



TEL EPISODE #030:

EDGY Conversations with Dan Waldschmidt

Show Notes: <http://www.theelpodcast.com/tel-030-edgy-conversations-dan-waldschmidt/>

Welcome to The Entrepreneurs Library, the only book-centric podcast that reviews all the top-selling business books and shares author's perspective, firsthand. This is your resource to finding the next great book that will enable you to grow personally and professionally. Welcome your host, Wade Danielson.

WADE: Thank you for joining us today on The EL. Today we have Dan Waldschmidt, author of *EDGY Conversations*. Welcome, Dan, and thank you for joining us on The Entrepreneurs Library.

DAN: Thanks for having me here. I'm excited.

WADE: Definitely. Will you take just a moment to introduce yourself and tell us just a little bit about you personally?

DAN: Sure. Dan Waldschmidt. You could find out all the juicy details at danwaldschmidt.com or edgyconversations.com. But entrepreneur from I think the time I was 12, when I started my first lawn mowing business. I have to tell you, some of those first lessons I learned mowing lawns, a couple hundred of them a week sometimes growing up, not only paid my way through college but really formed the opinions that helped me make millions and millions of dollars by the time I was 25. So very, very valuable lessons, and I was grateful for parents who were smart enough to teach me those things.

WADE: Yeah, absolutely. Thank you for sharing that. Now let's jump right into your book, *EDGY Conversations*, which was just made available for purchase on April 2nd, 2014. Dan, we're going to move fairly quickly, but we're looking to cover a couple different questions that our audience would like to get answered.

The first question is, what was the inspiration behind *EDGY Conversations*?

DAN: Frankly, the reason I wrote the book was because I couldn't find something like it out there already. I already write a popular blog that millions of people read; I'm already speaking all over the world. Our consulting company does business I think in 13 or 14 countries right now. We're already places. I didn't do this to get rich – good luck to you if you are, in the book industry.

I read so many books growing up. In Chapters 2 or 3, you'll learn that I grew up without a TV in my home. Had to read a book a day. Reading books and books and books and books on motivation and biographies and inspiration and how to do better and how to be more and all of the things that fit that category of self-help, I guess you might say.

I never felt like I was getting the real deal, the real scoop. I always felt like it was too sanitized, too generic, too "follow these steps and it'll magically work out for you." And I thought, here I had made millions of dollars and I had done it breaking the rules. For awhile I felt embarrassed; for awhile, I thought, "Maybe like everything else in your life, you're kind of a doofus, and everyone else gets it and you don't get it, and you're the guy who learns and you're the last guy to figure out the 'aha' moment."

But then as I began to mingle with friends who were billionaires and heads of states and influential people – our offices, by the way, are headquartered in downtown D.C., so you might be able to deal with all of those things over one cocktail party – but as you're mingling and talking to really rich and famous people, I began to notice this pattern that none of the people I was speaking with or had spoken with or was meeting with, negotiating with, doing these big business deals with, had the story that was so clearly planned out by the motivational gurus and experts and business gurus that I had read their books.

And then I thought, okay, so I'm not completely crazy. Maybe somewhat, but not completely. And if everyone I know doesn't fit the mold, then what is the mold? So that kind of inspiration – what do ordinary people do that enables them to achieve outrageous success – was the impetus behind 4 years of work, studying 1,000 different high performers in business, math, sports, science, and politics.

It was that driving question, how do ordinary people achieve extraordinary results? Outrageous success, of course, as we subtitled the book. How does that happen? It happens. It happens all around us. How does it happen? So that really drove us to sit down, spend years' worth of work, and carve off this book that, as you mentioned, is now a bestseller a few months later.

WADE: Excellent. You touched on this just a little bit, but what makes your book different from others regarding the same topic?

DAN: In this self-help category, we kind of fall into – /spiritual/how to make money, there's a lot of those slashes that you could put in there – the difference is several fold.

One being you'll probably find this to be somewhat tough love. It's not a super syrupy book that says "Oh, if you only had these tools you could be better, only if you followed this process, you could be better." We kind of slap you in the face and say, "Listen, even if you follow the best process in the world, 9 times out of 10 you're still going to have to struggle. You're still going to have to fight your way uphill." We teach you what to do in that process. We don't sugarcoat it.

#2, we tell some truly inspirational stories of normal people. What I found in reading some people that I respect – and in the last 3 or 4 weeks, I've had the chance to meet with amazing people like Chris Widener and the Tony Robbins team and the Brian Tracey team and some really amazing, inspirational forces that framed my thinking and actually keep me motivated even to this day – it's just a different framing point.

It's a different perspective – different perspective from the fact that the life that I've lived and the billionaires that I interact with and the ordinary people that I see make something of themselves don't plan for things to be easy, don't plan for "Hey, I'm going to stay motivated, I'm going to put a sticky note on my mirror that says 'go be awesome' and then I'll go be awesome." These are guys who plan for things to be tough.

So we kind of write this book from the ordinary man's approach. If you've ever read a book that you thought, "Wow, that's some good ideas, but that guy just didn't get me," I felt like I had read 40 or 50 of those. And this book is different because we take it from an ordinary man's approach. I dropped out of college twice. I think I mention that in the book. Spent 5 years in university, had made millions of dollars. The only reason why I was still in college was because my mom said to me, "You're never going to be somebody if you don't graduate." Finally took me a few months, a few years to say "Dude, you're already somebody."

Realizations like that framed my thinking to say let's write a book where somebody who's down on their luck, who's broke, who says "Dan, I don't even know if I'm going to have a paycheck in 2 weeks; Dan, I don't even have a great job right now – what do I do to achieve extraordinary results?" We're going to tell you. That's the perspective of the book. It's a little bit different than some of the syrupy stuff that you read and you go, "Golly gee, that made me feel good; now what?" This is a book that's going to say to you – when you're done, your thinking will be transformed. You might love me, you might hate me, because it's in your face. But at the end of it, you're not going to be the same person.

WADE: Excellent. How do you want the reader to engage with your book? Is this a book they can read from beginning to end, or is it more of a resource where they can jump into certain parts depending on where they're at currently?

DAN: You can pick it up in the middle if you want. I suspect after you read the first few pages, you're going to want to start from the beginning to the end. I tell a really personal, deeply personal story in the book. And of course, I'll leave you hanging so you have to go buy the book, or frankly you can go to Amazon or our website and download the first few chapters for free anyways. But I tell the story of a really low spot in my life when I had millions of dollars and wanted to end my own life and how that experience really forced me to get myself together.

What I hear from people writing back to me is, "Dan, I took this to the bathroom with me, all 150 pages, and I read it in one sitting." Good for them. Wherever you're sitting – on a plane; hopefully if you're at the dinner table, you're spending

time with the people you're sitting with, but it's really a book you can take in one sitting.

You want to come back to it, though, because there's over 150 stories in the book. There's probably stories you're going to want to share with somebody and say, "Dude, I read this book from this guy named Dan; it was incredible. You ought to hear this story." The stories in this book are so unbelievable, of ordinary people.

We tell a story I think in Chapter 2 or 3 of a poor, black, on welfare kid, one of nine kids – a nobody from nowhere, literally in the swamps of Florida – who goes on to become in the Hall of Fame for football. And oh by the way, if being poor and broke and a nobody wasn't enough, Carl was born with one leg. We tell Carl's transformational story inside the book. I mean, just story after story after story after that.

Now, we made it really easy for you: as you flip through the book with your thumb, slide through the book, all the stories are in bright red. So if you're just, for a church group or a focus group or a team kickoff meeting – I've had people on the radio just tell those stories, read those stories verbatim from the radio or from the pulpit or from their group podium. So it's made to be something where you can sit down and go, "I'm a changed person," but then hopefully you'll go back to the book and share those stories with somebody else who needs to be inspired.

WADE: Fantastic. The next part of this interview is really where we ask you to take a deep dive into your book. You've already given us a really good idea of some of the different stories, of some of the different content of the book, so we might take a different direction with this and really just ask more – again, it doesn't have to be chapter by chapter, but what are you looking for this reader to get out of this book?

DAN: Fantastic. I'm looking for full-on, hardcore transformation, okay? We're not looking for you to find a process to make more money. We're not interested in you working less, anything like that. We are looking for you to see the world in a



new way that you've never seen it before. Full-on, hardcore transformation. That's our goal. That's our mission.

Now, the way we structured the book was as if I am sitting in front of you, pleading with you to give me another paragraph or two to believe what I have to tell you. Frankly, I've been on the stage many times where I look out into the audience and I see the skeptics. I see the cynics. Especially when I talk about something like giving. When I wrote this book, I wanted to create a structure that just about the time you said, "Come on, Dan, come on," there would be a story or an illustration or a factoid that would pull you back in.

So the structure of the book, I start with a story, my own personal story, and I end with the conclusion to that story. And then the next few chapters are to convince you that being EDGY is something that you actually want to do. We set the tone for why people try to be successful but don't. They're trying to bolt on skills when they don't need skills, they need will. Not skill, they need will. We talk about the environment, the playing field for being successful, why it's changed.

And then the next four sections of the book – in fact, we've even made this super easy. I don't know if I mentioned this before, but this is a four-color, hand-illustrated, beautiful 186-page hand-illustrated book. There's illustrations on a lot of pages. The four sections of EDGY – E, D, G, Y – are then carefully argued to you.

Essentially, we uncovered the fact that there were four unique attitudes or philosophies of ordinary people who achieve outrageous success, outrageous results. Four. Four that they all shared. First, they were extreme; they had extreme behavior. Secondly, they showed disciplined activity. Third, they were givers; they gave more value than they took from other people. And fourth, they had a y(h)uman strategy – you might call this emotional intelligence. These four behaviors, attitudes, philosophies, framed up everything they did, every strategy they employed, everything they did to be better. It was their journey, the way they viewed the world.

So we make the argument in the book that you should strongly consider being extreme, and how to do it. You should strongly consider being disciplined, and not

just doing more, but denying yourself more. We make that argument inside the book, and we'll tell you why.

There's some magical stories about a gentleman who was homeless on the streets of Atlanta, a nobody, had just lost his job – went on to become a multimillionaire, found the love of his life, found what he was passionate about in life, all because he gave what he had. That's the next section we talk about, being a giver, and why you can never give too much, even when you think you have nothing to give, and why giving does for you what no other strategy in business will do, which is melt down doorways, melt hearts and minds, get people to care about what you care about. We share it passionately in the book.

The last section, we talk about the human strategy and why most people go wrong because they're really good at their own version of logic, but they're not good at everyone else's version of logic. We'll tell you briefly, without getting too nerdy, how brains work and how your brain works and how everyone else's brain works, and how to be emotionally intelligent so that you can persuade, you can inspire, you can rally to your cause the people who want to help you.

So once we're done with the two opening chapters and we're through the four main sections of EDGY, illustrated with stories and examples, then we come to a conclusion where this is your time to figure out if you're ready to change your life or not.

So the final two chapters are one chapter where we talk about there's always a good reason to make an excuse. When you've got to this point in the book, we think we've convinced you that EDGY is a pathway that will help you as a normal, ordinary Joe, to become extraordinary. But there's always an excuse. "I'll do it later" or "That worked for everyone else, but it probably won't work for me." There's always an excuse, and we hit that head-on.

We tell a hundred stories back to back, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, a hundred stories in your face from every age of 1 to 100 of somebody who did something outrageous at that age. Someone who said "no excuses."

And then the last chapter is really a call to arms. I tell a story that has inspired me many, many, many days, a story of the Spartans. Of course, there's the movie 300, which glamorized that story, but most of us don't consider – we play a game of basketball, we're exhausted, we go running – I'm a big ultra-runner; I run races that are 50, 100 miles plus. Sometimes it takes me 16, 20 hours of nonstop running. That's tiring.

Here the Spartans stood, 300 men against many say 2 million. Imagine swinging the sword in your hand for hour after hour after hour after hour. And the Greek historians tell us that the Persians were so intimidated by the ferocity of the Spartans that they had to take whips to whip their men forward so that they would, of course, be driven into battle where the Spartans killed them, these 300 men, strong and all-encompassing.

That's where we try to inspire you as the reader to say okay, you may think you're putting on a suit and going to the office, you may think you're putting on a tie and going to church or to community or to school or to wherever you're doing your "job," but it isn't a job. Your mission, it's a war, and you need to gear up to go to war.

When Alexander the Great conquered the known world before he was in his mid-30s, he didn't stop and ask for permission. He didn't stop and A-B test. He didn't stop and buy fancy tools. When he got to the gateway of India, Alexander the Great stood up in front of his men – no one had conquered King Porus, King of India; they had elephants, they had warfare that no other country had, and they had been able to thwart all of the attempts by invaders thus far. Alexander the Great stood in front of his men – his men had fought for 10 years. They were tired, hadn't slept with their girlfriends. Wasn't a good time, 10 years being away from home.

And Alexander the Great, whose teacher was Aristotle, stood in front of his men and he said, "Gentlemen, today we will decide whether upon my judgment we will go forward or whether upon some of yours we will go back." Then he paused, historical accounts say, and he said very simply, "I will make those who go the envy of those who stay."

That's the point of this book. If you've ever looked at somebody else and said, "I want that. I deserve that for my life. That's what I was meant to do. That's the person I was meant to be," that's what this book is about. I will make those who go, who fight, who win, who put their life on the line to achieve something bigger than themselves, the envy of everyone else who stays in the comfort of excuses, who stays in the comfort of saying "coulda woulda shoulda, they got lucky, I'm so bad, life is horrible to me, if I had them I could do better," all the excuses we make. Alexander the Great had it right. Those who go will be the envy of those who stay. And of course, Alexander the Great did what no other general had ever done, and he conquered India.

And then we wrap with a story of the conclusion of the dramatic story I end with. Hopefully by the end, we've made an impassioned case, not with fluffery or puffery or words that sound pretty and rhyme, but with the blood, sweat and tears of ordinary people who were nobody and didn't deserve to be successful, they didn't deserve to be on the podium winning an award, they didn't deserve to be the billionaire making the money that they eventually became. They didn't deserve any of that. According to the world's standards, they should've shut up and done nothing and been a nobody and not try to make a difference and not try to do anything that would rattle the cage.

And instead, we teach you that you as an ordinary person – you might be nobody, have nothing, never planned to be the somebody who has it all – but you can achieve what you desperately want to achieve, but you've got to change the rules. You've got to transform your life. And EDGY is the pathway that these people have done it, and it might be the pathway that you can do it as well.

So that's the challenge of our book. That's the argument that we definitely want you to argue with yourself, is "What if I were more extreme? What if I were more disciplined? What if I gave more? What if I understood the people around me a little bit better? How much more powerfully might I live my life?"

WADE: Excellent. Dan, that might be the best review of a book I've ever heard in my entire life. If it has one-tenth the passion, the inspiration that you've done in

this interview so far, then that book is gold. So I appreciate you really taking us down to the ground level, sharing some of those different stories. I don't know how someone hears what I just heard when they're listening to this on the podcast, running, working out, doing whatever, and they don't go out and grab this book immediately. So I appreciate you giving us a breakdown.

Now, unfortunately, this next question might seem almost difficult to answer, because what we're asking is if the reader could only take one concept, principle, or action item out of your entire book, what would you want that to be?

DAN: One thing: try more. Simple concept. A lot of EDGY comes down to one thing – trying. Trying gets knocked – most famously by Yoda, right? Most famously, people say “Oh, there is no try. There is only do.” What people forget is that trying is what you do until it's done. There is no “do” without a “try.” Trying is what you do.

So we often make this imagery in our mind as if “I'm going to go run a marathon,” and you just wake up one day and run a marathon. “I'm going to go lose weight.” No, you don't run a marathon. You try, and you train, and you practice, and you prepare, and when you get off course, you get back on course. That's what we saw from people as epically famous as Tommy Edison to people in their garage that no one have heard of who go invent the next rocket, is that they try more. That's what they do. They try more.

So what I would challenge all of us is that once or twice failing isn't a sign – by the way, now that you've gotten me on a soapbox, it's also one of my pet peeves with something like A-B testing. Nothing wrong with testing A or B, but when you're small, your A is smaller than your B. You've got nothing. So you're comparing two small things; it doesn't really matter. Back in the day, you tried one thing and then you tried something else. That's ultimately – we didn't have technology trying to dictate our decisions; we led because we were passionate about something.

Silly example: we tell a brief story in the book about Harland Sanders. Harland Sanders was an old man, 65-year-old man. Had a restaurant, life was good. No issues he could think of, until the stat of Kentucky decided “We're going to

reroute a road” that went right by his restaurant, and all of a sudden he had a building and a bankrupt business and a 3x5 card with a recipe for fried chicken on it.

And he said, “I think I can make a business out of this,” and he pitched that recipe 10 times, 20 times, 100 times, 500 times, over 1,500 times until he could find an investor who would put money into him. Ultimately, from the time he was 65 to in his late 90s, he was a man who built a billion dollar franchise that Pepsi-Cola now calls one of their featured cornerstone companies.

How? At 65, he shouldn’t have been trying stuff like that. No, he should’ve retired, taken his money and just made his way gently out of the universe, right? That’s what he should’ve done. Instead, he said, “I’m going to try more.” I don’t know how you can see these people around us, ordinary Joes, nothing fancy, just an old guy with a recipe he believes in –what did he do? He tried more. And that’s the challenge for us, I think.

WADE: Excellent. Very good. Dan, this next question, I want to give you an opportunity to kind of brag on yourself as a writer now, and that’s do you have a favorite quote that you wrote from your book? And if that’s too tough to answer, do you have one that’s resonating with your audience?

DAN: Yeah, if you go to edgyquotes.com, you’ll see almost 300 of these that we pull from the book or pull from blog posts, our EDGY Conversations blog posts. But one of my favorite quotes is “If you stop doing the right thing before it starts working, you’ve just done the wrong thing.” One more time for you: “If you stop doing the right thing before it starts working, you’ve just done the wrong thing.” And that applies to everything as simple as planting a field with corn or trying to get a startup off the ground.

I think it’s funny sometimes, or it’s interesting to take these analogies to an absurd conclusion, just to see how silly some of our excuses become. A farmer doesn’t just decide one day, “Hey, you know what? I think I’m going to grow corn,” and he goes out and throws some corn in the ground, some seed in the ground and puts some water and fertilizer on it and then sits back in a few days

and says, “You know what? This isn’t growing. I don’t see anything. I planted the seed, I followed the instructions on the fertilizer, I had it watered, it’s in the sunlight. I don’t see anything. This isn’t working. I’m giving up farming. I’m going to go plant potatoes now because the corn isn’t growing.”

No, no, no, no. Things take time, and along the way there’s going to be a thunderstorm, there’s going to be some showers, there might be some flooding. There’s going to be obstacles that get in his way. Just giving up because things don’t go as quickly as he plans it to go isn’t a good formula, and that’s why I often say if you stop doing the right thing before it starts working, you’ve done the wrong thing. You’ve done the silly thing. If you’re doing the right thing – and you get to determine what the right thing is. No one else gets to determine that for you. If you keep doing the right thing long enough, it always works.

One side note: I never met any of the thousand people, any, never met one of the thousand who said to me “Dan, I got to tell you, I was heads down working and all of a sudden I gave up, and now I’m magically successful. I wish I would’ve given up earlier.” None of them said to me, “You know, Dan, I was trying and trying – I realized I just needed to work smarter, not harder.” None of them.

You know what they all said to me? “Dan, I had my back against the wall, I had my home mortgage, I was living in a van down by the river. My best friends didn’t believe in me – heck, I didn’t even believe in myself. And one day, Dan, the sun came out, and that was it. And then from there, everything else began to grow. The darkness of the night wasn’t entirely past, but I made it through to the other side, and what seemed like impossible now seemed possible, and then possible became doable, and then doable became done.”

I just think that’s so inspiring. I’ve just not met many people who say – I’ve not met any from the book, but I’ve met a few who can with a straight face say “I gave up, I pivoted,” whatever word you want to put in there for stopping. “I stopped, and now everything is better.” No. It’s those who keep their head down – as Steve Jobs says, it’s the crazy ones, right? That’s who inherit the earth.

WADE: Excellent, thank you so much for sharing that. Dan, there's no doubt in my mind that your book is going to create paradigm shifts for different individuals that read it, different entrepreneurs. The next question is basically is there another book that you can recommend to our audience of entrepreneurs and readers that created a paradigm shift for you?

DAN: Well, I went to seminary early on, so I could throw you the cheap colloquial answer of the Bible. But I think that to each their own for that.

One of the books that helped frame up a lot of my thinking, going way back, is a book by David Sandler, *You Can't Teach a Kid to Ride a Bike at a Seminar*. That's way old. I think that's even out of print. That's way out of print right now.

But I'll tell you, a lot of that book comes down to two simple phrases, one of them being "what makes you say that?" The reason why I like that is that is where the light bulb went off in my head when I started asking people "What makes you say that?" Someone would ask me a complex business question, even my wife would ask me a question, and I would say "What makes you say that?" and I would start learning the intention. I would learn not what she was saying, but why she was saying it.

Once you learn the "why" inside people's minds, questions, answers, once you understand the "why," all of a sudden you realize what's really motivating them. And once you understand what motivates them or what they want to motivate them, all of a sudden you really understand them at a deeper level.

And that's what we were able to do with these thousand people, is understand not just what they did – not that they made money or they conquered sports or they became a political figure when no one expected them to. It's the fact that underneath it all was the simple formula, the simple formula of "why?" And that's what EDGY Conversations tries to lay out for the reader, is if you want more for yourself, here's how you get it.



WADE: Very good. Dan, before we depart, can you recommend the best way for our listeners to get more information on you and on your book, EDGY Conversations?

DAN: Yeah, absolutely. You can go to edgyconversations.com. That may be more simple than going to danwaldschmidt.com. Of course, if you Google me, you'll find I'm everywhere, pretty much. But I think even if you misspell it, you'll get close enough that it'll find you. But edgyconversations.com. There's information there; you can look at the book.

Every book comes with a workbook as well, and so you can actually not just go through the book, but we ask you a few hard-hitting questions that parallel what you're reading inside the book – questions about what you're fearful of, questions that get you to open up to yourself.

Once there, you'll see we have links to a bunch of other properties. Everything is free. The book is something you pay for, but everything else, including the workbook, is something that we provide to you at no cost. You can check out our other sites, EDGY Quotes if you need some inspiration, or EDGY Audit, where you can look at how well you're doing in being edgy.

Look, we work with billion dollar companies and transforming their business, solving complex problems for that. Everything else, we try to give away. That's our mission. Our mission is to inspire ordinary people to achieve outrageous success. So besides buying the book, if you want to do that, we won't charge you a penny for anything else. Our mission is to really get behind people who want to change.

And if you want to change, come hang out with us. Come hang out with us. Come learn with us. Come be a part of our team and get involved in things that truly transform your life – not just the day-to-day transactions that usually bog you down with busyness.



WADE: Excellent. Dan, thank you so much for coming on, sharing your book, sharing your passion, your inspiration. I think the audience is going to get a huge amount of value out of this.

DAN: Thanks for having me.

WADE: Definitely. Thanks again for listening in today. If there is a book you would love to hear reviewed by the author, please visit us on iTunes and leave us a review with the book title. If you would like to get your hands on EDGY Conversations or any of the other resources mentioned by Dan, just look at the show notes at TheELPodcast.com.

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