



## **Achieve Your Goals Podcast #122 - He was burned alive: An Unbelievable Interview with John O'Leary**

**Hal:**

Goal achievers, I have a very exciting announcement for you. The dates and location have been set for the first ever Miracle Morning Experience live event. That's right. Go to [miraclemorning.com/events](http://miraclemorning.com/events) to get all the details, and to apply for a spot. When I say apply for a spot, I mean that very sincerely. We'll have, probably, 10,000 people, plus apply. It is narrowed down, or is limited to 200 individuals. The reason is: this event will be unlike any event in history, in that every person there will be working together to, literally, create history by planning the future of the Miracle Morning Movement.

Every morning, we'll start by experiencing guided Miracle Morning sessions to deepen and expand your abilities to benefit from the Savors Practices. Silence, affirmations, visualization, exercise readings, scribing. We'll have world-renowned experts in each of these areas to take your Miracle Morning to a whole new level. During the afternoon is where the collaborative part happens. You'll connect and collaborate with hundreds of like-minded Miracle Morning practitioners to brainstorm, plan, and execute the future of the Miracle Morning Movement.

How will we continue to change millions lives one morning at a time? You'll be a part of the future. Every evening, we'll celebrate together. Not too late, of course. We have to be up early. Everything from helping to guide the vision for the Miracle Morning movie that we're filming right now, to initiatives that you, literally, create right there in the room that I don't even know about. They'll be created collectively by the brilliance that comes together this June in the middle of the United States.

Again, go to [miraclemorning.com/events](http://miraclemorning.com/events) for all of the details. I cannot wait to see you at the Miracle Morning experience live event.

Hey. It's Hal Elrod, and this episode of the Achieve Your Goals podcast is being brought to you by FreshBooks. The small business accounting software designed for you. Stay tuned at the end for a really cool offer, and you'll find out how FreshBooks is helping millions of small business owners make everyday accounting easy, fast, and secure.

Nick:

Welcome to the Achieve Your Goals Podcast with Hal Elrod. I'm your host, Nick Palkowski, and you're listening to the show that is guaranteed to help you take your life to the next level, faster than you've ever thought possible. In each episode, you will learn from someone who has achieved extraordinary goals that most haven't. He's the author of the #1 bestselling book, *The Miracle Morning*, a Hall of Fame business achiever, an international keynote speaker, ultra marathon runner, and the founder of [VIPSUCCESSCOACHING.COM](http://VIPSUCCESSCOACHING.COM). Mr. Hal Elrod.

**Hal:** All right. Achieve Your Goals podcast listeners, you're in for a treat. I just hung up on our guest, by the way. The record button is red, and then the hangup on the person you're talking to button is red. 50% of the time I hangup on my guests, which is kind of fun. Anyway. This is exciting, actually.

The gentleman that we're going to interview today, when he was 9 years old, he was burned on 100% of his body, and he was expected to die. Today, he is a speaker, he is an author, he is teaching 50,000 people each year how to live inspired. His new book On Fire, appropriately titled, The 7 Choices to Ignite a Radically Inspired Life was published in March by Simon & Schuster, and it is a #1 national bestseller. I met this gentleman, John O'Leary, at an event that we were both speaking at. Immediately, his heart, his authenticity, it was evident, and I felt a connection.

As soon as we jumped on the line today, it just feels good to talk to John, and I'm really excited to talk to John with you, and introduce you to Mr. John O'Leary, author of the book On Fire. John, are you on the line?

**John:** Hal Elrod, you hung up on me once, but not a second time. I am delighted to be on this podcast with you.

**Hal:** Right on, man. Luckily, I don't hang up in the middle of the podcast. It's just when I attempt to hit the record button, and hit

the hangup button. I'll do my best to not hangup again. Yeah, man. This is good. You're in St. Louis right now, right? Your part of the world?

**John:** That is my world. I travel about 120 days a year, and it means I'm home about 240 days a year. Home, for me, is St. Louis, it's married, I have 4 children. The oldest is 10, the youngest is 4, and so my life is very busy, both personally and professionally, but I feel blessed, man. I think life is a miracle, and it starts off with a Miracle Morning, but it gets even better from there. Truly. I love your work, and so to be on your show is meaningful.

**Hal:** Cool, man. Ditto. I appreciate your work. It's funny, we have a mutual friend, John Rullan. Plug for Johnny Rullan.

**John:** That's right.

**Hal:** He told me about you. "You got to meet this John O'Leary. The best speaker I've ever seen." That's what he said. I was like, "You've seen me speak. Screw you," you know. He's all, "Oh, oh. Yeah, yeah." It was really cool when I was like, "Dude, I'm speaking at an event. This is the John O'Leary that you talked about, right?" It was really cool when you and I got to finally meet in person. Our reputations had preceded each other, thanks to John Rullan.

Let's dive into your story. It's such an extraordinary story. I feel a kinship, based on having almost died together. No together, but it's one thing that we share in common. Also, when I saw your book, *On Fire*, my book is *Taking Life Head On*. I was like, "Yeah. John and I really do think alike." Share the story. I heard you tell it in person. It's riveting. I'm sure some of our listeners will be in tears, but please share. What was that fateful day like when you were 9 years old?

**John:** Hal, I think everyone has a story. Everybody's got a story, it's just, frequently, not the story we are telling the world.

**Hal:** True.

**John:** I think it's important because we don't always tell the world about our car accidents, about the challenges we face, relationally, about what we went through as kids. I went through something horrific, endured, and then spent the rest of my life working like crazy to cover it up. Today, I'm finally bold enough, and free enough, to embrace the scars, to celebrate that story, and that's where this book came from. That's where my speaking comes from, and, I guess, that's, ultimately, the answer to your question: What happened to you when you were a kid?

What happened was, about a week before this event, I saw some little boys in my neighborhood playing with fire and gasoline. Like all great, curious Midwestern boys, I assumed if they could do it, so could I. That weekend, it's Saturday, it's

January the 17th, my mom and dad are gone. I walk into the garage, lit a piece of cardboard on fire, came over to a 5-gallon container of gasoline. The plan, Hal, is to pour a tiny bit of gasoline on top of this piece of paper that is burning. Before the liquid even comes out of the can, those darn fumes.

By the way, we could rift on this for the next hour, but it's generally, in life, not the liquid that burns us. It's not the headlines, it's not what everybody is talking about or debating. It's the stuff that no one talks about, it's the stuff that we're too busy to see. It's the fumes in life, and that day, and I think every day, what gets us are those darn fumes. As a 9-year-old, the fumes come out, it creates a massive explosion, splits the can in 2, picks me up, and then launches me 20 feet against the far side of the garage, engulfed in flames, surrounded by fire. The only way out was back through the fire, and so I just took off running.

Eventually, my brother Jim saves my life. It's an amazing, miraculous story of selfless love, but it changed my world, and it changed my world forever. I was burned, as you said, on 100% of my body, and 87% were 3rd degree.

**Hal:** Wow.

**John:** It's a death sentence.

**Hal:** Wow. Talk about about your brother saving your life. How did that occur?

**John:** Yeah. Jim was 17, I was 9. I came screaming out of the garage back into my mom and dad's house. I ran to the kitchen, and into the family room, through the family room, into the front of the house, stood on top of this rug burning. I mean, geez.

**Hal:** Were you screaming?

**John:** Oh, gosh. Panicked-ridden. Absolutely screaming. Looking back on it, I'm not even sure I knew I was on fire. I just remember knowing that there were orange things in front of me everywhere that I went, and that I was in pain, and a 9-year-old mindset that I was in trouble. For me, that was enough. I just took off running, stood on top of that rug screaming for a hero. I knew I needed somebody to do something for me. I wasn't even sure what it was.

I see my brother Jim racing toward me. He was 17, he had never, to this point, Hal, done anything good for me, I don't think. He's my older brother. He's condescending, I think he hates me back then. He's never done anything kind. I remember thinking, as he's coming toward me, "Oh, God. Anybody else. Not this guy." Yet, this is his moment. I think the reason why we do the work we do is because we realize there are people out there that we can shake and rattle their cage, and wake up to live into the fullness of their lives. This is Jim's moment to change, and to shine.

What he does is he picks up a rug, comes back over to me, begins beating down the flames. It takes him 2 minutes. It's important that your listeners understand, every time he swings into the flames, he's burning himself, but he's unrelenting. He realizes. Because you don't do this if it's about you. In life, we too frequently do things to see what we can get out of it. You don't beat someone with a little rug and burn yourself in the process for yourself, for your ego, or for whatever else, you do it for somebody else. In that, miracles start popping in your own life. This is true when you're a 17-year-old brother, but it's also true for all of us today in our lives.

He selflessly serves me, he beats down the flames, carries me outside, saves my life. 1987, a lifesaver of the year for the state of Missouri was an arrogant, self-centered, pimple-faced, punk brother who changed. Became a much better version of himself. He shined, man. Jim's my hero. I'm an old guy now. I'm 38. He's still my hero, today. He's one of the great heroes of my life.

**Hal:** At 9 years old, Jim saves your life. I don't think you shared this, yet. Where were your parents? When did they come into the picture?

**John:** Right. I'm glad you asked. My dad was at work, my mother was out with a couple of my siblings. I'm one of 6. I remember, in the hospital room, because I had not seen my parents yet. This explosion happened in the garage. I caused it, I'm laying now,

here in this bed by myself, doctors around, I'm naked and skinless and totally freaked out, and I remember just shutting my eyes. As a kid, Hal, and you have children yourself, so you can appreciate this, for me, the only thought I had that morning was, "Oh, my gosh. My dad is going to freaking kill me."

**Hal:** Of course.

**John:** Dude, he's going to flip out when he finds out what I did to the garage. The dude's going to flip. Then I hear his voice down the hall, the former army guy. He's a type-A business owner. Tough guy. Love him, but he's a tough guy, down the hall yelling at some nurse, "Where is my boy John? Where is my boy John?" I remember, as a kid, thinking, "Oh, my gosh. The old man has come to finish me off."

This nurse brings him back, pulls back the curtain, she probably should of called security, he walks in, he points down, finger in my face, and the dude let me have it. I like to say verbatim, what he said to me, because I'll never forget the words. With his finger in my face, Hal, he says, "John, look at me when I'm talking to you. John, I have never been so proud of anybody in my entire life, and my little buddy, you look at me when I'm talking to you. Today, this morning, I'm just proud to be your dad."

Then my mean, type-A, business-owning father says back to me, "John, I love you. I love you. I love you." As a kid, I crossed my arms as best as I could, I shut my eyes, and for me,

the thought was, "Oh, my gosh. Nobody told my dad what happened." The dude doesn't know. The next thought is, "Dude, I wonder if I can get away with it." Hal, I'm pretty sure you know, and your listeners know, your dad knew.

**Hal:** Sure.

**John:** If it's true on this day, it should be true for all of us on every freaking day. On this day, he realized what mattered. It's not the house, and it's not the garage, and it's not the car, it's not the crap. That stuff, it's fine, but it's not the stuff. It's the stuff that's sustained, it's the stuff that matters. It's relationship, and it's life, and it's faith, and it's health, and it's eyesight, and it's the ability to do life even better afterwards.

That day, my dad changed, and his great love changed me, too. It's just a moment in my time, this infliction point, that I think changed everything that happened from that moment in the hospital, afterwards.

**Hal:** How long did the recovery take you?

**John:** It's intense. With a broken arm, they cast you and you go home, and you get a milkshake on the way home. With burn care, when you're burned 100% of your body, and 87% is 3rd degree, the math, Hal, today is this: in 2016, they take the percentage of your body burns. 100. You can write these down at home. 100.

They add your age, 9, and if you draw a line below the 9, I know some of us are like, "Dude, we were told Hal would have no math involved today," but there's a little bit of math. 100 plus 9. You have 109% likelihood, in 2016, of dying.

**Hal:** Wow.

**John:** 30 years ago, there is no chance because you got no skin, and there's not really any likelihood of you getting any skin. They got to take it from the only place in your body not burned. For me, it's my scalp and my face. They weren't able to take it from my face, but they took it from my scalp. They took it from my scalp, I think, 14 different times. Week, after week, after week, coming back to that scalp, taking the skin, piecing me back together, breathing life back into my journey.

In-between the surgeries, they take you for bandage changes and physical and occupational respiratory therapy. It's a journey, man. It's something I don't write about, I don't really talk about, just because it's so intense, psychically. What I do write about, and what I do talk about is the people, the men and women who provided that care. Because I think it's hard for your listeners to imagine being a 9-year-old kid with no skin.

**Hal:** Sure.

**John:**

That's hard to relate to, man. I'll never be there, God willing. We all have jobs, and for the most part, our jobs are not always easy, and they're not always glorious to live into. How do you clean a room as a janitor? Because if he doesn't do his job beautifully, this kid dies of an infection. Truly. That's just a fact. He's going to get minimum wage for it. How does the burn technician, who makes about minimum wage, plus \$.50, carry a kid to a bandage change, and then do a procedure that is so torturous, not only for the kid, but the guy doing it?

How does the doctor do it? Because it's not just payment, at this point, it's got to be mission-driven. The beauty of our story is that all of these men, all of these women knew their power. They knew their purpose, they knew their mission, they knew their role in this little kid's miracle. They knew that every single person was responsible for it, and they played a beautiful symphony as one. Through their work, and through their efforts, through their faith, their actions, man.

You and I are on this call today, so I don't talk about burn care, I talk about the studs and the ladies. These incredible men and women who provided it extraordinarily well. Through their care, I'm with you. It's one example. In our lives, we can complain about the work we do, or we can celebrate that through it, we make a difference. We're going to do our finest job, ever, at making lattes today, or sweeping streets today, or painting pictures, or doing podcasts, or whatever else we do professionally. Through that, we can trust that our life and our work matters profoundly.

**Hal:** Wow. When did you start speaking? How long ago did you start speaking, professionally, and sharing your story, and sharing the lessons that you share?

**John:** Even this is new, and I think it's such a cool question. Because most people don't ask, they just assume. "John, I'm assuming you came out of your mother's womb with a microphone, correct?" Candidly, no, not correct. I, as a kid, was an introvert, and I remained an introvert certainly after blowing myself up in a garage. I remained an introvert, and very much to myself for the better part of 3 decades.

When I was 28 years old, Hal, just 10 years ago, my mom and dad wrote a book, called Overwhelming Odds, about what happened to them on a cold January morning, when they got phone calls at separate locations that their little boy was burnt, and that he was not going to survive. They wrote a little book about their journey. They printed 200 copies. They sold over 70,000.

**Hal:** Wow.

**John:** Which, that's not Miracle Morning type stuff, man, but this is a huge-

**Hal:** Pretty close. That's amazing.

**John:**

It's freaking enormous for a stay-at-home mother and a man who has Parkinson's disease, and has had it for 2 and-a-half decades, to sell out of their garage. One of the copies they sold was to the guy you're interviewing today. For a few bucks, I got to read about how I got burned. I had to read my own, unauthorized biography of my life. Imagine if your parents, Hal, wrote about your accident, and they wrote about the recovery, and they wrote about your scars.

See. Things you've never told anybody. I remember reading this book and getting to the end of it, and looking back at the front cover. Man, I get emotional talking about it. This little boy, he's got a St. Louis Cardinal hat on, he's in a wheel chair, he's got a big goofy grin on his face, but forever, when I looked at that picture, I saw a kid in a wheelchair. Because if you look closely, you see a wheelchair handle, and I saw a neck brace, which I used to have to wear, and I saw the scars on my neck. The remnants of struggles, man, below the clothes.

This time, 10 years ago, when I look back at that picture, I saw the grin, and I saw something miraculously. My face is not burned. Dude, what is the chance of that? That's a miracle. I saw the grin, not only in my face, but in my eyes. Light, and courage, and faithfulness, and zest. Character and grit. It also allowed me to realize that the fire, ultimately, led to me, not only in that character in life, which is important, but also the compassion.

It led to where I went to school, it led to college. It led to a chance encounter my senior year with a brunette named Elizabeth Grace, who is stunningly gorgeous on the inside and out.

**Hal:** Nice.

**John:** She's given me 4 babies. We have a wonderful marriage. It's not perfect, but we're better today at it than we were yesterday. The best of my life today, Hal, is the direct result of being blown up as a kid. Losing my fingers, going through surgeries and struggles, and never telling anybody about it. 10 years ago, I finally woke up. I embraced the gift of my scars, and the gift of my story, and very slowly started sharing it with others. The first group, 6 months later, was a group of 4 Girl Scouts. That's the first home run.

I got a text, recently. We were just the #1 seller on Amazon. All these things are coming our way. One of my friends said, "Man, I'm so glad this happened for you so quickly." I'm thinking back, like, "Quickly? It's been 9 years, man. My first group was 4 Girl Scouts, and they were yawning their way through my 8-minute presentation." No. This was not quick. It was painstakingly slow, but like erosion, it wore true.

I never wrote a book, I never, ever gave a presentation for revenue. I never did this to see what I could get out of it, man. Never. I still don't. I think when you do things because you trust

that the work you do, the words you speak, what you write can touch people's lives. The revenue comes, just trust in that.

**Hal:** Sure.

**John:** You do your job well, and you do it right. Humbly and authentically with the other people in mind, not you. With other people in mind. Dude, it shows back up, and that's been our experience. It's been a gift. Both what the speaking world has done for us, but also what the book has done. Not only in my life, but in the lives of those who have read it.

**Hal:** Yeah. I'm looking on Amazon. By the way, before I say this, I think that you're so right. The more value you add for people like that, that, to me, is the real law of attraction. Put it that way, right? You attract all the things that you want, based on how much you contribute, and how much you give to the world.

**John:** Right on.

**Hal:** The more you give, the more you attract. The more you contribute, the more you attract. Not, "I made a vision board and put pictures of fancy cars and houses on my wall, and I just sat back and it all magically showed up."

**John:** Dude, we could rift on that for a while. We'll lose some of the listeners, I'm sure. Hey. Guess what? It's not a secret. It's a fact. Hard work, done selflessly, leads to results in life. I think it's less about putting it up on a board and shutting your eyes and waiting for it to manifest, and more about imagining, "Gosh. What can I do today to make a profound difference?" It's called hard work.

**Hal:** I don't think it-

**John:** Usually, it's dressed-

**Hal:** -would have sold-

**John:** -in overalls, man.

**Hal:** If that was the-

**John:** It takes a lot of faith and character, and a network, and it shows up.

**Hal:** If that was the secret, your subtitle for the secret, I don't think you would have sold as many copies.

**John:** It's true.

**Hal:** Yeah. I'm on Amazon right now. You've been a #1 bestseller. You've got 56 reviews, which is impressive. The book published just in the last couple of months, right? When did it come out?

**John:** Just 4 weeks ago.

**Hal:** Right now, you're #19 in happiness, your #38 in motivation and self-improvement, and of the 56 reviews you have, they are all 5 stars. I know you well enough to know that those are authentic 5-star reviews. You didn't go buy those on Craigslist or anything.

**John:** No.

**Hal:** The headlines are things like, "Inspiring lessons. Couldn't put it down. A life changer. An incredible book and journey." On and on and on. What I want to know is, first, 2 questions, and you can handle them. They'll lead one right into the other. The first question is: why the book now? Why did you write the book now?

You mentioned that you became a speaker 10 years ago. It's been about 10 years that you started speaking, and before you put it into writing, it's been a decade. Why write the book now, and what is it going to do for our listeners if they go over to Amazon and pick up a copy?

**John:** Awesome. I'm sure all of your listeners have read, already, my first book called The Phoenix Factor. Oh, no?

**Hal:** Oh, no.

**John:** That's the one I wrote 9 years ago.

**Hal:** Oh, wow. Okay.

**John:** Like you, I was taught and trained, every speaker has a book.

**Hal:** Got it. Okay.

**John:** I just think there's such a cool lesson here. I wrote that book because I needed a way to monetize this, to get it out into the community to prove that I'm a speaker. I tried to sell it to New York. No one called me back, no one wrote me back. Rejection after rejection. You know what? Looking back at that book, the

book sucked. It was a lousy autobiography. It just was not worthy. I put it down and just started starving.

I waited. I waited until a message had manifested. Here's a sexy term these days, to reveal itself, clearly, in my mind, that I think the community, the world is starved for. What I think that is, Hal, is a battle cry, a yell out to challenge people to wake up from accidental living. No more excuses, no more blame shifting, no more looking back to what happened to you in a car accident, or what happened to you as a kid when you got burned, or what happened in that first marriage, or what happened in your upbringing. What happened 200 years ago.

No more blame shifting. No more looking back. Wake up to the gift and the miracle of this moment, of this day, and then do your absolute best to live into that profound beauty for those around you. Trusting that it might show back up in your life, but not doing it for that purpose. The book recounts the stories of a little boy being burned, but less than being an autobiography or a brag sheet. It's the story and the lessons taught to that little boy of the servants who showed up. The civilians, the parents, the community, President Reagan, Pope John Paul II, athletes, nobodies.

The collection of goodness that arrives, the lessons they taught me, and then, ultimately, what that can do for us in our work, in our relationships, and in our life.

**Hal:** Wow. Again, going into that second question, if somebody is reading it, what do you feel like the biggest takeaway is for people?

**John:** I'm not a big subtitle guy, but I walk them through 7 Choices to Ignite a Radically Inspired Life.

**Hal:** There we go. Okay.

**John:** "Why do you have so much happiness in life, John? I hear it in your voice. I hear it Hal's voice." Right now, if you said, "Which one's your favorite, O'Leary?" That's a little like asking me which of my 4 is my favorite kids. Which, I can off the air, but certainly not on the air. I think it's got to start with the first step. The first step, in my world, and I would suggest in your listener's world, is accountability, which is not a sexy term.

**Hal:** I love it.

**John:** Dude, if you can't own your life, no one else can, either. Buying a lottery ticket won't do it. Getting lucky tomorrow won't happen for you. If you can't wake up to the fact that you can no longer blame on someone else. Maybe it'll show up tomorrow for you, but man, you got to fight for it. If fighting's not working for you, maybe, sometimes, it means you got surrender to it.

One of the most powerful stories, and there are 2 that run hand in hand, when I was laying in that hospital bed. After my dad walked out of that room, my mom walked in. My mom's a pushover. She's so giving. She's a wonderful parent. I love her, still. She walked in, she took my right hand in hers, she patted my bald head. She looked me in the eyes, Hal, and she says, "I love you. I love you." I remember, as a 9-year-old, looking up at my mom and saying, "Mom, knock it off with the loves. Enough."

**Hal:** My daughter tells me that all the time.

**John:** Enough. I'm done with it. Then I asked, "Am I going to die?" Yeah, I'm 9. I'm laying there naked and skinless, and I am dying. I don't know it yet, but I am dying. When I asked the question, I assumed she would say, "Baby, what are you talking about? We're going to get you out of here today. We'll get you a milkshake on the way home. All I need you to think about, right now, Baby, is if you want chocolate or vanilla."

That's what I want, man. The milkshake promise. This bold, incredible lady, who was not prepared for this, trust me, looks back at me, takes my hand a little more firmly in hers, pats my bald head, and she says, a question that changes my world and continues to rock my life. She says, "Baby, look at me. Do you want to die? It's your choice. It's not mine."

**Hal:** Wow

**John:** I said, "Mom, no. I don't want to die. Geez. I don't want to die. I want to live." Her response was, "Good, Honey. Then look, take the hand of God, you walk the journey with him, and you fight. Baby, look at me. You fight like you have never fought before." She said, "Your Daddy and I will be with you every step along the journey, but Baby, this is your fight now. This is your life. It is time for you to own it."

On that day, it was January the 17th, 1987, I'll never forget it, we made a covenant to own it, man. To take the hand of God, to walk the journey, and to fight. By the way, it was a fight. 5 months later, the second lesson my mother taught me, that I think this book can inspire in others, is I'm at home. The miracle has taken hold, man. This little boy has come home. Life has come out of death. It's an amazing story, but I'm at home.

My mom is at one side of the table, my dad's at the other, my siblings are gathered around, she makes my favorite meal, which unusually is Au Gratin potatoes. Dude, I just loved cheesy goodness back in the day. I'm looking down at this, it smells good, looks better. The problem, back then, was I was tied into a wheelchair. I don't have hands, so I can't really eat this thing, so my sister grabs a fork, she scoops up potatoes, she brings it toward my mouth, and right before the cheesy goodness enters into the hangar, my mother says, "Amy, drop that fork. If John's hungry, he'll figure out a way to feed himself."

**Hal:** Wow.

**John:** I remember taking my eyes from the potatoes, and looking at my mom with such hatred. How could she do this? I can't eat. She's going to ruin dinner, and in fact, she did ruin dinner, because before it was all said and done, there were tears, there was yelling. Everybody else left the room except for my mother and I. I flipped the plate twice, but by the end of the night, Hal, there was a fork that had been wedged within my two hands. There were potatoes at the end of the fork, the fork had made it's way into my mouth, and through hatred-filled eyes, I looked at my mom, and I ate the potatoes.

This is the key piece, the day I was burned, she taught me not to die, which is a lesson we all must learn in life. No more dying. No more dying, please. 5 months later, she taught me a much more important lesson, which was, "Okay. Now it's time to live." Dude, if that doesn't wake you up, your health and your troubles, and your finances, and your marriage, and your parenting, and your professional, and your goal, there is no secret. It's about picking up the freaking fork.

Maybe you got to stare angrily at somebody else. Eating those potatoes and getting after day after day after day. It's not sexy, it's not pretty, it's called accountability, and it's transformative.

**Hal:**

I love that. Accountability. You're right, it's a word that people are like, "I don't want to be accountable," and it's like, dude, grow up. It's time to be accountable. If you want your life to be extraordinary, you've got to own it. I love that that is one of the foundational messages that you share. John, if people want to get ahold of you, if they want to buy the book, what's the best place to find you? Where's the best place to get a copy of *On Fire: The 7 Choices to Ignite a Radically Inspired Life*, and join the thousands upon thousands of people that have read the book and love the book, and it's impacting their life in a positive way?

**John:**

Awesome, man. I'm grateful. The book is at all the main retailers. Barnes & Noble, the indie retailers, the little bookstores. It's certainly on Amazon. I know a lot of your buyers will just hop right on it and buy it on Amazon. Through this process, though, Hal, I've begun really supporting the little guys. If you really are interested in checking out this book, and I hope you are, check out Amazon, go to Barnes & Noble, fine.

Man, walk down to your local bookstore. If, for some reason, they don't have it, order it. Buy it there. Keep someone in business who lives at the corner shop right now. Buy a coffee while you're in there. Be a cool guy, a cool gal. See a part of your community you may not have seen, ever. If we don't invest in it, it's going to disappear.

Go to the big bookstores if you want. Buy it on Amazon, save a few bucks, or go to the local retailer. I think you'll be blown away at how cool a store is right down the street from you.

There is some channels to check it out. An alternative path is to visit me online. I can be found online at [johnlearyinspires.com](http://johnlearyinspires.com). Johnlearyinspires.com. The book is there, but that same offer remains.

Yeah, you can buy it from me in my bookstore. You can go to Amazon and Barnes & Noble, but again, dude, kick the tires of a local bookstore. I know you'll love it.

**Hal:** John, you just inspired me. I'm a convenience guy. I'm an Amazon Prime member. I always go to Amazon, right? Order my books there. As you know, I just moved just outside of Austin, Texas a few days ago. You just inspired me to Google Lakeway Bookstore. Yeah, man. I'm going to keep it local. I really respect that.

My parents owned a grocery store in a small town. The big Vons came in and put us out of business. Thank you. You're one of the most thoughtful people I know, so thank you for that.

**John:** To be honest about it, I had no idea what was going on. I used to buy everything on Amazon, now I buy everything at my local bookstore. What happens is, price pressures. I'm not an economist, but here's the deal. When you choose to go there, instead of the local bookstore, it means one more set of dollars has now flown away from them, toward a bigger guy who can push the price on even more, which makes them even more attractive for guys like you and me, and everybody else who

loves convenience, to get it even cheaper tomorrow morning for free.

**Hal:** Awesome.

**John:** Which, then, pushes the guys even father out of the neighborhood. It makes it even harder for these great stores, and they add a ton of value. They employed local people. It's just a cool thing, man. These stores, very seldom, have drywall. They got cherry mahogany walls, and they smell funky, and it's just cool. Check out your local bookstores. If you're there, check out the book *On Fire*, that's the one I wrote. If not that, any book. It's all worthy. It's good stuff that you can learn, and do life even better afterwards.

**Hal:** Awesome, man. I just found Gould Family Books. It's 3 miles away from me, so I will be headed there. I think I've already got one copy of the book, but I will grab another copy of the book there just to support them, and to support you, and on and on. Man, I appreciate you, John O'Leary. Thank you so much for the time, and the value, and again, just delivered through real authenticity and heartfelt desire to serve, so I appreciate you buddy.

**John:** I think that would be what I would encourage as the takeaway. That authenticity, the joy. If you're looking for a tangible takeaway now, before the podcast turns off in your car, at your home, wherever you might be listening, here's what I do, Hal. This is my secret, man. It's done more for my marriage, more

for my faith, a lot more for my friendships, more for my work, more for my writing, more for my interviews on podcasts, than anything else. I step into every single conversation, always, with the words quietly in my heart, but sincere, "I love you, and there's nothing you can do about it." I mean this, man.

If you have one takeaway from this podcast today, with Hal Elrod, this is it. Step into your next conversation, your next phone call, your next sales call, the meeting tonight with your spouse, at the dinner table with your kids, the visit with the barista down the street, whatever. With those words, internally, "I love you. There is nothing, nothing that you can do about it," and then watch what happens, man. Cool things will explode from that conversation, always.

**Hal:** I love it. I'm writing it down right now. Nothing you can do. That's what I do with my kids. I'm sure, being that you just shared that, it's the same. Here's a little tangent bonus lesson. Not just parents, but most humans react to other humans, they mirror them, right? If somebody comes to you with anger, most people get angry.

**John:** That's right.

**Hal:** They get defensive. If you're a kid freaks out and hits you, you hit him back, or whatever. We moved into this new house, and I said, "Hey. We got some new family rules. No aggression in this house." Every comment, every interaction is coming from a place of love, empathy, kindness, and compassion. Period.

That's all we're allowed. My son's had a couple tantrums. The kids are young, they're adjusting to this. It's been a lot of chaos. We've been in moving trucks-

**John:** Totally.

**Hal:** -and all this stuff. I'm just trying to create this space. In the moment, I think, "Well, no. They need a pat on the butt because they need to know right away." In the long run, it's like your mom telling you, "I love you. I love you. I love you." Right?

**John:** Yes.

**Hal:** You go, "Mom, shut up already." I love that my daughter goes, "Mom, Dad, I know. You love me. I don't need to hear it every day." When she does need to hear it, she'll never forget it.

**John:** That's right.

**Hal:** I'm pushing that deep in her subconscious, so that when she's away at college, she's feeling lonely, it's like, "My dad loves me more than anything in the world. He's told me 70 million times over the last 18 years. I know it in my heart of hearts." John, thank you for sharing that. It's not just with our friends and family. Like you said, with the barista. It's every human being on the planet to come from that place of, "I love you, and there

is nothing you can do about. Nothing you can say that's going to change that. You be mean to me, that's okay. I love you right back."

**John:** Dude, that's awesome.

**Hal:** Thanks, brother. I appreciate you.

**John:** Man, I'm lifted up. I'm ready to roll.

**Hal:** Ditto, dude. Ditto. All right, man. Hey, we'll wrap this up. Thank you, again, John O'Leary. Achieve Your Goals podcast listeners, thank you for being on the show. Go. Go check out John's book at your local bookstore. If you don't have transportation, go to amazon.com, grab a copy of On Fire: The 7 Choices to Ignite a Radically Inspired Life.

I do know that John O'Leary has a podcast coming out soon. It might not be out at the date of this podcast, but keep an eye out for that. John, do you have the name of your podcast figured out?

**John:** Maybe we'll take a vote on Hal Elrod, and figure out what the name of it is. It's going to be around living a radically inspired life. That's what we teach. It's what my work is all about. It'll broadly be about living an inspired life.

**Hal:** Beautiful. Beautiful, man. All right. Achieve Your Goals podcast listeners, I know, in my heart, you got as much value, and really enjoyed the conversation with John today. Thank you so much for your valuable time, thanks for tuning in. I love you, I appreciate you. There's nothing you can do about it, and we'll talk to you next week.

**Nick:** Thank you so much for tuning in to this episode of the podcast. Now, we want to know, what were your big takeaways from this episode with John? Simply head over to [Halelrod.com/122](http://Halelrod.com/122) for episode 122, and simply leave a comment there on the show notes page. Let us know what your big takeaway was. Also, if you haven't done so yet, please go and subscribe to the podcast on iTunes by going to [Halelrod.com/itunes](http://Halelrod.com/itunes), click on the little subscribe button, and then, if you would, please leave a rating and review.

Rating and reviews truly are the best way for you to show your appreciation for the show because they help more people find out about the podcast, and decide if this is the one for them. All right. It's time for you to go out there, take action, and achieve your goals.

**Speaker 4:** If you're looking to grow your business using podcasting, but don't have the time to edit the audio, insert the intro and outro, write up the show notes, post the episode to all the different sites, and do all of the ridiculous backend work that's required, then you need [yourpodcastguru.com](http://yourpodcastguru.com), where you bring the

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