

## Interview with Gabe Strom

**Alicia Dunams:** And welcome back! Alicia Dunams here and we have Gabe Strom on the line. Now Gabe has really been exhibiting leadership in all areas of his life. First of all, he's been doing internet marketing since 2008. Also hosts the podcast, Rich and Awake. I love that podcast 'coz he talks about really, the interweaving of business and faith. He's a man of faith and he's gonna be talking about that today. About being an online entrepreneur and having a successful coaching practice. Welcome Gabe, how are you?

**Gabe Strom:** I'm wonderful Alicia. I appreciate the opportunity, so I'm excited about this.

**A:** Awesome! But I love to start each interview with the question... Are you ready to play ALL IN?

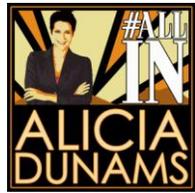
**G:** Let's jam, I'm ready for it!

**A:** Okay, awesome! So I did a really short introduction of yourself, I would love for you to tell us a little bit more about you and how you are here today.

**G:** Yeah... So cliff notes version, I'm on those strange entrepreneur that pretty knew at a young age that I want to in business for myself. I started my first business back when I was in college. A painting company, and I used that to paint way through school. While my friends were out on Spring Break party, I was knocking on doors selling paint jobs, which I've never done before in my life. That was my first experience of pre-selling we can talk about that later. I know you're a big fan of pre-selling products and services. But, yeah, I've been an entrepreneur for most of my adult life. I've only had two real jobs as an adult. I've had lots of jobs as a kid. And I've really lived in this entrepreneurial world. I got started online back in 2008. At that time, I had been in and out of several different direct sales businesses. I was doing the old school grind. If anyone is listening to the interview, you know this as the hotel model. I was just laying it out, you know, hitting up leads on Craigslist, my whole world market had pretty much been pushed away from me. And I found, I'll never forget this Alicia, I found a video by a gentleman on the internet, named Mike Dillard. And this was back, as I've said in 2008, end up watching a video went to a sales form, end up purchasing a book that he had for sale it was a \$37 book. This was like at three o'clock in the morning, it was a book about how to get leads on the internet essentially. I have never heard of internet marketing, I never heard of building a list, I've never heard of a direct response marketing. And I sat back in my chair, and I'll never forget this, it was 3 o'clock in the morning, and I thought, "You know what? Here's this guy I never spoke to before, I never had to do any hotel means, I've never met him face to face, I just said him, 37 bucks and he's gonna wake up in the morning with money in his bank account that I gave him from this whole internet marketing thing. So that light bulb basically went off instantly and I thought, well I've



gotta figure this stuff out, I gotta learn how these guys are leveraging systems. I read a really great book which is one of my favorite books which is called the [The E-Myth](#). It was probably my number one business book, if you haven't read that book by Michael Gerber. And in that book he talked about why ninety-five percent of all small businesses fail. And so at a very young age, I read that book back when I was in college, I became infectious with studying what... you know why do businesses fail? What makes them succeed? And I already knew really early on that nine out of ten fails. So my mindset back then as a his young entrepreneur was I wanna do whatever it takes, like I'm sold out, I'm all in, I wanna create wealth and be financially free. And if that means I gotta fail my phase 10 times in a row to get one right, I was willing to do that. I was a young guy, I didn't have a family, I didn't have kids or anything like that, I still don't have kids recently. But... so that was my mindset I was ruthless. I started; I was just trying all different kinds of stuff at that time in my career, to find out what works out. When I found out about internet marketing, when I first discovered this whole like subculture of direct response marketing, I learned the value early on of building an email list and creating value through videos and other online media, to invoke relationships with your audience. So fast forward, to make the long story short, I started coaching and consulting other small businesses, I said, "Hey, if I'm not the only one out here who doesn't know how to leverage technology. I just dove in, head first. Say everything I could get my hands on bought a whole ton of different courses, spent probably close to 10 grand on my education. Just learning, and learning, and learning. I ended up partnering with one of my coaching clients to launch our first real online business, which was called the Free Blog Factory. It's still a process that's in business today. I actually sold my shares to that company and got out of the business. But essentially, that was my first taste of real success. I had sold some information products and we can talk about that on the early stages. Actually, my very first success online, I've pre-sold a weekend summit series called The Social Media Summit. The Social Media Marketing Summit Series. I basically pre-sold a weekend seminar, a two-day seminar. All done via webinar, we sold it for \$297. I forget what we actually sold. Probably, we had 20 or 30 clients that went through that first program and the light bulb went off, and I'm like wow, I just you know leverage a webinar, leverage the seminar technology, and create money out of thin air. And that's when we kinda transitioned, launched the original Free Blog Factory and we've built that into a very successful business model. End up moving out to California for about a year to build that, we end up selling that. We moved back to Chicago. And this is the part of my story where, sometimes as an entrepreneur, sometime not all roads are opening. And at this point, you know I started a business... Due to some weird technicalities, I end up leaving the business. I moved back to Chicago and found myself starting over again from scratch. And I ended up taking a job, working in corporate America for an ad agency in Chicago, here, doing local advertising, pay per click things, like that. And I really liked my mindset; I've heard Kiyasaki talked about this. If you're gonna work, work to learn. You know don't work to earn the pay check, work to learn a skill. I knew that it would take me years to spend a couple million bucks and draft response advertising but if I could work for and agency, I could learn so many skills. So I ended up doing that for a couple years, learning the local internet marketing scene and end up getting back into affiliate marketing and over. About a period of 6 months, it's about 6 or 7 months, while also working my full-time job, I was able to double my corporate salary and walk away from that job. And really go full time in internet



marketing again; doing affiliate marketing and that also I watch an agency. We worked with dentists, chiropractors, local small business owners, helping them with their Google+, helping them with their pay per click and SEO, and things like that. So I'm giving you the real cliff notes version, 'coz my story's been, as like a lot of entrepreneurs, you try a lot of things. I've had a lot of success, had a lot of failures. And that's one of the things I've learned along the way. It's just gotta keep taking action in the midst of uncertainty. And here we are today, I have the privilege of helping... we've got a nice client base of local clients that we work with. And I do my passion, coaching and helping entrepreneurs to see their blind spots, and find out what's holding them back from reaching their fullest potential. Yeah, I'm giving you the real cliff notes version, and that's what I did in the past couple years, so.

**A:** That's awesome! Now, did you go to college?

**G:** I did, yeah; I went to Eastern, through the five-year college route.

**A:** Okay, good, good. So you went to college and I love how you just totally stood up as a leader and just really learning through failing. I love the quote, "Fail, forward, fast!" I think Christine Cummerford came up with that back in the day with her book. And this is the part of the podcast I love asking. What's your favourite leadership quote? 'Coz we share that in the show notes, and on the blog. And I'd love to hear what inspires you.

**G:** Yeah, well actually I'm gonna give you two. And I thought the second one as you're talking, they both came from a high school basketball coach. I learned so much about leadership from sports. When I was on the basketball team, I was starting for a team for a couple years. And there were two things that the coach said. And number one, "Character is what you do when no one's watching." Right? Character is what you do when no one's watching. And as a leader you know, there isn't always you know, especially as an entrepreneur, there's no one... like I don't have a box. There's no one telling you that you gotta be that, you gotta do this. And having a good character and being a man of your word, a woman of your word, it's so important. And the second quote is actually a plaque that I have sitting on my desk here. I don't know the author of this, but it says that, "True leaders are not those who strive to be the first, but are those who are first to strive and who would give their all for the success of the team." I don't know who the author of this, it doesn't have it here on the quote. Leaders are always the first to take action and then cast that vision. And so that's that. So those are the 2 quotes I live by.

**A:** I love that. I love that. So how are you Gabe showing up as a leader in your life?

**G:** Yeah, my life's got shifted recently. I recently got married about eight months ago. And so your responsibilities... I've heard this happens when you have kids and when you get married, but your whole world shifts from, I mean you know what I mean Alicia. Just from being about you to being with other people, being a bigger service. So you know, leading my family and you know and in business, as a coach and as an entrepreneur. I have my clients look to me and my



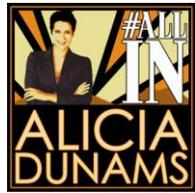
leadership to help craft their vision and with what they're up to life. So in my business, in my life... And you know, hopefully, we don't plan on having kids anytime soon, God-willing. And those are the two, so...

**A:** That's awesome. So for your family, your new family and your wife and for your clients. And how is the faith? Because we talked about this before. How is faith maybe, shown up in terms of being a leader and in your business?

**G:** I know that's a good question. I had this experience a couple years ago. I read a book recommended to me called [Surrender to Love](#) by David Benner. And I always in my life, especially at that time as an entrepreneur where I was just trying new things trying to find what would sticks. I got to a point where things weren't working. You know I have tried at this point a couple times that if you're an entrepreneur, you can get to that point. I finally got to a point where I said, you know what God what I'm doing is not working and I've been trying drive this car and I'm not getting where I wanna go. So I'm going to let go of the steering wheel and surrender to your will and my life and what you made me up to. And I'll never forget this; one of the experience I had at a church one day and I had this surrendering experience that I have this experience of letting go of my whole life. And I basically said, God, you know what? You created the universe, you created all the hottest stars in the sky, you created me, you know me better than I know myself, and you know how to get me to where I need to be. So I let go and you know there's been a couple times that this has happened in my life, this surrendering process and it's been the most freeing experience, I would say. Like, I don't always know the answers in my life. It plays a big part in what I do. You, anytime I get stopped me, I mean I'm constantly talking with God. It's not even like you, Oh dear God, here's my prayer. It's just kind of a conversation throughout my day. You know, I'm kind of constantly talking with him about what's going. So it plays a big part of what I do. And you know, having that awareness that I don't know all the answers. I was willing to be humble enough to get out of the driver's seat and say, Okay lord, you know, lead my life I'll take the actions and do what I need to do. I need your vision and direction so... It faces a big part of everything I do it's a big part of all my businesses.

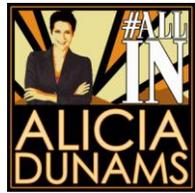
**A:** That's great, I love that. Surrendering is leadership, and be humble enough to get out of the driver's seat. I love that. So what are some of the characteristics...? We talked about it with your quote. What are the characteristics of being a leader? We talked about character, humility... What else for you?

**G:** Yeah, I think the biggest thing that comes to mind is vision. And as a leader in any area of your life, I think all great leaders cast a vision before it ever existed. I did a podcast of this recently. If you look back at some of the leaders of our generation; the Martin Luther King, sending the first man to the moon, J.F. Kennedy, and some of the greatest leaders like Martin Luther King... You know, he said I have a vision, I have a dream that all men will be treated equal. He said this at a time in our history when you know, blacks and whites, unlike these days, there wasn't equality. So he was casting a vision of what he saw in the future before it ever



existed. Same thing happened with J.F. Kennedy at his presidency. He said this decade we will put a man on the moon. Now, the powerful thing is that he said those words... We didn't have the technology to get to space, he didn't know how he was going to get there, and he didn't have any of the answers that the how-to stuff put together. But one of the things I've noticed all great leaders, men and women in our generation, and in the generations past they have a foresight to cast a vision before all the talks in the row. I think that's so important as entrepreneurs and how we live. Before you start a business, you've got to be able to have that vision seeing your creation before it actually exists. It might be you in a video camera. Try casting a vision of what you're creating, or pre-selling your seminar or you know, telling your programmers, hey I want you guys to go develop this. And just one last example on that; I love ... Like there's so much we can learn from history. I love reading biographies, I love reading about Ben Franklin and Henry Ford. And if you study the history of the V8 motor for example. This is another great example of leadership. You know Henry Ford at the time, you know the V8 Motor and Cars haven't been created yet, it was considered a possibility by the engineers of that time. It just wasn't possible. And he said, you know what I want to be the first car company to create the V8 motor, go to work on it. And the engineers said, Henry it's impossible, we can't do it. He said I'm paying you to do your job, go to work on it. Six months go by; they said it's still possible; you're wasting your time. He hired more engineers; he said you can do your job... And that's your choice... He kept clear on the vision and if you study the history of it, you know, a year and a half or so later, the first prototype of what was considered impossible, the V8 motor was created. And here we are today in 2014 and you know V8 cars has been a standard. But all of that came from a man that had a vision of what could be created before it was created. So I think leadership is a lot of things. I think it's humility, being able to recognize what you're good at, and what you're not strong at. So you can surround yourself with a team. I think great leadership is building a solid team around you. You have people that are stronger than you, or are weak. A lot of great men and women in history, they're never the smartest or brightest or most enthusiastic they've got the best people around them. The best leaders have the best teams around them. And then they're willing to... With the one thing you have to be good at and leadership. To be a great leader is to cast a clear vision. Because without a vision the people perish; without your vision as an entrepreneur, your team can't respond to you. So there are a lot of qualities, but I think some of those are, humility and just being able to recognize what you're good at and build a strong team around you, you know, you can fill in where you're weak at.

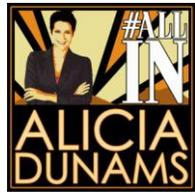
**A:** Vision, it's so important. Casting that clear vision, I love that. Now I'm almost thinking there's a lack... You know, I'm all about abundance, but sometimes I feel there's a lack of leadership, and there is a lack of vision. I mean I'm here in San Francisco Silicon Valley, it seems like there are visionaries all around, in terms of technology. I love that we're talking about this... Because I feel that there's a lack of vision, and our job as leaders is to create other leaders. It's something that I do in my business. And one thing, when I looked at my LinkedIn account, it's so funny, the amount of people who endorse me for motivating. A motivational speaker, I get that a lot. Well my program is called Bestseller in a Weekend, but I think I play people to play big. So how are you doing that in your life?



**G:** Yeah, you know what I'm glad you said that Alicia, 'coz I agree. I do believe that there's a shortage of great leaders and vision in our society. I was just talking with my client this morning. I've got a client who runs a direct sales organization and I really believe that people in this world are waiting for great leaders like you who are watching this podcast to step up. Like people are waiting for people to follow... And there's this weird vacuum that happens. When someone raises their hand and just steps up as a leader with confidence and authority, people just respond to that stuff. It's just like... I've noticed this, like here's an example. So I was at the movies the other day and there were 2 lines in the movies that were full, and there's a third line that was opened. And then sure enough, one guy steps out of the line and goes to the open line. And you wouldn't believe it, as soon as he did that, what do you guess happened? Just like clockwork, people followed that man and just joined that line. Now that opportunity was there for anyone to take. But because of fear, or because people don't want to step outside of the normal, people stay in their little comfort zone. I call this the tippie of the world. We are so prone to just stay in our comfort zones, and due to that one person who stepped out of line to do something different, and then people just lined up like clockwork. So I do believe there's leadership in this world, I think people are just waiting for people to stand up and cast that vision. I forgot what your original question was, but I just wanted to echo that 'coz I do feel there's a huge need for that and using this podcast, so...

**A:** That's awesome! People stepping up, because a lot of people are cautious. It's like, oh there's an empty line, do I go in, am I allowed to? And all of these questioning, it's almost like a lack of self-esteem or self-worth that they shouldn't just go there. So really, I wanna ask the question, so what does playing ALL IN mean to you? Because this is the ALL IN Podcast, about elevating your leadership game. And what does that mean, playing ALL IN?

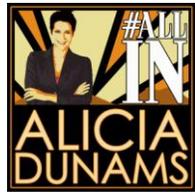
**G:** Man, playing ALL IN is a scary thing. I read your questions I knew this was coming. Playing all in is getting out of your comfort zone. You know, playing all in is doing whatever it takes to get the job done. If it's inside your time schedule or outside your time schedule or stepping up and doing the things that you know you need to get done that you might even be a little afraid of. So in my life, like my vision for the podcast. I've been called to start this podcast for a couple years now. And for a lot of reasons, I have not done it. And I feel a really strong calling to inspire. My why, my vision is to inspire a million entrepreneurs this year. So I don't know how I'm gonna do that, I don't know how I'm gonna reach that audience. You know, my show right now is averaging between three or five thousand downloads a month right now, so I've got a long way to go right up the paper. But let's get back to that, where great leaders don't always know the how-to. So I believe playing ALL IN is stepping up. And one of the big openings that I had, and I recently... You and I both recently went through this leadership course together, and one of the first things that opened up for me at the very beginning of this process, just this self awareness piece is that I've been selfish. I've always considered myself this really generous and giving person, and what I mean by that... It's not selfishness in the sense of, you know when I take things, but that by me playing small, by me not starting my podcast, by me not sharing my voice, not doing interviews like this. I actually subconsciously, and giving the people around me



permission to play small too. And that is a form of selfishness. You know, hanging on to my fears, my lack of insecurities, all the BS that swims around in my head and everyone else's head. But me actually hanging on to that, I'm playing small by being selfish. So when I hear you say, you know, playing all in and going all out, what I think about is doing things that are scary to you, doing things that put you outside your comfort zone. And doing things based on a vision, such as starting the podcast that I did with the inspiration... You know, I wanna inspire a million entrepreneurs and not even knowing how it all happened. So you know playing ALL IN is just taking action every single day. And this is one of the things that I've learned in working with literally thousands of clients that anytime someone's feeling uncertain, that lack of action breeds uncertainty, whereas action breeds confidence. So if you're not quite sure what to do yet, usually the answer is somewhere wrapped around taking action and playing, you know, being all in and playing all out in your life. It's such a... I love that question, I love that you ask that. I'm really curious to listen to the other interviews with you, to see what people say about that. But I think it could be a lot of things that I mean just step it out and get after it without knowing all the pieces, 'coz as leaders, you don't always know all the answers.

**A:** You don't know all the answers, that's the thing. I mean my daughter is a, she's writing music, and singing. And you know she's like, I'm really scared to put my stuff on the internet 'coz people are gonna be mean and say things, they're not gonna like it. And I'm like, think about Martin Luther King; he died for what he believed in. I just think about when you are a leader, you step out, and you have so much faith in what you believe in, you will die for it. You will die for it. And that's the reason, he needed to step up. I read this article about him and his methodology in terms of like the \_\_\_\_\_. And he would do things so he was heard, and it was all peaceful, it was all peaceful driven, and he wouldn't stand back. And he would go forward and totally playing all in until he lost his life. And so, I mean, we're just scratching the surface in terms of that, in terms of the potential and the power of everyone that's being born everyday, scratching the surface when we see by playing all in an making those decisions, and those hard decisions and feeling uncomfortable, we could really change the world. And there are some people doing it. But even us as leaders and having communities, I think about it everyday, it's like I could be doing so much more. And that's why I have this podcast; I'd say that the teacher teaches what they wanna know.

**G:** That's so true. You learn so much from teaching. And I just wanna like echo this to anyone watching this podcast, this is one of the reasons I love coaching so much 'coz you learn so much about yourself when you are coaching and inspiring other people. But hearing you say that Alicia, you know, you're really challenging my thought process. Being really all in and playing all in your life really is being willing to die for your vision. And there's only a handful men and women in history who've done that; Mother Theresa, Jesus, Martin Luther King. There's been a handful king has been a handful of people who are willing to die for a vision, and so... You know the answer that I just gave you, I feel, I'm gonna be honest... I feel like that's like, it's like a level 8, you're kinda like tapping at it, but really being playing all in is really being wanna die for a vision. And I'm being honest with myself; I am not willing to die for a vision yet. I think there's always room to grow more as leaders, but ask yourself that question like are you are you willing



to die for what you believe in, then if you're not then that shows as opportunities for us leaders of where we can grow in and craft our vision. But, powerful words right? When you look at those people in history that have done that. Thank you for challenging that question.

**A:** I love that. A handful, very powerful, very powerful. So Gabe, how can people find more about you and the programs you offer and your coaching?

**G:** Yeah, so first of all, I would love for you to tune in and participate in my podcast. Find "Rich and Awake" on iTunes; do search for "Rich and Awake." Or you can go to RichAndAwake.com and subscribe to the newsletter list. I'm really proud of a coaching process that I've been working on for the past couple of years. I believe this was divinely inspired from a couple of the mentors I worked with. And you can watch the video about on BackwardsBlueprints.com. There's a short video that explains this. But essentially, this is a future casting process where I work with you to help you get clearer on your vision, get clearer on what you're creating. And then it's called the BackwardsBlueprints 'coz we literally go through a series of questions in this technology, we'll walk backwards to today and say what actions should you be taking today to move closer to that. So yeah, I love for you to plug into the podcast. If you're curious or you feel that calling and you like to get some clarity around your vision, head over BackwardsBlueprints.com. That's probably another great place to connect with me.

**A:** Excellent! BackwardsBlueprints.com and RichandAwake.com, and your iTunes podcast. And I would love for you to leave us with some words of wisdom around leadership and to inspire people to play 100% today.

**G:** Yeah, you know the best advice that I would share is to craft and start where you're at, right? And I was just working through this with my mentor yesterday. Start with what you're at, create your first vision. If you don't have the end result created, just be okay with the process; trust the process, trust yourself, trust that the things are gonna line up the way the way that they're supposed to line up. 'Coz when everything happens, nothing happens perfectly the way that you expect it. And that's where disease comes from; it's the disconnection of your expectations and what reality actually is. If you can separate the expectations, just be okay with the journey. Trust yourself and be willing to step up in your life for what you believe for. There are people who are starving for your leadership. That's why I have so much respect for what you're doing Alicia, it's just evoking that greater leader in all of us and step up. Because there's people in your life right now, and I promise you no matter who you are listening to this podcast, whether you're a single mother, whether you're a leader or a \_\_\_\_\_ with your church. There are people in your life, even if you don't think that people are watching and following, they're watching and they're following what you're doing. So just step up and be right where you are. That's probably the best advice I would give. So many people, and I'm in this category too, have these grandiose visions of... Well I'm not inspiring millions of people, I'm not the president of the United States, I don't have a huge following in this space, but people are watching you where



# All In Podcast Transcript



you are. So just step up and live for what you are, it's probably the best advice I could give you. And trust yourself because it's gonna work out, so...

**A:** There we have it, Gabe Strom. Thank you so much for your words of wisdom and sharing ALL IN today. So, thank you!