

ONE-ON-ONE

WITH NICK NANTON

featuring

Dave Crenshaw



Nick: Hi everybody. I have Mr. Dave Crenshaw on the line. How have you been, man?

Dave: Great. Fantastic.

Nick: Awesome, man. Well, we've got some great content to cover today. Dave, you've put out two best-selling books – *The Myth of Multi-Tasking* and *Invaluable*. And then why don't we talk a little bit about what led you down that path. Then, how did you become the speaker/author you did? How did you become the celebrity in your marketplace?

I know a lot of people in the speaker, author, and writing world but I don't know anyone who fulfills your

niche. So why don't we start there.

Dave: Okay. Sure. Well, I started out as a business coach about 13 years ago, '98 is when I began. But my first book came out in 2008, *The Myth of Multi-Tasking*, and since that point, things have really taken off for me. I've been in Time Magazine, Forbes, MSN Money, Sirius, XM Radio, lots of different places, lots of great publicity. And also, recently I have a training course on Linda.com and will be having more coming out very soon. Those are some of the accolades.

Actually there's one that I'm most proud of though, which is that Chuck Norris is my biggest fan. When my wife sent me that e-mail, I was like, "What are you talking about?" And then it turned out he quoted me in his Official Fact Book. So there you go. If you don't like this interview just remember that Chuck will come over to your house and give you 10 reasons why you *should* like this interview.

Nick: So let's start talking about what brought you to the writing process and then at what point in your career did you decide to write the book, *The Myth of Multi-Tasking*, and what made you think people would want a book like that?

Dave: Well what led me to it was just my experience working with entrepreneurs, small business owners in particular, because they have so many different job descriptions. It puts them in a situation where they're forced to multi-task constantly. So one of the things I started doing with my clients was helping them take control of their time and actually get more productive.

And it was from my developing the program and working with my clients that I realized, man, I've just got so many stories built up from this. I wanted to write a book and it just seemed like all this material just landed in my lap.

Nick: So why don't we run through a few of the principles that you teach in the book?

Let's talk about the principles from *The Myth of Multi-Tasking*. Why don't you walk us through and help us understand some of the principles from the book.

Dave: Okay. Well the story is following a consultant or coach going into the office of a CEO. And the CEO's stressed out because she doesn't have enough time. She feels like she can't keep on top of everything that she has to do. What I found in true life is that she's multi-tasking constantly. And when you multi-task, what's really taking place is that you're switching rapidly back and forth between paths.

So, if I'm trying to have an interview with you right now and I'm looking at my computer screen, which I'm not. If I was trying to do both of those things at the same time, I would not be doing both well at the same time. I'd be switching back and forth rapidly between them. And when you have all those little switches going back and forth, you incur switching cost. And there are four effects from switch-tasking.

Number one, things take longer. Number two, you make mistakes. Number three, your stress-levels increase. And then the fourth is when you see the interaction between some employees. That damages relationships really badly when they multi-task. So a lot of the problems that people are experiencing right now in terms of not feeling like they don't have enough time, feeling always behind, feeling disconnected from the world around them, all of that comes down to this fact that they bought in to the cultural myth of multi-tasking.

Nick: Got it. And so the myth is that there's no such thing as multi-tasking. Your take on it is that it's really switch-tasking and you're really just switching back and forth rapidly and not doing either one very well.

Dave: Exactly. And there's lots of scientific evidence that backs this up, but I wrote it in accessible form, because my experience is that even though people have heard that there are studies that say you can't multi-task, the intellectual acknowledgement hasn't changed their day-to-day behavior.

Nick: Absolutely.

Dave: So that's really what it's about; it is about changing behavior.

Nick: So let's dig in even deeper. Based on what you're saying, multi-tasking's not a reality nor efficient. Some would say aren't there times when it does work?

Dave: Yeah. Well, the most common thing is where someone says, "Well, I'm running on a tread mill and watching TV at the same time?" That's actually not what I define as switch-tasking. That's part of the problem with multi-tasking. It's just a poor word. It doesn't have real meaning. What I call that is background-tasking. When you're doing something in the background that doesn't require effort and attention it can actually be productive. That's background-tasking. That can be efficient. But when people say, "I'm good at multi-tasking," what they're trying to do is multiple active tasks at the same time and that's always inefficient and causes mistakes.

Nick: I can see that. I've heard you say that some people would even brag they're good multi-taskers and they're great at it. What do you say to those folks?

Dave: Well the thing that I do, rather than telling them that they're wrong, I take them through an exercise and it's an exercise that all your listeners can have for free. You don't have to opt-in. If you just go to DaveCrenshaw.com/Exercise you'll see a video where I walk people through. But in two minutes, you can illustrate all of those effects first hand to anyone who thinks that they're a good multi-tasker.

Nick: Cool. Okay, so obviously one of the hardest parts right now for all of us is technology. We're between living our lives and now trying to keep up with all of our 'friends' on Facebook and Twitter and people texting us and everything else. Do you feel like technology is making us have to multi-task more?

Dave: It's a great question and the answer that I come up with is that technology is not the problem. It's our improper use of technology that's the problem, and that's a really important distinction. People will look at their cell phones and say, "Oh my life was so much easier before I had a cell phone." Well that's not the problem. If you go to the average person and say, "Do you know how to use all of the functions that your phone's capable of doing?" People don't. They're so busy that they're not taking the time to learn how to use the technology tools that they actually have. So my focus is on retraining people how to use the resources that they have. So technology isn't the problem.

Nick: Okay cool. And so let's be candid for a second – which groups of people do you think suffer the most

from this Myth of Multi-tasking?

Dave: Well, obviously the group that I started with, entrepreneurs in general, have a really time hard with it, because of the different demands on their time and because they have so many different job descriptions. Interestingly, I find that the group that I'm talking to the most, and the one that really resonates the most with my message and gets the biggest benefit are women -- particularly women in business and business owners, women entrepreneurs, because they have an even stronger desire to balance the demands of a family and their business at the same time.

Nick: Right.

Dave: And then secondly, I would just say its more of a personality trait. I see sales people having a hard time with it, and this is more a personality trait than a job description. They just have the tendency to jump around from task-to-task and opportunity-to-opportunity very, very quickly.

Nick: Well, sales people are opportunity seekers, right? You're excited about the next opportunity. I can certainly relate.

Dave: Yeah. Unfortunately, that gets in the way of the follow-through a lot of the time.

Nick: So let me ask you this, how does a woman or a mom or even a man handle it? Talking about women and moms for a second. We just had our third baby. She's a month old and we have two others. What do you say, is it just better planning that can allow you to stop trying to multi-task because you've got lots going on. You're trying to help one kid do his homework. You're trying to cook dinner. Your mom's calling you on the phone just to check to make sure the kid didn't choke while you're trying to cook dinner. How do you deal with that?

Dave: Yeah, a lot of it has to do with living at peace with the truth of time. And I jokingly tell my clients that they pay me the big bucks to tell them the truth of time. And the truth of time is that there are only 24-hours in a day. There are only 60 minutes in an hour and at that point I'll usually say, "Okay and you can send the check to my office, thank you very much." But the reality is most people are living at war with the truth of time and they'll never win that battle.

So it comes down to becoming very realistic about how many hours you have, and making some hard choices about what you're going to devote your attention to during that day.

I talk a lot about living within a time budget. When you think about a money budget, the purpose of a budget is to make sure that you don't overspend. Well, when you overspend time, when you try to cram that extra five minutes into a 60-minute hour, you end up overspending and you go into debt. And whenever you have debt you have to repay it with interest.

So, regardless of your role -- mom, dad, business owner, sales person, whatever it is -- you want to start living by the truth that happiness comes from spending five minutes less than what you have. Not five minutes more.

Nick: What about talking on the phone while you're driving.

Dave: You know there have been lots of studies. In fact, probably the most publicized one is from the University of Utah where they found that driving while talking on your phone is as dangerous as driving while intoxicated... and the reason why isn't necessarily that your judgment is impaired -- it's because of the switching cost. It's because of the reaction time.

Nick: Okay cool. I dig that. All right. Now let's talk about effective multi-tasking in business. So, we know you're a CEO coach. Tell us how much money you think is going down the drain in most businesses because of multi-tasking?

Dave: Well, the average person loses 28% of their time due to switches and switching cost -- and that number comes from a study by Basics Research out of New York. They use the term 'interruption and recovery time from associations' but it's the same thing. Now 28% is an interesting number, but think about it this way.

If you have employees, that means that one week that you're paying them to work is useless. It's garbage. You didn't get anything for that time that you're paying for. So where I'm coming from is that I can't completely get rid of the switches, but we can reduce them greatly. Usually, we can get it down to somewhere around 5% or 10% of their time is spent in the switches. So that's a pretty significant gain in terms of time and productivity when you're getting back 20% or close to it -- an entire workweek every single month.

Nick: Wow that's incredible and frustrating. This is great practical advice, Now, I've often heard ADD, ADHD, and multi-tasking are linked to each other. Do you think one fuels the other?

Dave: Well here's the interesting thing -- I was diagnosed as, and this is word-for-word from the

psychologist, "...freaking off the charts ADHD." So I know what this is all about. The reality is ADHD sometimes called ADD, but the correct term is ADHD. It is a genetic condition. And only about 4 to 8% of the population actually have it. So when most people say that they have ADD, what they really have is what I call Short Attention Span Syndrome or SASS, and SASS is a learned behavior. It's something that you have conditioned yourself to do over time because of this constant jumping back and forth. You can condition your brain to behave as if you have ADHD. The great thing is that because you can condition your brain to behave that way, you can also do the reverse.

Nick: Awesome. Love that. So let's say I'm convinced and I want to stop multi-tasking, and want to help others around me stop multi-tasking. Can you give me a few practical tips that can help me overcome it?

Dave: Sure. In the first place, let's look at how we can reduce the number of switches in the day? How can we reduce the number of distractions that are in front of you to cause your attention to pull away from whatever you're working on? So the first month, the obvious place is in messaging, whether that's e-mail or text messages. Whenever you get a message, are you getting instant notification that that message came in? If you are, then you're creating a situation that's setting you up for failure right from the beginning. You're conditioning your brain to switch.

So the first place is to just turn off those instant notifications. Give yourself the freedom to focus on what you're doing by removing those things. And then instead have a regularly scheduled time to check your e-mail and to process those things on a regular schedule, on *your* time table rather than the computer's time table.

Nick: You obviously have become a figurehead in this world of multitasking and now let's talk about the business implications of that.

Dave: Okay, because of all the other opportunities that I have that are really pressing on my time, one of the things I talk about in *Invaluable* is focusing on your most valuable activity. Every person really has only about two things that bring the most value to their bottom-line. For me, the biggest value besides working one-on-one with my coaching clients is the licensing of my training programs. So that's really where my emphasis is right now. That is where the training program that I've been delivering to people for so long I'm actually getting that into the hands of other companies through contracts -- where they're presenting it to their people, to their platform and

then I'm just receiving royalties off its use.

Nick: So okay, cool. And hey look, I'll be the first one to tell you I've had plenty of ideas that didn't go the way I thought they would go. Whether they were good ideas or not, you're right, sometimes you just can't do them all at one time.

Dave: Exactly.

Nick: In the same vein, here is another great lesson for all our people that have good content.

You were trying to take your content to another level and you decided to try it going into a retail market. But now, instead, you've gone to a more corporate environment where you're saying you're not going to certify them, but you're actually licensing the content. So you're effectively doing the same thing. You're leveraging the content even further. You're still allowing other people to teach your content and you're going to get paid for it.

Dave: Right! ... and the nice thing is too, coming from what you teach people, is that I allow myself to maintain the authority by doing that. So people are seeing me be the one to deliver it, which in turn raises its value. By licensing, I can actually reach a lot more people, help a lot more people get these stories back from people. They're saying, "Man, you changed my life. Everything's so much better." And that's part of it too.

One of things I teach is that you need to have a cause, and I know that's something that you're really big in, Nick. The cause that you did recently with, what's the name of the movie? I apologize.

Nick: Jacob's Turn. Yeah, no worries.

Dave: Yeah, Jacob's Turn. So I know that you understand that. And part of my cause is I want to help parents spend more time with their children. Too many people are working too long hours, and they know they're working too long hours but they don't know how to get out of it. So I want to be able to have as many as people as can, have that opportunity to spend more time with their children, because I think parental involvement solves an inventory of problems that kids have now.

Nick: So thanks for all that you do, man. Thanks for being on the call, taking the time with us and I can't wait to see you again in a few months. So be well in the meantime and thanks for joining us.

Dave: Great. Thanks a lot Nick. ★