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**INTERVIEW SERIES**

**“Mail-Order Maverick”**

**Joe Sugarman Reveals...How To Be  
Super-Successful...Just By Learning  
To Turn Obstacles Into Opportunities**

**An Interview With Legendary Business  
Success Coach Joe Sugarman**

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I'm Michael Senoff, founder and CEO of [HardToFindSeminars.com](http://HardToFindSeminars.com).

For the last five years, I've interviewed the world's best business and marketing minds.

And along the way, I've created a successful home-based publishing business all from my two-car garage.

When my first child was born, he was very sick, and it was then that I knew I had to have a business that I could operate from home.

Now, my challenge is to build the world's largest resource for online, downloadable audio business interviews.

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Now, let's get going.

Michael Senoff

*Michael Senoff*

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# **“Mail-Order Maverick” Joe Sugarman Reveals...How To Be Super-Successful... Just By Learning To Turn Obstacles Into Opportunities**

*An Interview With Legendary Business Success Coach  
Joe Sugarman*

Joe Sugarman revolutionized mail-order marketing in the 1970s, started the mega-famous Blue Blocker sunglasses company, and has written three very profitable books. And in this audio, you'll hear how he became super-successful and how you can do it too – and it might just be as simple as changing your philosophy on failure.

Joe says very few people have had as many failures as he's had in life. But because he believes that there's a hidden opportunity in every problem, he's never let failure keep him down for long. And in this audio, you'll hear exactly how he turned his problems into super-success stories and how you can learn to find hidden opportunities too.

You'll Also Hear...

- The surefire (yet unexpected) way you can look around at your friends and family and know for certain you've got a winning business idea you
- How to create the ultimate goal of marketing – branding – and how to know when you've achieved it
- Why you should NEVER focus on money if you want to have money in life – and what you should be focusing on instead
- The 3 things you must do if you want to have a super successful business in today's economy
- How to use the “feeling of involvement/ownership” in your Internet marketing campaign to drive sales to new heights
- 2 quick-start tips for anyone thinking about breaking into the copywriting field

- The simple phrase Joe used that tripled his response rate overnight

Joe says if you want to be successful in business, you should learn all the rules so you can carefully follow them one by one. But if you want to be super-successful, you've got to learn all those rules so you can break them right and left. And in this audio, you'll hear how he did it, along with the other little-known insider secrets that super-successful people use to climb to the top.

Arthur: Good evening, everyone. I have another special interview for all of you. Tonight I have a wonderful person on the call. His name is Joe Sugarman and for those that don't know Joe, let me explain to you about this incredible man. Joe Sugarman is the chairman of JS&A Group, Incorporated, Blue Blocker Corporation, Delstar Publishing and president of a biotech company, Stem Cell Products LLC, all based in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The New York Times called Joe Sugarman a mail order maverick, bottom line regarding him as one of the country's greatest copywriters, and Success magazine called him one of the most successful direct marketing gurus of all time. Joe Sugarman defied the experts throughout his career and came out with the legendary successes that broke many of the marketing rules of his time and that is an awesome resume. Without further ado, I'd like to welcome Joe Sugarman to the call.

Joe: Thanks for the kind comments.

Arthur: I'd like to thank you, Joe, for taking time out of your busy schedule to educate my listeners about the power of copywriting and the power of marketing. I gladly appreciate it.

Joe: It's my pleasure. I should clarify something. You probably have never had somebody who's failed more times than I have, so I'm probably the biggest failure

you've ever had on your program. I was lucky and there were a few principles that I followed that brought me a lot of success.

Arthur: Okay. What I would like to know, get you to educate my listeners in regard to who you are, how long you've been in your powerful industry and what is your expertise?

Joe: I think the strongest thing I have is the power of my pen. In other words, I am a writer, basically a writer. Through my writing I have been able to create persuasive messages that have brought me success. I would say it's just my ability to write. Also I think another thing is the fact that I've had so many failures. I've had this philosophy also that has helped me a lot and that is that for every problem lies within that problem an opportunity so big that it dwarfs the problem. Whenever I have problems, whenever I have failures, I look at the situation and I say to myself okay, where is the opportunity here? Sometimes there is no opportunity. You just have to take your lumps. I can give you – would you like a couple examples?

Arthur: Yes, I would.

Joe: I think probably a good example is the toll-free number, toll-free order number. Before there was toll-free order taking, the credit card companies did not allow you to take an order over the telephone because they insisted on having the signature of the person purchasing your product. We had to sign an agreement with credit card companies that we would have the signature of the client. In the beginning, one of my first products that I discovered was the pocket calculator and I noticed that there were a lot of people who would call me and say, "Mr. Sugarman, we need this calculator right away but we don't have time to fill out the coupon and send it in and sign it and all that kind of stuff." So I would take a chance and I'd sign their name for them and I'd send out the calculator.

I did this for about six months and it was a problem. I looked at this problem and I said to myself, "Where's the opportunity in here?" I know that nobody has taken

advantage of me, nobody has ripped me off in any way, so maybe I can figure out – maybe what I can do is – I know what I can do. I looked at one of my ads and there was a coupon on it and right above the coupon I decided I would put the line, “Credit card buyer’s call toll-free.” It was small because I didn’t want to draw attention. I ran the ad and I acquired some toll-free numbers and we were deluged.

This was like in 1973, October of 1973. We’re deluged with orders and by noon we had broken even. Before it used to take a week, ten days, two weeks sometimes to know if you broke even because it took awhile for all those orders to come in and the checks or the credit card numbers and the signatures and all that stuff, but by noon I knew I had a winner, so I kept advertising. I put this little line in there, “Credit card buyers call toll-free.”

I did that for about six months and then I get a call from the Bell Systems. They were the people who were in charge of selling toll-free numbers. They called me up and they said, “Mr. Sugarman, we have been observing your activity and we would like to feature your company and your success in a full-page ad in the Wall Street Journal.” I said, “Well, you know, it’s illegal what I’m doing. It’s not the correct thing to do.” They said, “No, no, we’ve already talked to the credit card companies. We’ve been monitoring you. We’ve been following your success and we realize the great opportunity that you probably have discovered.”

Sure enough, they featured me in the Wall Street Journal and as a result of that discovery and that combination of things I put together and made happen, because of that problem that I turned into an opportunity, the whole direct marketing industry exploded. Catalogs started to proliferate. Mail order ads, fulfillment centers, call centers. In other words, it created a number of industries in direct marketing and increased the potential of direct marketing as a great vehicle.

I have this philosophy that if you want to be successful, you learn all the rules and you follow them one by one, but if you want to be super successful, you learn all

the rules and you break them one by one. I don't mean illegally or anything like that, but you understand what I'm saying. In other words, you've got to think out of the box and you've got to think different and that's how I discovered Blue Blocker, Blue Blocker Sunglasses.

This is a company that I started 23 years ago and it was from a problem, originated from a problem. I was with a friend of mine, he was a manufacturer's representative taking me to see a product and I was squinting. It was a bright, sunny day in Los Angeles. We were driving down the 405 and he saw me squinting and he handed me a pair of sunglasses and I put them on and I said, "Wow, I'm not squinting anymore and things appear sharper and clearer. What's the story behind these?" He told me, he said they were made for NASA and he told me the background about ultraviolet light, which I never knew, and the danger of blue light and the diseases they cause and all sorts of interesting things.

I said, "Well, this would be a great mail order item." He said, "No, the company's going out of business. They're not going to be around very much longer. If I were you, don't worry about it. You shouldn't be interested in this product." I didn't think much of it and went back to Chicago and we were doing an eight-page catalog for United Airlines and it was to be inserted in their magazine. One of the products I discovered dropped out because the company went bankrupt, so I had to fill it in with a new product. I had a problem. I called my friend, "Look, I need that pair of sunglasses. I'll figure out a way to make them. I've got a couple months before the ad breaks, before the response comes in. Send me that pair." He did and I ran it in that insert.

Well, it turned out to be the best-selling product in our history from that one ad. It was exciting, so I arranged to manufacture them in the Far East and I placed a million dollars' worth of national advertising over eight months and I sold about 100,000 pairs of them and that was working out really well. Then I heard about infomercials. The government allowed now your right to run a half-hour commercial. Before that, it was illegal. So I said you know, I think this will really

work. A lot of people say who would buy a pair of sunglasses off an infomercial? I mean, a half hour, how could you spend a half hour selling something like that, that's ridiculous. By the way, that's a really good sign, when people don't think you have a chance or they try to discourage you that should be an indication to you that you've got something. I've always followed that. When people say no, that's impossible, I go out and I prove them wrong.

So anyway we ran the infomercial and instead of selling 100,000 pairs over eight months, within a month we were selling 100,000 pairs and within three or four years our sales were climbing. We were doing like 300,000 a month, eventually sold 20 million pairs, and that was on QVC, that was all over the world. Our infomercial appeared in many countries all over the world and it was a really good run.

The funny part about it is we're having a resurgence. There was a movie called "The Hangover" and it featured our Blue Blockers and, sure enough, we're getting a lot of response and a lot of young people, a lot of rock groups. Everybody's starting to gravitate toward Blue Blockers, so it's still very much alive. I started that business 23 years ago, again, turning a problem into an opportunity, and so that's what happened. I better give you a chance to take a breath here.

Arthur: Well, Joe, this is absolutely wonderful that you are joining me and my listeners and I know you have achieved massive, massive success. I know you have generated millions of dollars through your powerful marketing. To everyone listening on this call, I highly recommend go get your pen and your pad right now. Write down these powerful notes that Joe Sugarman is revealing to you. He is very passionate about what he teaches but you have to be open to these important principles and these are powerful tools and powerful strategies that you can implement right away that's going to increase your revenue and grow your business but you have to be committed to the important principles.

Now, Joe, can you explain to my listeners in layman's terms what exactly is a mail order?

Joe: Mail order, or another way to say it is direct response, is where you place an ad in a publication and you offer your product or service directly to the consumer. In other words, when we were selling our calculators, we had an ad that appeared at first in the magazines and you didn't have to worry about retail, you didn't have to worry about all the other complications when you go to retail. I didn't need retail. I could sell my products directly to the consumer. Another thing, you sell to retail, they sometimes take months to pay you. With mail order, people send you their credit card numbers or their checks and you've got the money in advance even before you ship. It's a lot more advantageous and it's a very good method to market.

Arthur: Wow. That is very powerful. Can you explain to my listeners what is your definition of marketing?

Joe: You know, that's a good question, because you could have the greatest – how can I put this – you could have the greatest product, you could have the greatest science, you could have all the money behind your product, you could have everything, but if you don't have marketing you have nothing. Therefore marketing is extremely important.

What is marketing? It's positioning of a product in such a way that it appeals to the consumer and if you're successful in your marketing program and you repeat that program very often, chances are you will create the ultimate goal of marketing, which is creating a brand. If you can create a brand that is so important in marketing. Why? Because I have to just mentioned Blue Blocker and most people would recognize that name and many of them would remember the infomercials that we used to run. It was an established brand. It has personality. It has kind of pizzazz to it. That's what brands do.

There are sunglasses out there, for example, like Gucci, you know, just to name a few that have famous brand names attached to the sunglasses, but they may not be as good as our sunglasses because we elected to sell at a reasonable, lower price, but because they are a brand, that brand is worth an extra hundred dollars, an extra hundred and fifty dollars. Brand is very important and of course marketing is extremely important.

Arthur: Would you say that marketing done right is the quickest path to the sale?

Joe: Yeah, if you do your marketing correctly, you're going to sell your products, people are going to respond, they're going to buy your product, you're going to make a profit and you're going to reinvest those funds into more advertising and you're going to be successful.

Arthur: How old are you now, Joe?

Joe: Right now I am 72.

Arthur: Wow.

Joe: Here's the interesting thing. I take a lot of the new products and I'll probably get into that shortly. I do 25 chin-ups, I do 100 push-ups. You'd never guess I was 72 and I have strength and endurance. A lot of it is because I followed a path, a healthy path in my life and another part of it is because of the products we've been developing over the past five years, our anti-aging stem cell research type products. That probably explains a little bit. People don't recognize the fact that I'm 72. They find it sometimes a little bit hard to believe.

Arthur: Where are you currently residing right now?

Joe: Right now I am in Maui, Hawaii. I'm looking out over the ocean in my beautiful home here in an area called Wailayakee area. It's a beautiful day, 80 degrees, a lot of people on the beach. I'm up on the second story looking over and it's very

nice.

Arthur: Can you explain to my listeners who do you have that is in your corner to help you maximize your market?

Joe: Who do I have in my corner?

Arthur: Yes.

Joe: I would say my desire to help others. That's my sole purpose in life, is to help others. That reminds me when I sometimes give a talk, I'll start the talk off by saying there's a scientific philosophy – no, not scientific, a spiritual philosophy, a spiritual principle that says whatever you focus on expands. So if you focus on your business, what happens? The audience answers oh, it expands, it grows. That's right. If you focus on your health, what happens? Everybody says oh, you stay healthy. I say what happens when you focus on money? Everybody says oh, you make more money. I said no, that's not true. Money is a symbol. Money is a symbol of work and effort, so what expands? The work and the effort, not the money. I said what you need to focus on if you want to make a lot of money is helping others.

You know, I've devoted my life to that, either by providing a really good product. For example, Blue Blockers helps protect your eyes and not only that, when we were advertising it, we told people about the dangers of ultraviolet light and how it damaged your eye, what it caused, and then the disadvantages of blue light and all that kind of stuff. As a consequence, we educated the public and everybody then became aware of the importance of blocking the ultraviolet light. Before that, nobody really advertised it. In fact, the Sunglass Association in the very beginning, they were really upset with us, because here we were bringing up something that they didn't – that none of their members actually could promote because they weren't blocking the ultraviolet light.

In other words, helping others, that could mean putting aside a portion of your profits for charities, to help various groups. It could mean giving people advice. It could mean also publishing a series of books. When you publish the books, you're leaving a legacy. You're helping others who read those books and you're sharing your knowledge. I used to teach seminars for several years. I've written six books. I've given many talks and many speeches and from all that I've helped people. I've inspired them. I've given them hope. I help people and that's really what's been the prime motivation for me and the thing that I've always relied on to really help society. That's my goal. That's my only goal.

Arthur: You mentioned books. I know that you are a powerful author. Let's talk about psychological triggers. What inspires you to write that?

Joe: Interesting question, because what happened, I wrote three books. I used to give these seminars and these seminars were really interesting. They helped a lot of people and a lot of people went out after the seminars and became quite successful. I remember one of our first participants was Victoria's Secret when they only had one store. I remember a lot of very famous people who weren't famous when they came to my seminar but as a result of what they learned, became very successful, one of whom was a farmer. He was a farmer and he sold grapefruits. He went to my seminar, wrote an ad, and that ad ran for ten years, made him a fortune.

So I decided to sit down and write a book about my experience in the seminar and it ended up being like a thousand pages. I kept writing and writing and I was trying to convey all the things that I taught and all the things that I learned. I finally decided wait a second, this doesn't make sense. I'm going to break it down into three books and cover three different topics. The three topics I covered, one book was Advertising Secrets of the Written Word, and that was on copywriting. The second one was Marketing Secrets of a Mail Order Maverick and that was on print advertising, mail order, direct marketing, direct mail, all that kind of stuff. Then the third book was Television Secrets for Marketing Success. I was pretty prominent

on TV, both at QVC, QVC throughout the world. I was in Germany on QVC, in London on QVC, and also through the infomercials which ran with the Blue Blocker brand for almost six years.

Anyway that was the extent of these books I wrote and I started getting publicity for the books. What was interesting was that most of the publicity was surrounding chapter 19 in my copywriting book on psychological triggers. That fascinated a lot of people and it was always one of the favorite things in my class, psychological triggers. Now what are they supposed to do? They're supposed to set an environment for you, a selling environment. They're to build trust and they're to trigger a sale. I decided you know what? I'm going to create a separate book. I'm going to take chapter 19 and really expand on it and cite some really good examples that I just didn't have the time or the patience to cover in my book on copywriting.

So I came out with a book called Triggers and the subtitle is 30 Sales Tools You Can Use to Control the Mind of Your Prospect to Motivate, Influence and Persuade. It's out of print because it's been a pretty good selling book, but I'm here on Maui actually revising it. I should have that book revised and ready to go by this fall or winter. It covers the 30 psychological triggers that cause people to buy. Like I said they either set the environment for selling. In other words, when you walk into a very high-priced – what do you call it – a very high-level type of let's say an arts store and you see these paintings on the wall. Then you walk into another store and you see prints all over the floor and pictures hung up and price tags on everything, you get a completely different impression.

The first impression you get is one of this is a fancy place so the prices must be high. The second impression you get from the other place is boy, this must be a bargain. These prices must be pretty low. In other words, you set the environment and the environment can be set in a lot of different ways.

The second thing you want to do is you want to build trust. You want to build trust so that people trust you and like you and respect you and feel comfortable ordering from you. The third purpose of the triggers are to trigger the sale. In other words, what causes you to all of a sudden say, “Okay, that’s it. I’m going to buy.” That’s what the book Triggers accomplish. Anyway, I hope that answers your question.

Arthur: Yes, you did. Once people like you, respect you and trust you, that’s when people want to do business with you.

Joe: Yeah, you’ve got to develop a level of trust and in order to do that, you need to – first of all you need to be honest. I have found that the consumer is a lot sharper than you think they are, and they can see through where you’re covering something up or you’re trying to hide something. For example, we have one trigger that, what do you call it, let’s see. Raising objections. In other words, if there’s something that’s inherently wrong with your product, I’ve always believed in being very honest and saying right up front, “Hey, this product is missing something and therefore we just want you to be aware of it.” And then I go to resolve the objection. I say even though it doesn’t make sense, the product still is very good and a very good bargain because of such and such and I go into that.

Let me give you an example. We were selling a thermostat. This was a thermostat that a manufacturer brought to me and I looked at it and I said my god, the thing’s ugly, it uses old technology, who would ever buy this? They explained to me about how easy it is to install and all this kind of stuff and I tried it. I was really impressed with it. When I wrote the ad, I told the story of the manufacturer presenting the product to me and I’m looking at and saying, “This product really is stupid. It’s old technology. It looks ugly. It has a stupid name, Magicstat. I just don’t think this is a really good product.” But then I go into the fact that the manufacturer insisted that I at least install it and told me how simple it was, because it only used 24 – thermostats only use 24 volts and the yellow wire goes to the yellow lead and the red wire goes to the red lead and it’s just really easy to install.

Anyway, we ran that ad, but you see what I did there? So then I talked about the fact that I did install it, it was really simple, and then I said, “You know something? This was the most exciting, the greatest, the best thermostat I’ve ever imagined. It saves energy. It makes the house so much more comfortable because of the new electronics.” Blah-blah-blah. I raised the objections and then I resolved them. We got a terrific response. People really appreciated it. Not only that, we got responses from people who said, “You know, I read your entire ad. I’m not the market for a thermostat but you had me so enticed that I had to read the whole ad.” That’s an example, you raise the objection and you resolve it. If there’s something wrong with your product, raise the objection and then see if you can come up with the resolution that makes sense for the product.

I can give you another example. One of our triggers is the feeling of involvement and/or ownership. The feeling of involvement or ownership. This is a story about a guy – I talk about this in my book – about a guy who was a television salesman in this appliance store. He had the best track record of all the other salesmen. He sold more televisions than everybody else combined. He was retiring and at his retirement party he got up to talk and he said he would reveal at his retirement party the secret for his success. He gets up there and he says, “Ladies and gentlemen, the real secret of my success is I stood at this door – I always stand near the door. People come in. I observe them and when they walk up to a television – this was before remote control – when they walk up to a television and start punching and turning the knobs, I know that they’re a very good prospect and I go after them.”

It was that feeling of involvement or ownership, in other words, when they start turning the knobs, they start touching it, they start clicking it, where they really get involved in the product. That’s something that’s very powerful with the Internet, because with the Internet you have all these tools. You have video, you have audio, you have touching buttons which would bring you to certain places. The feeling of involvement or ownership is really important. Of course with all my

triggers I go to specific examples of how they're used and why they're used and how you could use them for any business, whether it be a product or a service.

By the way, I have a blog which is [www.JoeSugarman.com](http://www.JoeSugarman.com). You're more than welcome to go visit that site. Also we'll be talking about the anti-aging products that I currently market, and so I will talk about that shortly. You can write this down. It's [www.stem120.com](http://www.stem120.com), [www.stem120.com](http://www.stem120.com), and that's about it.

Arthur: You mentioned earlier the powerful word copywriting. Can you explain to my listeners what exactly is copywriting? Can copywriting be very effective for a business owner or for an infopreneur?

Joe: You know, first of all, copywriting is not that hard. I have taken people at my seminar and taught them how to write copy and they have gone out and become very, very successful. There is no mystery to it. There is no secret to it. Now what is important, and that is that you have to immerse yourself and become an expert in that particular area. That means getting the right books such as the books that we sell and learning how to write copy. It's not that difficult but once you do learn how to write your own copy, and by the way you are the expert in your product so there's nobody better to write copy.

After you become that copywriter, after you start writing copy, you have within your grasp the capability of a very, very powerful tool, the ability to communicate through writing. By the way, just being a copywriter, it's only part of it. When I do big TV ads or if I do an infomercial, I'll always write out the copy first because I want to get out all the salient points, I want to get out all the advantages, and I do that by becoming basically an expert in the product and also an expert in writing copy.

You can learn it. It is very easy to learn and a couple secrets -- you want to know a couple secrets of being able to write copy? Aside from reading my books, which I really strongly recommend, that is experience life. Go out there and do things

you've never done before. Create things for your bucket list. Go out and experience as many different things. What I found is people who have experienced life, who have gone out there and done many, many different things make the best copywriters.

The second thing I could advise you on is become an expert, an absolute expert, with your particular product, whatever it is, your product or service. You become the expert and you learn everything there is to know about that. You cannot write effective copy without doing that because people will pick that up and they really respect people who really know their product. Anyway, that's my suggestion there.

Arthur: I know that you were in the U.S. Army in 1962 and you basically joined forces with the CIA. Can you explain to my listeners about that powerful experience?

Joe: I was with military intelligence in Frankfurt, Germany. I was kind of an expert in the German language. They sent me to two very intensive German schools while I was in the military and they assigned me to a branch that involved electronic surveillance.

Arthur: What is that? What is electronic surveillance?

Joe: Either planting bugs or detecting bugs. In other words, like the Watergate bug or things like that. They assigned me into that unit and I worked there with civilian clothes. Never wore a uniform. Occasionally the military would assign me to the CIA to look after their Russian defectors. There were a number of Russians that were defecting at that particular time. It was the middle of the Cold War. I would go work with the CIA in that respect.

After I actually got out of the army, I continued working with the CIA because I was right in the middle of an operation. I stayed with them for two or three months and then I left and went back to the states. It was a really interesting time. I saw things that I'm really not too privileged to talk about but they were extremely interesting

and I had a lot of very fun experiences. It was probably one of the most enjoyable periods of my life. I really enjoyed that.

Arthur: What does CIA stand for?

Joe: Central Intelligence Agency.

Arthur: Have they been around for a long, long time?

Joe: I don't know actually when they started, but I bet it would be easy to find out. You just go to the Internet, type in CIA history, and I'm sure you'll find it. In fact, I just finished one book. I'm actually trying to work on two books. I finished one and boy, the Internet is helpful. There are people I have totally forgot about in my earlier experience both in the military and also just in life in general, and you can just look up on the Internet, find these people, find out what they've done, find out facts that you didn't know before to help you with the writing of a book.

Boy, what a difference. Ten years ago, or I think it was 11 years ago, I wrote these last three books. The book I'm actually just finishing up is a book I wrote 30 years ago and it has all my success principles and a lot of my experience in it. It impacted so many people in so many different ways I decided I would reissue and update it and that's exactly what I've done.

I've got like three stages of my life, one leading up to the 30 years ago when I wrote that first book which, by the way, was called Success Forces. Then 20 years later when I wrote my trilogy, the three books I mentioned plus Triggers, and I also wrote another book called the Ad Week Copywriting Manual, which is another good book to get on copywriting. Either get that book or Advertising Secrets because they're both primarily the same, though the Ad Week Copywriting Manual is more current and contains more Internet information as a result. Then I guess maybe after I finish these two books there will be a couple more books coming out on what's happened to me in the last ten years.

I've got a little bit of a following. A funny story that happened to me, I was at a convention offering some of these anti-aging products that we were selling and there were like 400 doctors at this convention. This doctor walks up to me and says, "Are you Joe Sugarman, the marketing guy?" I said yeah and he said, "Oh my god, I don't believe this." I said, "Why? What's going on?" He said, "You're number one on my bucket list. Lance Armstrong is number two and number three is some other famous person." I said, "Wow." I said, "You've got to be kidding. How could I be number one on your bucket list? You must have read my books." He said, "No, I never read your books." I said, "Well, you must have been to a seminar or been to a speech I've given." He said, "No, I've never been to a seminar, never been to a speech." I said, "Then how can I be number one on your bucket list?"

He said, "Very simply, I really am a doctor but I'm into marketing and I go to all these marketing conventions and your name keeps popping up every time I go there. I just was so curious, who is this guy, Joe Sugarman? What is he about? What can I learn from him? And here you are." That was a funny story. I'm glad I was influential in helping this guy or at least building his curiosity to get to meet me. Of course, he became a friend and I've been helping him since.

Arthur: Explain to my listeners what exactly is a bucket list.

Joe: There was a movie out called "The Bucket List" and the bucket list basically is you pick three things that you want to do in your life before you kick the bucket, before you die, and so that's what a bucket list is. It's a list of things you need to do in order to be successful – or excuse me, that you want to accomplish before you kick the bucket.

Arthur: Is copywriting something you was always passionate about, or did you build your dream over a period of time?

Joe: I was always pretty passionate about it. When I was in grammar school we were always given writing assignments and I'd write something, try to add humor to it, and then I'd put it on – I'd have to present it to the class. I'd read it and everybody would laugh and I just loved that feedback. I just kept writing. I just enjoyed writing. When I was in high school I joined the school newspaper both as a photographer and a writer. While I was doing that, actually in my senior year I started my own teenage magazine and that was successful. Went off to college, joined the school newspaper there. While I was in college, my dad calls me up and says, "Joe, we can't afford to send you to college anymore. I lost a lot of money in my business. It's really very costly for me. Please, I want you to think about heading back home." I said, "Maybe I could get a job out here or work and somehow make my own money." He said, "Why don't you give it a try?"

I did and the first thing I did was I went to a restaurant that I'd been frequenting and the owner came up to me and I'm sitting there contemplating now what do I do. The owner came up to me and said, "You go to the university?" I said, "Yeah, I do." He said, "I have to ask you a really important question. How do you reach those students? How do you communicate with them to get them to come to my restaurant?" I said, "You advertise in the school paper, but you put an ad in that is totally different, that is off the wall, that nobody would ever anticipate." He said, "Gee whiz, what kind of ad would that be?" I said, "Why don't you let me write something? I'll put it in for you and —" He said, "Well, if it works, what do you want me to pay?" I said, "You just give me free meals because I'm having a rough time supporting myself right now and I think free meals will be just fine."

It was a chicken and rib place and, you know, if you have chicken and ribs every day for two, three, four days, you get kind of greasy. It's not very pleasant. Anyway, I wrote this ad. It was a crazy ad. It ran in the school paper and I was kind of embarrassed actually. I thought my god, what if he doesn't like this ad and what if it doesn't work? All these thoughts ran through my mind. I said you know

what? I'm going to go out and take a look. I'm going to go to the restaurant and see if any more kids are there.

So I went to the restaurant and before I even got close to it, there was cars parked all over the place. There was a line of people trying to get in. They were holding pieces of cardboard, pieces of wood, because what I did in the ad was I said, "Come to the Old Hickory Barbecue Restaurant on such-and-such a street and students will get this special price. Say for \$1.69 they can get this blah-blah-blah-blah. Is there a catch? Yes, there is a catch. You have to bring the top of a Brinks Armored Car in order to get the special."

All the kids used their imagination. They came up with these pieces of plastic, cardboard, wood, all marked "Top of Brinks Armored Car." They're sitting out there waiting in line, waiting to get in. I got there, I parked and I walked into the front door ahead of everybody and I went up to the owner. He sees me and comes running up to me. He says, "Joe, I don't know what the hell you did, but we are doing exceptionally well. I want you to continue doing this." I said, "Well, gee whiz, maybe there's an answer here."

I started doing ads for various restaurants and clothing stores and ice cream parlors, you name it, and the deal was they'd give me free food or free clothes or free this or free that. It was easy for them and it helped me, because I was the best-dressed, best-fed guy on campus. I didn't realize it at the time but I had formed my own ad agency and I was making my own money. Of course some of them I would charge and I would get cash for it, so I was able to support myself. That's how I finished or almost got through college.

It was in my senior year where I had one semester left and the army drafted me. I tried to get out of it because I was in ROTC which is the reserve office training corps and I was going to be an officer in a month. They said, "No, you forgot to register with the university and get a deferment and all this kind of stuff. You're going to go to basic training." So I had to go off to basic training. Anyway, that

was my college experience and it turned out to be pretty good. It was good experience and I enjoyed doing what I was doing, but it also created in my own mind the possibilities available with, you know, writing your own copy and being a copywriter and being creative.

Arthur: That sounds like a wonderful experience. What are some of the triggers that you have found to be the most effective in selling your products and services?

Joe: I have found storytelling to be a very effective tool. A lot of the ads I do, I start telling a story. You know, the supplier comes to me, presents the product, here's my reaction. Or it could involve just something that has nothing to do with the product, just to tell the story, to get people involved, to get people reading. Storytelling is a very good trigger. It's a very good, helpful thing for you to get into the story, to help you avoid the typical advertising babble that a lot of advertisers give you. In other words, you know it's advertising, but mine are stories and people love stories.

Another thing is what I call satisfaction conviction. You know what a trial period is. If you don't like the product you return it within a few weeks and you get your money back. I like to go beyond that. Satisfaction conviction goes beyond what typically would be offered to the consumer as a trial period, so far beyond that the consumer thinks to himself, "Hey, wait a second, they're going to get really ripped off if they're not honest about what they're saying."

For example, with Blue Blocker Sunglasses, we would say, "Order a pair and if you're not happy, either when you receive them or ten years from now, return them and you'll get all your money back." In other words, there was no time period. They could return their Blue Blockers and get all their money back. That was a satisfaction conviction. I was saying basically that you were going to be so satisfied and you're going to be so convinced that you're going to feel very comfortable in buying this product because you can return it any time in your lifetime.

I found that the strongest trigger, believe it or not, was honesty. The more honest you are in your ads, and you'll know – I've explained a couple ads where I've honestly expressed my dissatisfaction with some of the features of the product – and people then trust you. They build a level of trust. They build a level of – you develop a very good level of believability. So those are the triggers that are probably among my most favorite. Again, there are 30 of them and certainly very helpful.

Arthur: What is your favorite trigger, the one you use with great success?

Joe: I would say satisfaction conviction is the best one for me and the reason I say that is because very often when I'd use a very strong satisfaction conviction like if you're not happy with this product, I'll send somebody to your door and pick it up so you don't have to pay any expense or something like that. Right now, by the way, there are some companies that do that. Back when I was doing it, this was very unusual. The reason I liked it especially is because I was able to determine that it doubled or even tripled response. In other words, I had that satisfaction conviction at the end of, let's say, a thousand-word ad, and I would triple response when I put in a more forceful satisfaction conviction. I found it through testing and through the success I had that it was probably my favorite and probably the most effective.

Arthur: Joe, I want to do a powerful test with you right about now. I want to ask you some powerful words and on a scale from one to five, one meaning great and five meaning terrible. Are you ready?

Joe: Go ahead.

Arthur: Copywriting.

Joe: Well, that's number one. You have that skill and you have the ability and the power to influence millions of people. What is copy – you know, there are issues – there are situations in which you try to influence somebody. I knew a salesman in

Detroit who was in the Guinness Book of World Records, Joe Girard. He was able to sell six, seven cars a day, broke the record for the most amount of cars sold by a dealership. He explains how he did it and all that kind of stuff. He contacted me and he said, "You know, I can sell six, seven cars a day, but you can sell millions of things in the matter of a day because you have the power to be able to communicate to people." That of course comes with copywriting. Number one.

Arthur: Accountability.

Joe: Accountability. What do you mean by that?

Arthur: Accountability, the way I describe it is, if you say you're going to do something, then you have to be committed to what you say you're going to do.

Joe: I think what you're talking about is integrity and, boy, that is number one. That's in all my ads, I mean, everything. I say what I'm going to say and it's the truth. I don't lie and I say it with a great deal of integrity. That's part of building trust.

Arthur: Branding.

Joe: That's number one again, because as I discussed before, if you reach the point where you're actually created a brand, then you know and you can be assured of the fact that you've reached the pinnacle as far as marketing is concerned.

Arthur: Marketing.

Joe: Well, again, number one. You're not giving me much of a variety here.

Arthur: Success.

Joe: I think success is probably such a loose term I'd probably give it a three. I don't think it's the important thing. I don't think focusing on success – I think success comes when you help others. Success comes when you're really helpful in society and you help people and you contribute. Success will come. Striving for it, I don't

know if that's really as important as focusing on the more important things of helping others, providing a good service or product, and really being there to help society.

Arthur: Value.

Joe: Value, you can sell – again, that's truthfulness, it's integrity, it's honesty. You want to show value. I'd have to give that a two. It's important that people feel that they're getting value. I don't care if you're a multi-millionaire. You don't want to be ripped off. Nobody wants to be ripped off. As a consequence, value is very important, to establish value for your customer, you show them that they have value, that what you're selling has value and you go from there.

Arthur: Family.

Joe: Oh, I think probably that's number one. I think that's important. Family is number one and you can always postpone that call or postpone that business meeting, but when the family calls, that takes precedent with me.

Arthur: Commitment.

Joe: That's important – I think the best way to describe that, commitment in terms of never giving up. I think that's probably the reason for my success is that I've just never given up. I've been defeated, I've lost a great deal of money, I've lost opportunities, all sorts of negative things, but I never gave up because I always believed I was going to be a success and all these experiences were just experiences that I had to go through and that made me stronger.

Arthur: Profits.

Joe: Well, you want to be in business to make a profit, that's for sure. You don't want to be in business to lose money. I don't know how to answer that really.

Arthur: Encouragement.

Joe: In what sense?

Arthur: In regard to inspiring others.

Joe: I think, again, that's number one for me. I am there to inspire other people, there's no question. That is the purpose of my entire life. By the way, we have four more minutes and then I have another issue I have to take care of.

Arthur: Okay. That's good, Joe. Now can you explain to my listeners, you have this philosophy that has helped you through the roughest of times. Everything was falling apart and you were just as calm as can be. How do you do it?

Joe: You know what it is, it's the philosophy that I have, is that everything that happens to you in life, everything is for your benefit. You may not realize it at the time. Failure, sometimes it really hurts, but even failure is a benefit. Everything that happens in your life is for a purpose and it is to help you. If you go on with that philosophy and you say well, I don't know how this is going to help me but I know in the long run it will. Then you're a lot more relaxed and you're not going to be – I have this philosophy, never be attached to any outcome. If I'm not attached to any outcome and it fails, okay, it fails. That's life. That's my philosophy, everything happens, happens for the best, and if you believe that life is a lot easier.

Arthur: Do a lot of your principles apply to the Internet?

Joe: Every one of them. Every one of them. They all apply to the Internet. The difference is the media. It's like on television there are certain things that are very important. In radio there are certain things that are more important. But all principles remain the same. In other words, if you're writing copy, the same copywriting principles apply. If you're doing a video, the same video concepts, the same marketing concepts apply. It will never become outdated, these books that I've written and also the principles, but the method in which you go out and deliver the message that may change over time. Of course, with the Internet, that is a major, major, major marketing tool that never existed before. You know what it

does? It levels the playing field. Now anybody, I don't care what color, what race, how much money you have, where you're at in life, you can be successful on the Internet. A lot of people are proving that every day.

Arthur: You have a powerful event coming up, Joe, the Mega Partnering Event. I know you're teaming up with the great George Ross and Bill Glaser. Can you explain to my listeners about that program?

Joe: That's a program that's going to take place in Chicago. That's a speech that I'll be giving, it's either the 11th or the 12th, and people are invited. It's at the Chicago O'Hare Marriott Hotel, and it's put on by this organization. I spoke before for them in Toronto and had a wonderful reception there and they invited me to speak in Chicago. Of course, Chicago's my home town so I am really looking forward to that.

Arthur: Do you have any last pearls of wisdom for my listeners?

Joe: Yeah, actually, we're talking about pearls. I always believe that we're all given a bucket of oysters, and in one of the oysters is a very expensive pearl. You're given that bucket and you start to open up the oysters and they're kind of tough on your hands. You cut yourself, they're hard to open, but a lot of people will give up. They'll say, "Oh, this is too hard for me and I'll stop." If you keep opening them, you're going to find that pearl. It might be the second one. It might be the tenth one. It might be the last one. But it's there.

It's just a matter of being persistent and never giving up and I guarantee you, you'll be successful eventually. Anyway, that's my last words of wisdom. It's been a pleasure. Thank you very much for having me and I hope everybody enjoys the message. Don't forget my blog, [www.JoeSugarman.com](http://www.JoeSugarman.com). Oh, I didn't talk too much about the products, the anti-aging products, but if you're interested, it's [www.Stem120.com](http://www.Stem120.com), that's s-t-e-m-1-2-0.com, and please feel free to send me a message on my blog. Thank you very much. I appreciate the opportunity.

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Arthur: Thank you, Joe, and to everyone listening on this call, listen to this powerful information that Joe has revealed to you about copywriting, about marketing, and about branding, and to every one of the listeners on this call, remember that the strongest muscle in your body is your brain and what you think about and what you take action on will become your reality. May God bless each and every one of you, and bye for now. Thank you, Joe.

Joe: Thank you.

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