

Alpha Nation Podcast

Todd Lamb Interview

With Craig Ballantyne

The Perfect Day Formula

Todd Lamb: Hey Alpha Nation, what's up. It's Todd Lamb here with an Alpha Nation podcast for you guys and today I have a very special guest. A guy that has mentored me through the online business world since about 2008 when I first found him through a program called Online Super Profits back in the day. Craig Ballantyne, it is my honor to have you on this show today.

Craig B.: No thanks so much Todd, that's an awesome introduction, I really appreciate it.

Todd Lamb: Yeah you bet. If you don't mind I just wouldn't mind taking the guys through a bit of your bio. Guys will be interested in this.

Craig B.: Sure. I can walk them through. I was born in Stratford, Ontario. No I'll start at when I was 25 years old, I got my big break when I was 25. I started writing for Men's Health Magazine and then I created this program called Turbulence Training, which is where I spent the next decade in the fitness industry. Then you and I met in about 2008 when I started showing other fitness experts how to share their message with the world. That's how we got to this point with all these great listeners on our call today because you took action like a champion. You've been taking action in so many aspects of life from in the police world through into this training world.

That's what I did for a long time and then I wrote a book called The Perfect Day Formula. I switched now to helping people get more done, make more money, still get home on time for dinner and really, really have an amazing work life balance I guess you would say but really having that dominating life.

Todd Lamb: Yeah it's a very powerful message that you deliver. I think what's important to point out to guys, listening to this interview is that you are actually considered the world's most disciplined man. That's saying something coming from my experience both in the military and the police world. You outpace most guys in terms of your work productivity, your commitment to health and fitness, your commitment to other people. It's very, very impressive and you've done that through your five pillars of success. You've overcome some challenges in your own life, which I want to dive into a bit further here. Right out of the gate I want to punch the guys right in the face with some wicked knowledge. Tell us something about how guys can improve their life using your Perfect Day Formula?

Craig B.: Sure. People do call me the worlds most disciplined man, mostly people that have never been in the military. Guys that are in the military listening to this, let's not challenge me to hard on that. Maybe the world's most disciplined civilian or something. The funny thing is Todd that is I became that way because I am so lazy. I had to put those systems into place to overcome my laziness and at the same time I leveraged my laziness to get my productivity really high. I do a lot what's called introspection. I'm sure most people can relate to this but when you think about your day when you make a connection

between the cause and effect in your life. It's really easy to do this for other people, it's a little bit harder to do this for ourselves as an aside.

When you do this when you sit there and you think, I was really productive today at 9 o'clock and I've got that meeting tomorrow at 9 o'clock or that phone call. What can I do to get revved at 9 o'clock meetings so that I can be really ruthless with my most productive time? I did that at a young age, realize that I had to protect my mornings. When I was a personal trainer I started getting rid of my clients who would train at that time of day. I passed them off to really good trainers. If they left and moved out of town I didn't replace them. In that way I just became really productive because I found that time.

It all comes back to your question there, what is the Perfect Day Formula? How can everybody use it whether they're a school teacher, a busy mom, someone whose training for a bodybuilding contest or someone who wants to be a book author and the answer is this. To make sure that you control your morning. That is one of the most important things in any area of your life because we have the greatest control over our mornings. We control what time we get up. We control what we think about first thing, what we focus on, the mood that we start the day in. We control what we eat for breakfast. We control what time we get to work if we leave early, if we leave late. It's so important to get your day off to a good start because it just leads to so much momentum over the course of the day. As I'm sure you have taught many people and you've experienced yourself right?

Todd Lamb: No question about it. I am relentless with my time in the mornings, really as a result of the lessons that you've taught me in my own life to be able to do that. What I've experienced about how once you start to open an email or you start to let outside influences creep in, it can really change, the trajectory of your day. Often times you finish your day feeling very unsatisfied with what you've accomplish when you don't control that two, three, four hour window like you teach for sure.

Craig B.: Yeah. You actually don't end up with any accomplishment at the end of the day. You end up with a lot of activity, which is different than accomplishment. Listen I've been there, I've had those 5 o'clock, 6 o'clock, 7 o'clock feelings where it's like, "Oh my gosh I was so busy today but what the heck did I actually get done?" It's because we were in reactive mode. Todd this is a generalization and all generalizations are bad but I always like to say that there's two types of people in this world. There's reactive people that struggle. They just can't get their footing. They just can't get their speed and momentum in their life because they're always responding to email. They're waking up late, they're getting caught in traffic because they're not planning ahead.

Then there's those proactive people who are successful in life. Going back to your time in the police force and all that stuff. You guys had to be so proactive in planning for when you're doing something that is high risk and high reward. That's the same sort of

approach we have to take with all of our lives. There's so many people, they put a lot of planning into their nutrition and their exercise. Once they get some information from experts like you but then they don't carry that over to the other areas of their life. Whether it's family or whether it's spiritual or whatever it is they want to get involved in or writing a book or even their work.

All it is, I'd like to say it's a champion mindset that a lot of us were champions when we were younger in a sport. Being a champion soccer player, football player, bodybuilder whatever it is, all that stuff can just be transferred into real life. Becoming an amazing teacher, an amazing cop, an amazing banker, an amazing anything, an amazing family person, an amazing dad. You just have to have that champion mindset transferred over because then it comes down to planning and preparation and coaching and all that stuff, which are actually my five pillars of success.

Todd Lamb: Right okay. Let me back you up there just before we dive into the five pillars. I know that you have a very specific formula, that you refer to as the 3 C formula. Do you mind just elaborating how that works?

Craig B.: Yeah so I teased a little bit of it with the control your morning. The 3 C formula I learned through studying Stoic philosophy. Stoic philosophy is getting kind of popular with authors like Brian Holiday and Tim Ferris, they talk about it a lot. It's really just a mindset, a world view about how to live your life and make sure that you don't focus on the wrong things. I learned this quote from a guy named Epictetus who lived thousands of years ago. He said, "Control what you can, cope with what you can't and concentrate on what counts." As soon as I read those words Todd I just felt this rush of, release of stress from my shoulders.

That is so true. That is the way to live life. Control what you can, you control your thoughts, words and deeds. You don't control how another person feels. You don't control the rain or the sunshine. Out in Victoria I'm sure you get quite a bit of rain. You can't get mad at that. You just got to know, I live in Victoria. It's beautiful but sometimes it's going to rain and you just have to control your thoughts about that and cope with what you can't control like the rain and traffic. Then concentrate on what counts, your mission in life, your family. Getting work done during the day so you can have true freedom at night.

I took that 3 C formula and I applied to the three parts of the day in my book. Control your morning, cope with the chaos of the world in the afternoon by being prepared for all those crazy obstacles that are going to come up in your way. Then concentrate on what counts at night. Be very structured and disciplined in your day so that you can have true freedom to be present with your family, health and hobbies at night and not have to check the phone every two minutes.

Todd Lamb: Yeah that kind of formulation I think in and of itself would set so people free. It's very powerful and liberating when you get down to the brass tacks of implementation and following like you say, being disciplined around those 3 Cs. You also mentioned rules. How does someone create rules for their life and why is it that they'd even want to do that?

Craig B.: Right most people are thinking this guy's crazy. Why on earth would I want more rules in my life? I've already got rules from the government, from my job, from all these things. You know what? When we have rules imposed upon us we rebel. It's just like a pheasant back in the day when the king is making the rules. Nobody likes people making the rules on them but when we make rules for ourself, it's really powerful. I like to use this analogy of the iPhone that most people probably have in their hand or in their pocket right now. If you think about an iPhone it has an amazingly powerful operating system, and that operating system is built on rules.

If you build your own operating system for yourself, you can become so much more productive, effective. You can use analogies like a bodybuilder. Bodybuilder has rules about training and diet and that's how they become the best they can be. Martial artists have rules about training and performance and that's how they become the best that they can be. You can use just use the analogy, the idea that when you go out on the road, there's traffic lights at every intersection.

That's the rules of the road and if the rules of the road were not there, we would not get to our destination safely and effectively. It would be chaos out there. When we put those rules on ourself we remove the chaos and we open up the opportunity for us to speed down the road, safely and effectively get to that destination and enjoy our true freedom. There's five rules that I help people build. Would that be okay if I shared them now?

Todd Lamb: Yeah by all means, please.

Craig B.: Okay so there are five templated rules. If someone reads my book *The Perfect Day Formula* they'll see how I have 12 rules and you certainly don't need 12. People would always say, "Well how do I get my own?" so I came up with these templated ones. The first one is to have a regular bed time and a regular wake up time. That's not the most exciting rule in the world but when I finally stopped resisting this advice, which I heard from my mentor for seven years before I finally implemented it. It made all the difference in my all day energy. I just went from being an 8 out of 10 most days to a 10 or even an 11 out of 10 every day.

I wasn't dragging my butt at 2 o'clock in the afternoon. I wasn't having a hard time getting out of bed. It was just so powerful because human body wants routine. The human body wants to eat at the same time every day. It wants to get up at the same

time, it wants to go to bed at the same time every day. I don't care if you get up at 9 o'clock in the morning or 6 o'clock in the morning but just get up at that time every day and you'll have more energy in your life. Of course people are thinking what about the weekends and date night and work trips? I understand, I probably have those two or three times a week. You will stay up a little bit later but try not to deviate too much from your wake up time.

Maybe have a nap the next day or go to bed earlier the next night but if you get out of sync with that wake up time, you're going to have a really hard time on Monday morning if you sleep in a couple of hours on Sunday. You can't fall asleep Sunday night, you're dragging your butt Monday morning, 2 o'clock you're falling asleep in your chair. It's not until Wednesday you're back on track. If you're a high performer, you've got to be on the get go from Monday morning so that's the first rule. Just choose your regular bed time, choose a regular wake up time and stick to it as much as you can.

The second rule is to focus on your number one priority in life for 15 minutes first thing in the morning. I see a lot of this in entrepreneurs where, they're doing all of these other things before they're focusing on what really matters in their business. I coach a lot of female entrepreneurs and they have this stress that they have to do meditation and gratitude journaling and yoga and interpretive dance. They have to do 19 things before breakfast because they read that some other person does them. Then they wonder why they can't get ahead, why they can't write that book, why they can't do the sales call. Why they can't finally hit \$100,000 in their gross revenue and it's because they aren't focusing on their number one priority first thing.

If your number one priority is to write a book, get up and write a book. Write a chapter in 15 minutes, maybe 30 minutes, maybe in 60 minutes. Just do your most important priority first thing in the morning. If you're not a writer, if you're not a business person but you're in \$3,000 worth of credit card debt, if you got up every morning and sat down at your kitchen table. No electronics, no distractions and you just sat there and thought, how can I get out of credit card debt?

How can I increase my income? How can I decrease my expenses? If you do that six days a week, 15 minutes at a time that's 72 hours in a year dedicated to your number one problem. You can't tell me you're not going to overcome that debt problem faster this way then if you just tried to find time over the course of the day to figure that out. Just give me at least 15 minutes preferably an hour but at least 15 minutes focusing on your number one priority in life, first thing in the morning.

Third rule is to have a foundational health rule. There's a million things we can do for our health and you can get caught up in that game of, the latest super food and all this stuff. What really matters is the simplest things. If the best thing for your health is to exercise 30 minutes a day in the gym, that's your health rule. If the best health rule for

you is to follow a paleo diet, follow that. Everything else will fall into place when you have your one foundational health rule.

The fourth rule is to make sure that you work on your number one wealth building activity every day. If you are a writer make sure that you write. If you are a sales person make sure that you aren't doing admin work all day and then not getting your sales calls in. If you are an investor make sure that you're spending time studying financial reports. Make sure that you're doing your number one wealth building activity every single work day. I'm the kind of guy who believes that working on Saturday morning is one of the most important things to accelerate your success so really it's six days a week.

Finally the fifth rule is you're not to do rule. We can do all these good things but we can also have one thing that holds us back in life and really, really can stop us from succeeding. In the extreme example if you take a look at investing, you can have a person who makes the right investments 9 times out of 10. Then 1 time out of 10 they make a bad investment and they put too much money in. They swing for the fences and they put all their money in Bitcoin. The next thing you know it drops 33% and they are wiped out of their money or something like that. It's because of that one bad mistake.

Another extreme example there Todd is a recovering alcoholic. Somebody's trying to stop drinking and get a life that's clean and sober and the thing is they do everything right six and a half days a week. They say their serenity prayer. They go and drink water and they go to the meetings. Then on Friday afternoon someone sends them a text message and says, "Hey meet me at the pub." That one mistake is going to ruin all of the good things. What I see in a lot of people is they check their email too much of Facebook too much or they drink too much. Too many glasses of wine at night. Some of these young guys with problems with online pornography. Don't judge yourself.

Just look and find that number one thing holding you back in life. Then make a rule around that, that I don't do this. I don't drink wine from Sunday through Thursday. I have a glass of wine or two on Friday and Saturday but I don't drink wine during the week because I have to wake up with a clear head. I'm a high performer and I want to go and have a great day. That's the type of mindset we have around that "do not do rule", which is the fifth rule, which is actually the most important of all I think. Hopefully those were helpful to everybody. They could see how that would allow them to be more successful in life because when you have those rules in place it requires less discipline and willpower, which is a depletable resource. You can apply that to other things over the course of your day. Was that helpful?

Todd Lamb: Very helpful yeah. It provides sort of anchors the concepts in something that's actionable for people. Those rules are those different from the five pillars of personal transformation or personal success that you use or are those the same things?

Craig B.: They are actually different yeah. The five pillars that I taught, I learned these from my weight loss transformation clients, which is pretty darn cool. I ran these before and after transformation contests since 2007, just before you and I met. We're up to 30 plus contests now, we try and run three a year. What I realized was the people who lost the most weight who stuck to the 12 week challenge and didn't drop out, they had these five things in place. Their better planning and preparation never before. Their professional accountability, positive social support, meaningful incentive and then the big deadline. I can walk through those in detail as to how they would apply in any area of life.

Todd Lamb: Yeah if you wouldn't mind giving us a couple of examples. I think people would benefit from that, absolutely.

Craig B.: Yeah sure. We use the weight loss example because it's really simple. When I realized these it was in 2008 but I realized I actually used them to overcome my anxiety attacks back in 2006. It wasn't until years later that I realized that I used them. Think about this in terms of weight loss. A lot of people wake up on January 1 and they say, "I'm going to lose 10 pounds." That's not a plan, that's just like some vague statement. They need to plan and prepare.

I'm going to use Todd's workouts three days a week. I'm going to follow the nutrition program that he recommends. I'm going to drink three liters of water a day and I'm going to sleep eight hours a day. Those are the things I control, that's my plan. I'm going to go and do it and that's how I'm going to achieve my results. You have to have better planning and preparation than ever before. That's the full title of pillar number one, better planning and preparation than ever before.

Pillar number two is professional accountability. This is getting the coach in your life. It's a little bit different than number three, positive social support, which are your cheerleaders in life. Your coach is going to give you two things that nobody else is going to give you, expert advice and professional accountability. No excuses. They're not going to let you get away with anything. If you mess up they're going to sit you down and say, "Okay you messed up. What happened and how can we make sure this never happens again?" That's so valuable because the accountability aspect, you can get all the good information in the world but if you don't have accountability on actually using it, you won't use it and you won't get anywhere so it's very powerful.

Third, the positive social support. Those are the people that are like cheerleaders, people on the side of the road as you run a marathon. They're just going to encourage you and pick you up when you're feeling down. They're not going to give you expert advice but they're going to give you that support when you're having a bad day, which is important. It's great to have those people as well. Just like when you go to a bootcamp workout. People get more results when they do that or when they go to a gym where

everybody else is getting results because they're surrounded by like-minded people and that's really important.

The fourth pillar is a meaningful incentive. What I found was, even though I was giving away money in these contests, people would still drop out. I was really confused and then I realized, the people that won the contest, they weren't doing it for money. They were doing it so they had more energy for their kids so that they'd be around their kids graduated college or got married. That was a meaningful incentive from their heart and from their mind. Whatever it is you want to change you have to have a meaningful incentive.

Finally just like the fifth rule is the most important one the fifth pillar, the big deadline is also the most important one. That is because it helps spur us to action in three different ways. First it gets us going, it gets us over that initial inertia. We're humans we like to procrastinate but if you have a deadline you get moving. Second when you're halfway through you're like, I feel like dropping out. I've been eating these same meals and doing these hard workouts and just getting bored of this.

You think, you know what? I'm halfway through it I'm going to finish it off so it keeps you going there. Finally as you get closer and closer to that deadline you actually tighten things up a little bit because it's all over next Sunday. I'm going to be perfect all week long and then I'm going to enjoy myself for one day and then stay back on track. That deadline spurs us to action all the time. Those are the five pillars. The better planning and preparation, professional accountability, positive social support and meaningful incentive and the big deadline.

Todd Lamb: Yeah that's fantastic. That's really good structure for people to, I use the phrase, "To get anchored to". I feel like once you have those roots in the ground those anchors from there it's ... you have the ability to build and grow and overcome these things. You make mention of overcoming anxiety with the five pillars. You may not remember this and I'll ask you how you did it but the last time you and I saw each other was in an elevator in San Diego, riding up after a business meeting. I was in the midst of a terrible anxiety attack on my way to ...

Craig B.: I could tell something was a little bit off because ...

Todd Lamb: We didn't even talk.

Craig B.: No. [inaudible 00:22:48] He's going to want to hang out and chat. No you were ready to get out of there.

Todd Lamb: Just needed to go and ... work through that process and using a very similar approach that you outline. When you're in the midst of it when it's an acute bout, it's a challenge for sure. I've done well with it the same way you have. There's always people, a lot of

guys in this group have anxiety. I'm interested to see how you are able to use those five pillars to overcome anxiety.

Craig B.: Yeah it's a great question. So many people mention it to me now that I talk about it on stage. I'm writing my next book on it Todd and so that will be out at Christmas time in overcoming the black box of anxiety. I can't wait to share it with people. I get text messages and Facebook messages from people in emergency rooms all the time just saying, "I don't know what I'm going through right now. You talked about it so do you have any advice?" What I found was, I need to do better planning and preparation for my life. I was young, I had too much freedom. I actually suffered from what I called the paradox of freedom, which a lot of people think they want.

They want to work whenever they want and do whatever they want but we need structure in our life and I didn't have any structure. When I suffered the anxiety I realized you know what, I need to do better planning and preparation. I need to cut off time for my work. I need to do better planning and preparation about my nutrition. I was dropping down to 75% good nutrition instead of 90% nutrition, had to bring that back up. That was better planning and preparation. Then I had to get professional accountability. Believe it or not I had to learn how to breathe properly, which sounds crazy. Most people actually breathe themselves into anxiety because they're breathing through their upper chest with short, shallow breaths.

When you do that you increase the carbon dioxide level in your blood and then that increases adrenaline in your blood and that makes you stressed out. I had to learn how to open up and breathe through my belly, a big inhale through my nose and then big slow exhale when I'm stressed out. That came through yoga and meditation and Qi Gong and all these things that I signed up for that I didn't like but I still went because I was paying coaches. I learned how to breathe properly through professional accountability. Then I have positive social support. Fortunately or unfortunately I had some friends who had gone through anxiety as well. They were always there to give me support.

A meaningful incentive, if anybody has ever had anxiety, meaningful incentive's built in right there. You just want to get rid of it because you don't feel normal, you can't concentrate. You can't engage in conversation when you're going through it. It's a bit frustrating and I call it a black box, which is why I think I'm going to have the anxiety. The Overcoming the Black Box of Anxiety as the title of my book because you can't explain it to yourself and you can't explain it to anybody else. You looked totally normal that day Todd and I looked totally normal the day that I asked one of my personal training clients to take me to the hospital. He looked at me like I had two heads but on the inside I was freaking out.

I couldn't explain it to him and I didn't really didn't know what was going on with me so I couldn't explain it to myself either. I was totally locked in this black box. The meaningful incentive for me was to go and do all these things I didn't like yoga and meditation

because I needed this to be resolved. Eventually it did resolve after about six weeks. It was pretty tough for those six weeks but I was able to overcome it. The reason why I was turning over every rock to overcome the anxiety was because I had a big business deadline. My anxiety started in March, I got rid of it in the middle of May and I had a big product launch and my business coming up in July. I knew that was going to be stressful on its own.

I thought there's no way I can be stressed out by the launch and be stressed out by this anxiety attack at the same time. I just won't be able to handle it. I had that deadline in my head and that spurred me to action. Those were the ways I overcame it and I hope that people listening will take some lessons away there. Just make sure that they get good advice from somebody that they learn how to breathe properly. That they lean on others for social support.

I tell people, "Anybody going through anxiety, you are tempted to isolate yourself but that's the worse thing you can do. You need to go and talk to somebody. You need to get fresh air. You need to not hold up in a room because that actually makes it worse." Even though you might feel ashamed or embarrassed by it you shouldn't be. There's nothing physically wrong with you if you get that checked out. Your doctor says, "Hey there's nothing physically wrong with you. That's okay, you're going to be okay. Just make sure that you're taking those steps, putting that stuff in place to overcome it."

Todd Lamb: Yeah. Very important advice. I think when you talk about somebody to lean on, somebody you trust because as we know mental health in and of itself has a stigma. Even as an individual going through these things, you have those questions in your head. Am I going crazy, am I dying? All of these different very scary things so it's nice to have somebody whose been through it, overcome it. Provide some kind of plan through their experience that people can take away and implement. Part of that process is concentrating on what counts. What I find is people don't even know how to figure out what counts. How does someone even know what they should be focusing on terms of what counts in their life?

Craig B.: Yeah it's a great question. Going back to what you mentioned, people are ... what you kind of alluded to is that people are getting a little bit stressed out, by not knowing what matters. A lot of us we end up spending a lot of time looking at other people's lives and getting stressed out. Thinking that oh my gosh their life is so much better than mine. We do this comparison syndrome and it causes so much unhappiness and stress. As I put together research from my book, we see that stress and anxiety and depression is going up and up and up. It's probably because people are comparing themselves to others. There's so many other ways through social media for people to get stressed out and think they're missing out on something. That's because we are not concentrating on what counts as you mentioned.

What I teach people to do is create a vision for their life, to set the right goals and to be clear about what really matters. One of my favorite exercises at the start of my Perfect Life workshop which is an extension of Perfect Day Formula is where we just extract values of somebody. It's just what really matters to you for your family, your health, your wealth and experiences. What do you want to achieve in the next 20 years? What would you be disappointed if it didn't happen? Nobody ever says, "I'd be disappointed if I didn't have \$10 million." No they say, "I would be disappointed if I didn't spend quality time with my family. I would be disappointed if I didn't experience, more time with my grandkids or being there for my kids when they graduate." This, that and the other thing.

Most people that's what really matters to them. Most of their energy goes into so many other things. I use this little analogy or this little diagram showing that often most people's actions are misaligned with their goals. If we use a very clear example from the weight loss world, you can see why this causes stress when things are not aligned. Mrs. Jones comes to me and says, "Hey Craig I want to lose 20 pounds." "Okay great. Show me what you eat." Right away you're going to see if your goal is to lose 20 pounds and you're going to Starbucks and eating unicorn frappuccinos and espresso brownies, your goals and your actions are so misaligned. That's why you're stressed out, that's why you're not getting results.

It's the same with people who are stressed by anything in life. I want to have more time with my family. I'm working 12 hours a day and spending 2 hours in a commute back and forth to a job I hate. How misaligned is that and you're going to be so stressed by anything. You're going to be stressed you're missing out. You're going to be stressed by work, you're going to be stressed by the commute. It's time to take a step back and realize and identify what really matters to you and then probably make some important shifts in your life. It all starts with identifying what really matters.

We go through that exercise, we help those people understand what matters to their health, their wealth, their family and their experiences. Then we start building the life through them and the perfect day for them. There's still successful. I'm not asking people to drop out of the world but you can still have an impact on the world. You can still make a good income and have more time with your family without ruining your life in this rat race.

Todd Lamb: That's great stuff. I think you've hit the nail right on the head when you talk about vision and values alignment. So many people are chaotic as a result of not having that focus and those things married up. That there's a lot of value when you get aligned and it absolutely is transformative when you do that. When I wrote a chapter of a book, I included you in there because I feel like your life exemplifies in what I refer to back then was sniper-like vision. A focus on achieving your mission. How have you used your vision to achieve exactly what you wanted in your life?

Craig B.: That's a great, great, great analogy you just used. I don't have as much experience with sharp shooting as you do but I use this analogy. The other day I was working with a coaching client. She's trying to do a million things. I use the analogy of okay, I actually looked on Google and I found a target that had been shot at with a shotgun and then with a high powered rifle. I said, "You see all those little dots on the outside of the bulls eye? That's your approach to life right now. You see those big holes in the center of the bulls eye? That's from being laser focused on doing less on saying no to things that are detours in your life." She was like, "Oh I get it."

A lot of women entrepreneurs are trying to do a million things. They get so much guilt about being a mom. They get so much guilt about being an entrepreneur so you just have to rein them in. When you do that and you're able to create your vision and be very clear and concise about it, then you're able to say yes to what matters and say, "No I'm sorry I can't help you on all the other stuff that doesn't matter." You have to say no. Warren Buffet has a great quote. "The difference between successful people and very successful people is that very successful people say no to almost everything." Warren Buffet spends 90% of his time sitting at his desk reading financial reports. He doesn't do a whole bunch of other things. He is so focused and that's why he's so successful/

For me I created a vision for myself back in 2006 when I hired my first coach. When I got that professional accountability to grow my business. The very first question on the very first call he said, "Craig what do you want your business to look like in five years from now?" I said, "Tom" which is the name of my coach. I said, "Tom I want to have a business like Early To Rise, which was a website that helped people build their health, wealth and wisdom." Then I went and became a better coach, a better speaker, a better writer, a better everything. Shared my own mastermind groups, started speaking, started teaching. Eventually I was able to buy the business of my dreams Early To Rise. It was 5 years, 3 months and 17 days after I first said, "This is the business I want."

I was 3 months and 17 days late so let's not give me too much credit. I did have that, it's almost like a law of attraction. I used the phrase, "The law of action attraction." You can't just sit in a chair and wish for things and expect them to show up. You can sit in a chair and envision things and then you have to get your butt out of the chair and go do a bunch of things to get that vision to come true.

Todd Lamb: Absolutely. In that vein, what would you say has been your number one mistake in your career?

Craig B.: It goes back to the coaching. Easily not getting a coach earlier in my life. I could have afforded one in 2003 but I was too cheap. You can see by my last name, I'm part Scottish. I was too cheap to get a coach. I wasted three years. I could have had a greater impact, I could have written my books earlier. I don't know what I could have

accomplished had I gotten that coach three years earlier but that's what I should have done.

Todd Lamb: Okay well that's really good advice. They do say that about those of us who are Scottish, short arms and deep pockets right? Alright. I've taken up a fair bit of your time. I want to move this really towards a conclusion by just a summary and maybe giving the listeners, just inviting them to take one action step that they can implement to take control of their time and own their day. What's the one action step that they can take?

Craig B.: We're going to go back to that second rule for your life, which is 15 minutes in the morning on your number one priority. It doesn't matter if it's an opportunity or a problem you have to solve. If you went down to your kitchen table, no electronics just pen and paper and sat there and just did clear, uninterrupted thinking for those 15 minutes, you'll have big breakthroughs. If you do that every single day you're doing that six days a week, that's 90 minutes a week, that's 72 hours in a year. It's like two full work weeks of working on your number one priority. That's proactive and that leads to success.

Todd Lamb: I can't stress enough how important things such as that are. I appreciate you actually highlighting it. When you do the math, you realize how productive you actually can be when you just take, carve out that very, very special time. Thank you so much for that. Craig I know you are one of the busiest guys in this industry. I really, really appreciate you taking the time out to have this interview with me to convey your knowledge. To those who joined me on Alpha Nation, I can't thank you enough.

Craig B.: Yeah it's really a lot of fun and good to catch up with you Todd. Really great to speak to a group of high performers.

Todd Lamb: Yeah okay. Guys that's it today from Alpha Nation. Thank you so much for taking the time to listen and we'll be bringing you more content like this in the near future. Enjoy your day, take care.

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