance that out. So obviously meditation but also yoga I got into really what should I started to eat and I really look after my well being because I loved my career and I was in it for the long game. So whereas a lot of people around me they were I wasn't part in it was it actually was a business for me and I was treating it very much like a business is a long term career. I wasn't into the the crazy party

side of it and I didn't even think I drink junk back then. I love music. I love deejaying. I've always been really passionate about music and I found a tribe of people that really connected within the club scene and then the rave scene in the early 90s in Sydney and I really felt like I belong. And so for me yeah I was in it for the long game so I had to find ways to kind of balance it out.

Tim

So wonderful friend clearly tap you on the shoulder says try this thing called meditation. What did that do for you?

Ray

Well all of a sudden at the time I couldn't stop my brain was going a million miles an hour I just couldn't switch off.

Tim

Welcome to the world.

Ray

Well I think the world tickle up with me now right everyone I talked to is in the same boat. I went through this all that time ago. I can switch off and I thought well I wasn't satisfied with life I had everything that we aspire to achieve and I say this in a way not in an egotistical way but in a way of I was making loads of money. I had all this status and all this stuff. But inside I really didn't feel. There was something missing and I really didn't feel happy and there was like a personal happiness. It was kind of missing in my life and I just didn't get it because I'm a working class boy I grew up in East End of London. One of the poorest areas of Britain very working class I had a terrible education and you grow up with that striving and trying to achieve and you kind of get there and it's when you finally reach it and something's missing. So I guess that kind of that was missing as well. So yeah.

Tim

So off the back of that you get well again and you decide to start another business in seafood you leave the dj scene behind and started a business called Hooked.

Ray

I actually maintained a professional deejaying career for about 15 years so all during that time meditation was a tool to help me deal with a lot of the ups and downs. I kind of faced during my career as a deejay but coming to the end of that I had a little boy I was married and decided that being up four o'clock in smoky nightclubs and having constant we call it club like trying to catch up on sleep. I'd done it I'd achieved everything I needed to achieved. There was nothing left to achieve and I felt I was feeling very bored and kind of I needed a new challenge and I actually I moved to Melbourne and decided to hang up the headphones leave those and leave Sydney moved to Melbourne and restart my life and I chuck myself into opening a chain of restaurants I had absolutely no experience in food before I was a passionate cook. Funnily enough I saw a great opportunity for an idea to open a chain of like core healthy focused. I guess fish and chip shops are done in a really

cool way really grounded really well and really healthy nice grilled fish beautiful salads brown rice bok choy and I actually got the idea when I was in Byron Bay of all places deejaying. There was a little an amazing fish and chip shop up there called fishmonger's behind the Beach Hotel and I was up there one day with this English deejay and he's kind like why isn't someone done this why isn't someone taking fish and chips rebranded it and done it in a really cool way and that idea kind of stuck with me and being an Englishman fish and chips is the National Meal

Tim

That's really interesting. So you got no experience in this field. You've never owned a restaurant or a cafe. You've not been in hospitality but you saw and I love this you saw an industry that was under marketed and under branded lots a fish and chip shop around the place are all over Australia as I'm sure they're all over England. No one had actually taken it up a step and created something cool and funky and healthy and it's interesting. That's all very well to see that I mean yeah I can look around now and probably identify another 3 5 10 types of industries that are like that but to actually then take the step and go I'm actually going to create one. That's a big step.

Ray

Yeah it's a massive step. Just to kind of intervene there. While this was happening as well I kind of went through a divorce lost custody of my son and so there was a lot of I was dealing with personal crisis and suffering. So I needed I needed a project to chuck myself into it as well. And so I had the energy and the drive I mean this was probably about 12 years ago. So I did. I took that leap of faith and said make it happen and I did and I had a great name for it. That's the other thing I always get inspired with businesses that come up with a good name I came up with the name hooked and I thought such a great name I've got to this. This is such a great name.

Tim

Well it has that. It's short it's funky it's got that element of kind of like it's so good I want more. Fishy yeah I like that. I'm the same it's funny you can come up with a good name and it kind of can lay the foundation for what the rest of the business looks like.

Ray

I found that in my career in a lot of things that I've done. Even going back to when I first started from parties and I came up with this name love and it was like what a great name at the time it was the summer of love in Britain just come to an end and it was a great name. So again that inspired me to start a whole series of party and I found that a lot of the things I've done have come from these names and now I'm at the good place.

Tim

God I love that. Which we all come to. With hooked. So you launch your first shop was in Paran or somewhere in Chapel Street wasn't it in Melbourne.

Ray

Oh yeah it was in Windsor.

Tim

And what was the key to its success because it went on to have some great level of success. What did you get right?

Ray

A lot of hard work as anyone knows it runs a business and I guess being in the right time. A bit of luck as well. Being in the right place at the right time. When I set it up my aim was to set up a chain of restaurants around Australia potentially maybe a go global brand. At the time I've been reading so many books about I've really immersed myself in business books. I went right back to Dale Carnegie. Jim Collins. About setting up systems. A lot of those like classic business books. I really immersed myself in that before I took on this project. And so it was about setting up a business and set up systems which was really important. So I think that fundamentally at the start that's helped because it's about setting up systems and it also helped my mate stand here at a brilliant market in a branding business can really help us.

Tim

Paul Finley he put us together and brands to life great business. Tell me about that because I mean I know Paul is passionate about branding and the visual of branding. You clearly are too how important was that in bringing hooked to life?

Ray It was everything. Branding the way you brand your business is essential. Especially today even more so today. Throughout my business career so far. Branding is absolutely it says everything about you. Every touchpoint has to be branded. It is who you are. It's says so much about you. Obviously Paul. As you know we've known each other a long time he actually started off doing the flyers for a lot of my parties back in the early days and we developed this friendship but he's amazing at what he does with brands to life and a great mentor as well. I have to say he mentored me as well through that period because I'd come to Melbourne. I didn't know anyone I was on my own and I had a couple of great mates down here that really helped. And yeah so and at that time as well in Windsor there wasn't that much competition it was only like a chain of restaurants called grilled that did like burgers healthy burgers I ran that business for 10 years so I scouted and of course the first two years after six weeks of me being in this business I was doing the front house because I believe it's really important that you roll your sleeves up you get and you get in the trenches and you really immerse yourself in the business. And my chef walked out. He was actually standing with me at the time I still remember this. I confronted him about something and he goes stuff you he walked out and then I remember just it was a very dark day I was sitting there and I was realising that I didn't have a chef and I had this restaurant and I'm going to have to learn how to cook very very quickly. And so I spent the next two years actually behind the deep fryers cooking and as well as running the business so I did everything in their first couple of years and so I really immersed myself in the business really know it really well and I think that's really important with setting up a business and the success of that business probably because it was a success it was crazy. We start getting

all these great reviews and the Good Food Guide and then it just took off. It was crazy. There were queues at the door every single night. I loved it a lot actually. I loved being behind the fries and cooking being pumped as they say I loved the rush of that kind of really get into the zone.

Tim

It's interesting how many stores did you get to Ray?

Ray

I build up to 2 stores and 35 staff.

Tim

Nice.

Ray

Yeah. And then I exit from that about three years ago. So I run it for 10 years.

Tim

Ray what role did meditation play in hooked success?

Ray

It's been an essential tool to help me deal with the stress and pressure of running businesses. Absolutely. I don't think I could have done it without that all. I've got different tools that I use to help me. But yeah in many many different ways not only to deal with stress but also to communication with my staff and productivity and focus on so many different levels.

Tim

Well you've sold hooked and now you're 100 percent focused on the business of mindfulness and meditation. Was that scary to see to kind of leave what was clearly a successful business behind and launch into something that I'm guessing many people still don't get?

Ray

It's a new industry absolutely. You'd be surprised actually most people get it. Most people actually doing it. It's actually surprisingly becoming very very mainstream very very fast but it is a new industry I think it's only in the last five years that it's really kind of exploded into the mainstream consciousness. Before that it was all as we said earlier meditation had the worst branding that you could think of. It was all crystals candles and sandals but that's all changed and it's changed I think because of two things. The first one is stress. We live in a world that's very volatile uncertain complex and ambiguous and we're struggling with time scarcity hyper connectivity information overload and constant distraction and we just can't switch off or unplug. And of course it's taken its toll. We have problem sleeping. We're having problems focusing and of course mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression are skyrocketing. The World Health Organization says that depression is the

biggest health issue globally now and it is also the leading cause of ill health in the workplace resulting in burnout increased absenteeism and presenteeism so it doesn't matter if you are a full time puppy cuddler. We all feel stressed.

Tim

I want to talk more about the whole mindfulness and meditation movement and how it can positively impact the business owner. But what if we practice one right now Ray. Is that a good idea?

Ray

Give it a go. Show those out there that have never tried a meditation. Let's just do a simple like two minute micro meditation as I call it and this is great. You can use this throughout the day if you're feeling a little stressed and scattered all before a meeting or presentation or just have a little break between tasks just to give you a chance to sort of reset refocus recharge.

Tim

I think that's an awesome idea. If I fall asleep just sort of tap on the microphone and Jamie if you could just down the lights of the studio please and light the candles. Buddy I'm ready when you are. And by the way if you are driving.

Ray

If you driving don't do this meditate while you drive.

Tim

If you are chopping down trees with chainsaws which you probably wouldn't be listening to the show if you do that but if you are doing something that requires you to just take your mind off for a while then stop what you're doing.

Ray

Okay so this meditation is called a stop meditation and it's acronymed. Stop whatever you're doing right now. Take a couple of nice deep breaths and observe your experience and then proceed mindfully. So we have a lot of people with a coach and business obviously just doing it very simple one or two minute meditation a couple of times during the day they find they get a lot of benefit out of it. So we'll begin this meditation. Just make sure that you're comfortable and if you can make sure your back's nice and straight and. Close the eyes if that feels uncomfortable you can just lower your gaze gently in front of you in a very loose and unfocused way. So we'll begin this meditation just by taking a couple of deep breaths so breathing through the nose down into the belly and then out through the mouth. Then we're just going to observe our experience right now what's going on what's the weather pattern like inside. What thoughts. What feelings. And just bring your awareness to the whole body sitting here. Just being aware of any sensations in the body you might feel some tension in the shoulders. Have awareness of whatever's going on in the body. And just bring your awareness to the body breathing. Maybe you can bring your awareness to the expected action and contraction of the breath down in the abdomen. So rest your

attention here on the inbreath and the outbreath. Not trying to control the breath in any way. We're just feeling the breath coming in and going out. If your mind wanders off and you get caught up in thinking and planning worrying about judgement or evaluation you just bring your attention back to the sensation of the breath. Just start again. And then as our meditation finishes just bring your awareness back to that space around you. And when you pray you can open your eyes and proceed with your day with a little bit more calm clarity focus. Tim wake up.

Tim

Who is this on the phone? Hello Ray. That was a beautiful mate. I am a meditator and there are some days where I forget to meditate and when I do it again I'm reminded of just how beautiful it is and it's incredible. And what was that two minutes and it can make such a shift in your mind.

Ray

Absolutely just had to stop and just take a break it is really powerful and I guess this is the reason why it's exploding globally at the moment.

Tim

I learnt a great technique a few years ago called Jam which acronym for just a minute. And it was simple to sit you set a little beep on your phone or your watch or your computer on the hour which many watches do that anyway and it was just a reminder that take one minute and to sit in silence and to observe your breath that was it nothing else. And boy it's a cleanser that's what it is it's just cleanses your mind of all that noise that's going on throughout your day.

Ray

Yeah it just comes calms the mind and there's also a whole lot of science behind when we actually focus on our breath we activate our parasympathetic nervous system which is the rest and digest and that's the opposite to the sympathetic nervous system the fight or flight stress response. And that's one of the reasons why meditation is really powerful in helping us to deal with stress and it's nice just to power down for a couple of minutes and before we power back up and getting into our day. Doing a couple of this I look at doing a couple of these little meditations during the day really really really powerful way just to reset refocus.

Tim

I was listening to a podcast last week with Oprah and Eckhart Tolle who wrote The Power of Now and this particular episode they were talking about the space that we've got to find the space in between the madness which is what we just did then we just did then collectively. And it's such a nice thing to do where that space in between of what's that order of got to put in and what's that marketing I've got to do it. Who's that client I've got to reach out to and I've got to pick the kids up and there's like just noise noise and if you don't actively seek out those little moments of space then you go mad. And that's why the world is going. That's why anxiety is on the massive increase.

Ray

Absolutely. We don't just take the time just to stop and take a little break and you're absolutely right.

Tim

So I think you're onto something here mate so you've turned this into a business I love it. Thegoodplace.com.au Where people can go and do what how do you turn this into a business you're going into businesses and get everyone to stop what are you doing?

Ray

So at the moment I'm a solopreneur it's just about me and my message and trying to get people into a good place so I do one on one coaching with people my fitness coach and then yeah I go into businesses I work with a lot of high performers business leaders and forward thinking companies and run workshops about how we can cultivate mindfulness but then also how we can be more productive and improve our performance.

Tim

How do you sell it? Is it a hard sell?

Ray

At the moment. Mindfulness it's been over the past five years I think everyone has heard about mindfulness. You'd have to be living under a rock to step in to not have heard of mindfulness. A lot of workplaces are saying that not only does it love work related stress but it also improves so wellbeing and happiness improves performance then you can also get a competitive advantage out there. So it's kind of an I guess a win win situation. And you look at the half the Fortune 500 now off the mindfulness meditation training to their employees you've got companies like Google Facebook links in Goldman Sachs you say. So in America it's obviously it's massive. I mean you've only got to look at the number of people in the United States over the last six years the number of people practicing mindfulness meditation or full four percent of the population to fourteen point four percent and it's currently being used by 35 million people. And the meditation at Headspace has been downloaded 20 million times. So it's it's a one point two billion dollar industry in the states alone. So as I said everyone must have heard when I go in and talk about it and people are really receptive because we are living in a world that's just so fast paced and we need the tools. And this is a tool to help you kind of cope with that.

Tim

What do you say to the business owner listening who either says this is nonsense and I think you've proved it's not or they say look I just cannot simply find the time I can't find the time to go out and grab a sandwich much less sit in stillness and not doing anything?

Ray

Well I hear that all the time and so I don't have time. I can't count on time. Well I say to them you talk about Oprah earlier if Oprah's got time to meditate you've got time to

meditate and there's a reason that many of the world's top performers are turning to mindfulness it's not because they've got tons of free time is because they're going to be less stressed they're going to be more productive and efficient and they're going to reach their goals a lot faster. So the truth is you don't have the time not to meditate invest in 2 percent of your day into a practice that's going to radically improve the other 98 percent of your day is a good return on investment and I don't know it's you've got to invest in yourself and your mental health. You know meditation mindfulness in the same way we exercise to look after our bodies we can think of this as an exercise for our minds and our brain and that's the way that it's been looked upon by a lot of people now. It's been taught in schools the British government and three weeks ago announced it was rolling out new subjects across 370 schools in Britain called mindfulness. One in eight English schoolchildren suffering from a mental health issue they rolled it out in schools hospitals prisons the military. As we mentioned before a lot of corporations turning to mindfulness in meditation. So I think it's like yoga in the seventies jogging and it's not like jogging in the 70s yoga in the 90s. It's the next big public health revolution.

Tim

You are the Richard Simmons of 2019. You're doing good things in a world that really really needs what you have to offer. So I hope the good place is as successful as hooked and as successful as your deejaying career and that it's all up from here today.

Ray

Thanks mate.

Tim

Namaste.