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Intro: Welcome to Profiles In Prosperity, the leading podcast for residential service contractors, sponsored by Service Roundtable and hosted by David Heimer.

David Heimer: Hi this is David Heimer. Welcome to Profiles In Prosperity. I think I first met Mark Matteson around 2006, 2007. I got to get to know him a whole lot better when we both spoke at one of our conferences in Sydney, Australia. And then I got to know him really well when he spoke at a bunch of our Success Days for several years. I'm a little bit embarrassed to say that while I listened to Mark all the time, and I really enjoyed his presentations a lot. I didn't follow his recommendations. And then one year when I was sort of taking stock of what I wanted to accomplish, how you go through that at the end of the year, I thought, you know what? I'm going to try this. So I had always written down my goals. But this time I was much more thoughtful about it. I wrote down my big goals for the year, and one of them was to increase my net worth that year by a significant amount.

I'm not going to tell you what the number was, but it was a lot. Then I implemented Mark's hour of power. I got up an hour earlier every day. I worked on my goals. I read about things that were related to my goals. I thought about what I should be grateful for. I tracked my progress, I set up a daily and monthly goal check-in. I don't remember what my other goals were. But I remember that I achieved my financial goal about halfway through the year, the stock market helped. But, there was a lot more to it than that. And I know I achieved my other goals that year as well. I think motivation is great. I enjoy motivational speakers. I think they are a lot of fun. But motivation is only part of it. I like motivational speakers that also give me practical tools that help me be more successful. And Mark does that in tons of different ways. In addition to all that, Mark is a prolific author. His books are fantastic. He writes, he speaks, he's a consultant, but what I really

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like most about Mark is that he's all about helping others succeed. So Mark Matteson, welcome to Profiles In Prosperity.

Mark Matteson: Good morning, David. A pleasure to be here. Thanks for having me.

David Heimer: Let's start at the beginning. How did you get into this industry?

Mark Matteson: I was playing basketball on a scholarship. I had a 3.0 blood alcohol level. And after a year I had a great year, I was 17 years old and I averaged 10 points a game. And I really truly did earn a 3.8 GPA and made the Dean's list. I loved school, I loved basketball, but I had a bit of a crisis at the time. Baby boomers were graduating from college and they couldn't find a job. It was the mid-seventies and there were a whole lot of baby boomers older than me. And I thought I didn't have a skill. I want to learn something that nobody can take away from me. So I called my uncle in Ohio who's an industrial arts teacher and he said, refrigeration and air conditioning. Kind of like that scene, Dustin Hoffman in the graduation, the guy says plastics, right? So, I went to the air force recruiter because my father had been in the air force for years and I took the test and I tested in the 96 percentile. So they said, you can have any job you want. And I said, refrigeration, air conditioning. So that's how I got started. And after my stint in the air force, I went through a four-year apprenticeship in Seattle and then got into sales and kind of the rest is history.

David Heimer: At some point, you made a really significant career pivot to writing, publishing, and speaking. I'm really interested in what caused you to do that. And also, how did you do that?

Mark Matteson: Well, I was the top salesperson in the contractor I was working for and

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I had attended a seminar for an old mentor of mine, Bob Moha. And I had met Bob when I was 14. It was the very first seminar I ever went to. And he taught me how to set goals and visualize at the tender age of 14. And here he was, 20 years later and he offered me a job working at a screening company at learning institutes. So I went to work for Bob. It was arduous and challenging and long hours. I drove 55 miles one way to get to their offices. And Bob taught me the speaking business.

And one day he approached me and said, look, "I know you're a voracious reader. Would you mind doing a column for our newsletter on books?" And I said, "sure." So I did book reviews and I wrote a bunch of those. And then I started sending out a, oh, I called it a view from the edge. It was a one-page article and I had mailed it out. That was back in the day when you mailed out. And I got up to like 350 people, I was mailing it out to. And then I stumbled across a book by Jeffrey Land called Email Eldorado. And then I listened to a book by Seth Godin called Permission Marketing. And those two books changed the way I saw the writing. And so in 2003, I started an easy electronic newsletter and went from there.

And then I'd written a bunch of articles. I cobbled them together. I thought it'd make a good book, but I'd also written this little story called Freedom From Fear. It was like 85-90 pages. And I mailed them to a mentor of mine, Charlie Tremendous Jones and I asked his opinion. He was a very successful speaker and someone I really admired. And he called me back a couple of weeks later, and Charlie was a unique guy. So I'm just going to do a Charlie Jones imitation. And he goes, "well, those little articles you wrote, you can do those yourself self-published." But he said "that little story, you wrote Freedom From Fear, if you write another book like that, you won't need to speak

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anymore." And I said, "excuse me." He goes, "I want to publish it." I said, "you're a publisher?" He said, "what do you think Executive Books is, an underwear store?"

So I said, "well, how does it work, Charlie?" And he said, "Well, I'm going to print 10,000 and give you a thousand to sell in the back of the room." And I said "the back of what room?" He said, "when you speak." And I went, "right, right." Like I knew what he was talking about. So that started it all and the book just took off. It's since sold 150,000 copies and has been translated into five or 10 languages. It exceeded all my expectations and that got me hooked on writing. So now ever since then, I've written three pages a day or an hour, whichever comes first. And writing was always on the side of the speaking business because I started the speaking business and did that for five years before I ever released my first book. So I kind of did it backwards. I think I tell aspiring speakers now to write a book because your book is your talk and your talk is your book.

David Heimer: That's great stuff. What a terrific story. I love the imitation of Charlie Tremendous Jones.

Mark Matteson: Well, he would say things like, you know what I like about you? Everything. Then he gives you a big hug. And then he says things like I got six kids, he goes, I'd have more children, but my wife hates kids. And Gloria is like the sweetest woman in the world. It was just, he was so funny. But while you were laughing, he hits you over the head with a principle. Like you'll be the same person in five years, except for two things, books and people, people and books. And when I heard that, it literally changed my life. I started evaluating who I was associating with.

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I really scrutinized what I read. And like you said, with the hour of power, I made sure that my reading was in alignment with my goals. And that's such a simple concept that nobody talks about. I don't know why they don't, but they don't. And as you know, David contractors don't read. As a rule, they're men and men don't read, women buy and read 80% of the books in this country. So one of the things I realized pretty quickly was although they were buying the book, they weren't reading it. So I went into the studio and I recorded it on back then it was audio cassette and then eventually CD and now audible. But having books on audio creates what I call windshield university. And I've logged about 50,000 hours in that fine university. That's changed my life as well.

David Heimer: Yeah, me too. I don't think I listen to the radio anymore in the car. I have a podcast or an audible book that I'm listening to. It's such a fantastic way. Frankly, with the Kindle Books now, you can use whisper sync and you listen and read and keep everything in sync. I just burn through books. It's amazing.

Mark Matteson: Micheal Paula has written a bunch of books on nutrition, but he wrote one on caffeine recently. It's only two hours. It's called Caffeine. And it's the history and the effect of caffeine. It's really fascinating. And we have a condo three hours east and it's a long drive. So I listened to books while I'm driving. And I've got the autobiography of Andrew Carnegie right now that I'm listening to. I also have the book as well. So I'm kind of reading it simultaneously, but yeah, it's a simple way to get great information.

Most of the things that are taught in school don't help us in business. They just don't and you can't get a degree in sales at a university. You get one in marketing, but you can't get one in sales. So what I tried to do is define the things that contractors needed, that they weren't getting. And so that's driven, all of the curriculum that I created over

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the years, whether it's customer service or sales or team building or personal development. And contractors seem to like what I do because I stay pretty busy over the years.

David Heimer: While we're talking about books, people tell us a little bit about your new podcast because that's really fascinating stuff.

Mark Matteson: Well, it's entitled Mark Matteson on Books And People. And what I try to do is interview interesting, smart people who've been very successful. Next week I'm interviewing Sylvia Hantle. She built a 500 person company, strictly women, all single moms, because she was a single mom her husband walked out on her and she built this amazing company. She just sold it just recently. I spoke at Boise State University at their big conference room up above that blue field and that's where I met Sylvia. And she told me her story at dinner. And I just, I said, you got to write a book. And she said, yeah, you're the 47th person that's told me that. So what I look for is people like you and people like Sylvia, who are just really interesting, really smart and really successful, or they've written a book and the book is fantastic. So I go back and forth between authors and speakers and inspiring business people.

David Heimer: I've listened to it. It's really good. Tell us the name of it again.

Mark Matteson: Mark Matteson on Books And People, you can get it on Google Play or iTunes. You can just go on my website, sparkingtest.net and click on podcasts. And they're all downloaded there. So yeah, they're fun. I love interviewing people. I studied the process of interviewing for years and some of my heroes, guys like Jay Leno and Charlie Rose are just phenomenal interviewers. And like you, you know how to ask the

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right questions and then listen, and then one answer leads to the next question. And I try to keep it fun and light and entertaining, but at the same time, substantive and content-rich.

David Heimer: That's the key. So I think of you as the guru of success and I'd like you to tell me - I know you've got a long list of things that people could do to create success. But just want to know what are your top three things that people should do to create success in their lives?

Mark Matteson: Well, you alluded to it as the hour of power. It's not a phrase I coined. It's one I borrowed, but the process of patching together, those three things came over time. So you said to get up an hour earlier or stay up an hour later, whatever works for your circadian rhythm and take a look at your number one goal. And one of the ways I get people to figure out what the number one goal is to have them list five goals they want to accomplish over the next year. And I've done that thousand of times in seminars and keynotes. And then once you have the five and you prioritize the list, which one's number one and so on. And then once you have your number one goal, then list the reasons why you want it and put it on paper. I use three-by-five cards. I've also got it on my phone.

I record my goals on my phone as well and listen to those while I'm driving. But once I have my number one goal, now I can plug in the hour power. So these three things are 20 minutes each to start. I've since expanded that to be over three hours. So I read for an hour or 50 pages, whichever comes first. I'm reading the autobiography of Andrew Carnegie right now. And what ends up happening is when I'm reading for 20 or 30 or 40 or 60 minutes, I'm looking for one idea. One thing that I can apply from the reading,

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that's going to help me move towards my goal. So the first thing is the reading.

The second thing is thinking about the goal, saying it out loud, revealing it, closing your eyes, imagining it, picturing it in your imagination, seeing yourself achieving the goal.

And I do that for 15 to 20 minutes. And invariably, I have a pastor friend who said, "if prayers are talking to God, meditation is listening." So, it's really the meditation side of the equation. And invariably in that thinking time, I come up with more ideas. And then finally, and this is a piece that pulls it all together is what are the six most important things I need to do today. Now that came from Andrew Carnegie's protege, Charles Schwab was the president of the US steel in 1925. And he hired a guy named Ivy Lee and Lee was a consultant. And Lee sat down with him and he said, "look, I want you to help me be more effective, at least that I can do that. Grab a legal pad and a pencil." He said, "I want you to write down the six most important things you need to do today."

So Schwab did that. He said, "Now prioritize the list, which one's number one. And so on, until you prioritize the list. Now estimate how long you think each of those tasks is going to take." So he did that. He said, "Now tomorrow morning when you come to work, do number one and do not go on to number two until you've completed number one or delegate its completion to somebody else." And he did that. He said, "I want you to do that every day for 30 days. And once you're convinced of this efficacy, I want you to teach it to all your managers." Which at that time had 42 people that reported to him. So he talked to his managers and they did it. 90 days later, Ivy Lee in 1925, got a check for \$25,000. Because Schwab said from a business standpoint, it was the single most important lesson you've ever learned.

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And so when you do any of those three things on their own, they're valuable. But when you combine all three, there's a chemistry that happens. It's magical. And the key David, and you said it, in six months you achieved your number one goal. Well, it's consistency. You can't do it for a day or two and then stop and then do it again. You have to do it consistently over an extended period of time. If you do it for 30 days, it becomes a habit. If you're doing it for 90 days, you're not going to believe what happens. Because in the end, it comes down to this, you'll be doing first things first, one thing at a time and finish what you start. And for a guy with ADD like me, is that a squirrel?

I need something like that. Squirrel squirrel. I need to because I'm so easily distracted. I have to have a plan each day. I plan my work and I work my plan. For your listeners, if they just try this for 30 days, they're not going to believe how effective they're going to be. What I used to do is I'd write down 14 things in my daytime back in the late eighties and I would only get like five or six of them done and I felt like I failed. Well, most people can never get more than five or six things done in a day. But if you get the right things done in the right order, over an extended period of time, we can accuse you of being effective.

David Heimer: Do you have those written down in any one of your particular books?

Mark Matterson: Oh yeah. I talked about them, at least two of my books. I also have a little pad. So I have to tell you this story. So I created a little pad. It was designed initially for marketing. It's got my picture, my contact information and it has the six most important things with 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 in lines there. And there's 50 sheets in a pad. The idea of being after 50 days has become a habit. And I printed those really just, I would

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throw them in with the book orders I'd received as kind of a value-added and to reinforce the idea of the hour of power and planning your day. Well, one day I was in Texas working with a plumbing contractor and I passed those out to everyone in the seminar. And I had them all write down plans for six things. And his name was Barry and afterward, he said, "do you have some more of those?" Can I buy some of those pads? How much do you charge for those? And I started laughing.

I thought it's a marketing tool. It's not really something I created for revenue. I said, "I don't know, what would you pay for those?" He goes, "I'd pay five or 10 bucks easy." I said, "how many do you want?" He said, "a hundred." I said, "okay, here you go." So it's become a marketing tool and a product. But here's the thing and you said it earlier. In business, it has to work. I'm not a professor at a college who's tenured and is never going to get fired no matter how bad or good I am. What I deliver has to work or I don't get asked back and the Hour Power works.

David Heimer: Yeah, it really does. You said it's in several of your books. If I were to just pick one and say, this is the place to start with reading Mark Matteson's books, which one would you recommend for me?

Mark Matteson: You have to start with Freedom From Fear. There's a reason 150,000 people bought it. It's only 95 pages. It's a bathroom book. You can read it in four sittings if you don't mind your legs going numb. It's just a simple book, but I talk about the goal-setting process in that book. My newest book, Freedom From Fat is another one that mentions the hour power. So either those two they're wonderful books, they're fables, right? So people ask me, "Is that a real story? Did those things happen to you?" And my

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response is always the same. You have to read the next book to find out. In the end, I'm a capitalist.

David Heimer: So this has been terrific. If people wanted to get hold of you for coaching, speaking, or to buy one of your books. What is the best way to do that?

Mark Matteson: Well, I'm the easiest guy in the universe to find. If you just type in my name, Mark with a K Matteson. MATTESON. I come up, I think the first 11 or 12. You can go to my website, sparkingsuccess.net, or you can call me at 206-697-0454. And the first hour is always free. And I love what I do, David. I do about 75 talks a year around the globe. Well I used to before COVID. But the tide started to come back in again. So yeah, I love what I do. I have a passion for contractors. I just love them because I've spent 40 years in this industry. And let's face it contractors are the hardest working group out there. And especially when you have a contract and you know this because you spent the better part of your life working to help contractors be successful. The ones who were hungry, the ones who were willing to take your suggestion and run with them when they called you a year or two later. And they say that principle, that concept changed my life. Is there anything better than that? I don't think so.

David Heimer: No, I agree. It's fantastic. It just extends to everybody around him. It is wonderful.

Mark Matteson: Well, look at the work you and Matt have done over the years. You've helped 5,000 plus contractors dramatically change, not just their business, but their life as well. And that's a testimony to the value of education and community and content. And you guys have done a phenomenal job with that. My hats off to you.

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David Heimer: Well thank you. And I think that these podcasts add to that. And additionally, just a lot of fun to do, frankly. I get to talk to interesting people like you. Mark Matteson, thank you for doing this with us and I look forward to speaking with you again in the future.

Mark Matteson: Thanks David, and my parting shot would be this, the books you don't read won't help and people that don't read it, we're better off than those that don't know how to read. So make it a great day unless you have other plans.

David Heimer: Alright, that's a wrap.

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