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INTERVIEW WITH GERARD BRAUD

Susan Friedmann: Welcome to Book Marketing Mentors, the weekly podcast where you learn proven strategies, tools, ideas, and tips from the masters. Hi, I'm Susan Friedman, owner and founder of the Aviva Publishing and host of this exciting podcast.

Every week, I introduce you to a marketing master who will share their expertise to help you market and sell more books. Today, my guest mentor of the week is media expert Gerard Braud. Gerard is known as the guy when you know what hits for fun because he's an expert in media training and crisis communications.

For 15 years, he's worked in print, radio and television as a frontline journalist on the scene of every type of news event imaginable. His reports have been seen around the world on NBC, CBS, CNN, and my favorite station, the BBC.

For over 20 years, he specialized in helping organizations communicate more effectively through media training, crisis communication plans and employee management training. He's also the author of, "Don't Talk to the Media Until 29 Secrets You Need to Know Before You Open Your Mouth to a Reporter."

I've known Gerard for years. I don't even know how long it's been Gerard but through our membership with the National Speaker's Association. One of the things I so admire about him is his inside knowledge of the media.

Since many office crave media exposure, I knew that Gerard would be the best person to interview for this podcast. Without further adieu, Gerard, welcome and thank you for being this week's guest expert and mentor.

Gerard Braud: It's so good to be here with you and hopefully to really help your folks so they can better market their book and sell more copies.

Susan Friedmann: Before we start, I just need to know this, all the years working in the media, is there a one story that you have that's cemented in your memory?

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- Gerard Braud: Probably the single best story that I've ever had fun with was the time that I talked to my boss into letting me do a TV series about dolphins, which put me in the Bahamas scuba diving with dolphins for four days. That is the best game I've ever run.
- Susan Friedmann: Having swam with the dolphins, I can see how wonderful that was and fun.
- Gerard Braud: I went with a guy who was the very first person to ever do that. In addition to the swim with the dolphin feature, you could take the dolphins out in 45-feet of water and go scuba diving with them on the ocean floor.
- Susan Friedmann: I can just see it. Lovely. Let's talk about the insider tips that you can give also when they have the good fortune to find themselves in the media either on radio or on television, what do they do? What are some of those things they need to do?
- Gerard Braud: The first mindset that an author needs to realize when dealing with the media is that it is not the media's job to give you publicity and to sell your book. If your sole purpose is to get publicity in order to sell books, you're going to have the door shut in your face on many occasions.
- Occasionally, you can look up and you'll find somebody who wants to talk purely about the book, but the key is to know that find difference between talking about the book and talking about your expertise as an author and the lessons that you share in the book that improve the lives for the viewers, the readers, or the listeners of that media outlet.
- The media outlet, the TV stations, or radio station, the newspaper, or the online publication, their primary goal is to sell advertising. That advertising keeps them in business. The only way that people want to buy the products and that the advertisers want to advertise, is that the content is rich and it benefits the knowledge or entertainment value of the viewer, the reader or the listener.
- Therefore, you have to realize that you're not here to just talk to the media. You're here to talk to the media's audience and to share willingly and openly and don't hold back. Give them information in such a way that it makes them want to know more and the way they find out more is to go and make the purchase of that book.

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Susan Friedmann: That's a very different flaunt and as you said going in and just saying, "Hey, I wrote this book and it's fantastic." Everybody's going to buy it.

Gerard Braud: One of the mindsets that authors need to adopt is to realize that the field of dreams paradigm does not apply to a book in the field of dreams, the same that took hold was, "If you build it they will come." It is not true that if you write it, they will come. It is not true that if you write it, they will buy. It is not true that if you write it, it will sell.

Marketing your book and selling your book takes an enormous amount of work and an author really has to begin doing that work to build a name and to build the following long before they ever publish the book. It's a process to especially now in a social media world, it's a process to be known as an expert. It's a process to build your mailing list if you have an online presence and a website. It's a process to build your list of avid fans and followers on Facebook or Twitter or Pinterest or Instagram or any of the other social media channels that are out there. It's a process.

An author should never be so naïve or so egotistical to think that just because you wrote this, they're going to come beating down a path to your door. It is hard work and it requires constant attention to feed the beast and to keep that flywheel turning in order to sell the quantity that you want to sell.

Susan Friedmann: If you find yourself as I say in front of an interviewer, what are the kinds of questions that they might ask? I know obviously they may be specific to your book, but are there some general questions? Should you supply the questions? How does this process work?

Gerard Braud: It is beneficial to give the reporter bullet points and suggested questions upfront to help guide them through the process. Most journalist who interview you about your book and never crack the cover of your book. For that reason, you need to make sure that the synopsis that is printed on the back cover is a really awesome synopsis.

Again, that synopsis should not be written from an egotistical point of view. It should be written with the reader in mind with emphasis on how it will benefit the reader. It needs to use the word, "You," more than it uses the word, "I, me, my."

Therefore, when a reporter gets ready to interview you, they're going to look at that synopsis and quite possibly nothing else. Therefore, you not

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only need to prepare a handful of questions, but you need to prepare some really awesome answers.

The questions might start with something broad such as, "What are the top three things that people will takeaway from reading this book?" Now, it's going to vary as to whether or not your book is written from a point of view of being an expert or whether your book is fiction. Let's just take it from the expert, the author who is an expert in the field of business or something like this or someone writing a, "How to book."

That is a perfect question to ask and it allows you to create a perfect answer that says, "When people read this book, they're going to learn and then you count it down first and when you give an answer, second then give an answer." If there are anecdotes that you have of how people would benefit it from reading your book, then you start talking about the benefits and that would be the question.

If the book is a fiction book, then you have to emotionally connect through the media to the potential reader and entice them by giving them a visual answer such as, "It's going to take the reader on the right if there are life." It will put them in the seat of a race car going down a highway at a 120-miles an hour and then you won't believe what will happen. Stop talking, wait for the reporter to say what will happen. Then you tease it a little bit more and you give a few more details.

Those are a couple of approaches that you can begin to use to get that conversation started. You really want to create an outline and part of creating that outline is to envision the setting that you will be interviewed in, who the reporter is interviewing you, and what their medium is. For example, if you're going to be on Good Morning Des Moines or Good Morning Peoria, the local morning talk show that so many towns have, it's probably going to be a three-minute interview.

The people interviewing you are generally going to be very young. All of the people in that studio will be sleep deprived, because they got up at two or three in the morning. By the time you arrive at 6:00, they have sleep deprivation and their attention span is very short. The people at home who are watching that TV station are multitasking, they're getting ready for work, the men are shaving, the ladies might be putting on makeup or doing their hair, selecting the right outfit.

Maybe parents are taking care of kids, there could be a commotion, there could be confusion, so you have a lot of competition. You only

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have three minutes and that's about enough time to answer three questions and to provide three answers, provided the questions say at 30 seconds and the answer stay at 30 seconds.

If on the other hand a book reviewer is writing for a magazine or a newspaper, they're probably going to write 24 to 36 sentences about your book. There are not a lot of details that you can give in 24 to 36 sentences, but knowing that that's how much they're writing, you can suggest maybe four or five questions and expect that regardless of what you say for an answer there will be a follow up question that is generated by something that you said in your answer.

It's very important to realize that your answer is what triggers the reporter's very next question. It's usually sequential. Most reporters do not come in to an interview with questions written down. They make them up as they go. In the case of radio, you might have 15 minutes, you might have 30 minutes, you might have an hour. At that point you need to really be prepared to have an in depth conversation. The secret to that is to be prepared to tell more stories, stories or the emotional connection on radio.

Susan Friedmann: I love understanding the background. I'd never even thought about all these, the sleep deprivation that these reporters have and the host have, and then of course on the other end the home environment or the station maybe fighting with. As you say the fact the shaving, the [inaudible 00:14:39] of what's going on in somebody's home.

This piece of jog and it goes around I know in the media it's sound bites. Can you talk to us about sound bites, what are they exactly and how do they fit into what you've been telling us?

Gerard Braud: A sound bite is a quote and in print, it's printed out as a quote in quotation marks. In television, if the television station is interviewing you and then editing a news report for the six, seven, 10, or 11:00 news, or whatever at the newscast, they might interview you for 10 minutes and only choose one quote and that electronic quote is known as a sound bite.

It will last six to 15 seconds in length and it is vital, if you want to be good in a television interview that you know what your sound bite is going to be before you say it and how you lead up to it and how you transition out of it and how to deliver that line in a way that it does not sound rehearsed. It must sound completely spontaneous.

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The philosophy that I use and I paid great success with writing sound bites and writing quotes. Because I'm a former journalist, I write the way a journalist would write. I take out what I affectionately referred to as the PRBS. PR for public relations, BS is self explanatory. You'll find it in a pasture behind a cal and on cold mornings warm steam rises from it. We have to eliminate the PRBS, because when it's present you can smell it a mile away and it stinks.

In writing a quote, it has to be rich and if someone is truly a great writer, they should understand and be able to visualize that excitement, that euphoria, that endorphin release that they get as a writer when they've written an awesome phrase.

I believe that just as runners tell us that they get a runner's high which is an endorphin release. I believe writers get a writer's high and that we get an endorphin release when we've come up with that perfect phrase. When the phrase, "One small step for men, one giant leap for mankind," was written, it still gives me goose bumps.

I have goose bumps right now just thinking about that moment in time and that quote. That is the type of thing you need to give a euphoric feeling or a goose bumps or whatever emotional feeling you can through the words that you say in a six to 12 to 15-second period of time. Seldom is that something that comes to you organically in the middle of an interview. It is best on days before when you're planning and practicing.

I cannot emphasize that you should never do a media interview unless you've been trained on how to do the interview, because it is not a normal conversation. It's a [fool's bet 00:18:21] if you ever walk into a media interview and think, "I will wing it." If you wing it, you will crash and burn. If you prepare and practice, it'll be brilliant, and you can actually control the outcome of what is said in the interview especially if it's going to be an edited interview.

That brings this back to your original question which is, "What is a sound bite?" It is a killer quotable quote.

Susan Friedmann:

That's a sound bite. That was definitely a sound bite. As you were talking, I was thinking, "Yeah, practice." It just doesn't come to you just sitting there and this brilliance that you expect the news to come and visit you while you're thinking in front of the reporter.

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Gerard Braud:

Yeah, and here's a good mindset and I cover this in my book that you mentioned earlier. The first lesson is don't talk to the media. Talk to the media's audience. The second lesson is to think if you could attach a dollar to every word that comes out of your mouth, would you make money or would you lose money?

I'll repeat that, if you could attach a dollar value to every word that comes out of your mouth, would you make money or would you lose money? If you think in terms of this interview being a portion of the sales machine, do you want to take a chance that you're going to make money?

Do you want to take a chance that you will sell books or will you put in the time and effort to prepare and train for the interview? If you truly want to sell books, if you put your heart in your life, in your blood, sweat, and tears into that book that you thought was so important that it had to come out of your fingers, if that was so important for you to do in life, it should be equally important that you should prepare for it and know the financial impact.

If you come across looking foolish or egotistical, if you babble, if you don't enrich the lives of the readers, viewers, and listeners, no one wants to buy your book. Not only do they not want to buy your book, they're likely to tell a friend, "Yeah, some bozo was on who wrote this book called X, Y, Z, I would never buy that. Have you heard of it? No, I wouldn't buy it."

On the other hand, if they love the interview, they're going to say, "I need that book." They're going to go online and they're going to buy it at that moment.

Susan Friedmann:

I think you've said quite a few but let's pinpoint a few, some biggest mistakes that people make in this environment?

Gerard Braud:

Giving a bunch of facts and figures is the worst thing you can do. Focusing too much on the, "me" as oppose to the "you." Focus on yourself is a problem. Many times, people miss getting down to the things that people need to know about the book because they talk at too high of a level, trying to appear to be too intellectual.

The average person who watches television in the United States has about a 6th grade educational level. The average person who reads a newspaper reads at an 8th grade level. With an information overload,

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people really want to consume information faster and short amounts of time. Therefore, nothing that you say in that interview should be greater than the words that you would use to a 6th, 7th, or 8th grader.

Some people get flustered when I teach them that in the training classes and they say, "We don't want to dump it down." My response is, "I'm never asking you to dump it down. I'm asking you to be inclusive." If we look at our global work forces, we've spent an enormous amount of money in global work forces going through diversity training which is designed to be inclusive with everyone. That's the same mindset that you have to have when you're doing a media interview. You have to be inclusive of everyone who can buy your book.

Those are a handful of things that the person conducting the interview, the author needs to be aware of.

Susan Friedmann: That's brilliant. I love that idea of being inclusive versus as you say people think that simplifying something means dumping it down, but it doesn't. It just means that it's just more comprehensible and people understand it and the stories, I think the stories and having those anecdotes of those stories that you can tell are just so important.

Again, as you said that practicing, how important that is. How can our listeners get hold of you? What's the best way to contact you?

Gerard Braud: The best way is to realize I have a very strange spelling on my name. Even though my name is pronounced, "Jarred", it is spelled like Gerard, G-E-R-A-R-D. The last name is French, B-R-A-U-D, that's pronounced Braud. My website is braudcommunications.com. My e-mail address is gerard@braudcommunications.com. You can always drop me a line and wherever I have to be in the globe, I will get back to you within a couple of hours.

Susan Friedmann: Tell us more about where people can get copy of your book because I think that's invaluable.

Gerard Braud: You can also send me an e-mail or you can go to the website, donttalktothedia.com and purchase it there. Of course websites do not take apostrophes so remove the apostrophe when you type out, donttalktothedia.com. You can also purchase it online at Amazon.

Susan Friedmann: I highly recommend it. Don't Talk to the Media Until 29 Secrets You Need to Know Before You Open Your Mouth to a Reporter. If you were

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to leave our listeners with a golden nugget of information, what would that be?

Gerard Braud:

Understand how a reporter conducts an interview and how they write a story or structure a story. The best way to understand this is to realize that the first day of journalism school, the instructor teaches you the golden rule of journalism which is, "The inverted pyramid." That means that every story begins with a synopsis sentence that known as a, "Lead," and that is usually followed within one or two paragraphs with a quote.

Think of when you pick up a newspaper, there is a headline followed by a synopsis sentence, followed by a quote. Those are the three most important elements. Therefore, when you begin your interview, you need to verbally establish a headline. You need to verbally state a synopsis sentence and you need to verbally get to the quote.

If an interview is going on too long, it's because the reporter doesn't understand you. Do not think the reporter is doing a long interview with you because they love what you're saying. It is the exact opposite. They are doing a long interview with you because nothing you've said up to now makes sense. Nothing is usable in their report, they really don't comprehend what you're talking about. That's the golden key.

A keen to that is to realize that when you pick up a newspaper or an online publication, you never read every story in that publication. Most of the stories that you do read, you don't read all the way to an end. You read usually the headline, the synopsis and the quote which is an indication that you really don't care about all the details in that story. Likewise recognize that if you don't care about someone else's details, they're not necessarily going to care about your details.

What they're going to care about is how much they can learn through the headline, through the synopsis lead sentence and through that quote.

Susan Friedmann:

What it reminded me of was I worked for a public relations company in England and when we wrote press releases, it was always anything that they would be able to cut had to be at the bottom. All the important stuff had to be at the top of the press release. I always remember that. Sorry.

Gerard Braud:

I thought you were hitting the music to end the show.

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- Susan Friedmann: No. Okay, so thank you so much for being our guest mentor and expert and look forward to people contacting you and hopefully buying your book because it's a real treasure. Don't Talk to the Media Until 29 Secrets You Need to Know Before You Open Your Mouth to a Reporter. Gerard Braud, thank you so much for being here.
- Gerard Braud: It is my pleasure. Good talking with you today.
- Susan Friedmann: Thank you for taking precious time out of your day to listen to this interview. I sincerely hope that it sparks my viewers you can use to sell more books.