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Episode 474: Abby Marks Beale: Speed Reading Skills 101 Air Date: December 21, 2022

Dori Nugent: You came to the right location to unlock the key to reading not only faster, but smarter. You will be amazed by the simple tips given in today's episode by our industry expert to improve your reading skills. Stay tuned as the Fitness Business Podcast delivers another favorite fantastic educational episode. As I wrap up the year, I'm curious about something. Which show, guest or topic was your absolute favorite?

Dori Nugent: By you telling us. Well, that gives us a good guide for 2022's lineup. Our mission here at The Fitness Business Podcast is to provide the most up to date and relevant episodes. So let the posting begin. Please share on your favorite social media site. And you know what? Don't forget tag us. Hello FBP family and happy holidays. I'm your host, Dori Nugent and Abby Marks Beale, the owner of Rev It Up Reading joins me today on the Mic.

Dori Nugent: Abby is a speed reading expert and she believes that with a little education and a little practice, we can greatly improve our reading skills. Listen today to learn her tips and tricks to become a more efficient reader. After a few words from our partner Keep Me, we will get started with our episode. Want to sell more memberships, improve your retention and maximize your nonducted revenue? Then take a look at keep me.

Dori Nugent: Keep Me is a smart automation platform that's helping fitness operators increase their revenue across the entire membership lifecycle with some pretty amazing results. Keep Me customers have consistently achieved lead generation rates above 60%, increased their average length of membership by twelve months, improved their Nondes revenue by 35%, and saved 16 to 20 hours a month per team member. We absolutely love this tool and we think you will too.

Dori Nugent: To learn more, head to www.keepme.ai and book a demo today. I love keep me. And I'm positive you will, too. Take a look at www.keepme.ai

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Dori Nugent: Abby, I'd love for you to give us your top three tips for starting to learn to speed read.

Abby Marks Beale: So I'm happy to share. Probably the first one is to consider going to get my free sneak peek that is on my website. And what is there is one of the modules that shows you how to move your eyes in a more rhythmic fashion. And so it's a really nice taste of what it is that I teach and how the course looks. So that's on revitupreading.com the free sneak peek, the second would be anytime that you're reading is to do it intentionally and actively. A lot of people just read and they're very passive about it, but by putting yourself in a place that's a learning place and that you set yourself some time goals and you don't have the interruptions, and maybe think about finding the writer's outline.

Abby Marks Beale: If it's nonfiction, it's just like make it a conscious effort instead of like, oh, I'm just going to read now if you want to read on the beach, it's a different kind of experience than reading at a desk, so be aware of that. And then the third would be is just because speed reading is just something people don't know about is just go get some education. There's so much out there between my books, as I mentioned earlier.

Abby Marks Beale: Plus, I have my podcast Rev It Up Reading Revolution. It has only 18 episodes. I stopped doing it, but there's some great stuff in there. There's other audio books, my online course. There's another course called speeder.com. Just go looking for speed reading resources and see what works for you. But that's one of the best things I can say is just get educated.

Dori Nugent: This is usually the part in the show where I announce next week's guest. However, my announcement today is that Santa is giving all of the hardworking elves here at the Fitness Business podcast a week off. Yay. But don't worry, the podcast will be up and running for the 2023 calendar year. Up first for 2023, super talented Larry Levine, author of *Selling from the Heart*. And his topic is all things sales.

Dori Nugent: See you in 2023.

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Dori Nugent: Let's transition into this week's interview with Abby Marks Beale FBP family. Thank you for coming back and joining us. I'm really excited about our industry expert today. We kind of went in a little different direction. Nonfitness. Today we're actually going with a speed reading expert and author Abby Marks Beale is here. Thank you, Abby, for joining us on the Fitness Business podcast.

Abby Marks Beale: Oh, such my pleasure. Thanks for having me.

Dori Nugent: Yes. You got a pretty cool job title. You're an author, of course. And then you're also the creator of rev it up. Reading online course.

Abby Marks Beale: Yes, I am. Not many people when people say, so what do you do for a living? And I say, I'm a speed reading expert. It's like I come out of left field because nobody knows a speed reading expert.

Dori Nugent: Well. I love that you kind of advertise yourself as far as in your business, as far as read smarter, faster and just plain better. I love that.

Abby Marks Beale: Yeah. Thank you. I like to have a tagline. I think every business needs to have a tagline.

Dori Nugent: Oh, we're going to have to have you back for marketing. Oh, gosh, okay, listen, everybody in the world reads, right? And it's funny because I'm always like, oh, I'm a slow reader because I swear I've got comprehension problems and I have to read things three times sometimes. So I love that you're here and you're just going to talk to us about learning to read faster. So let's start off with you just explaining what speed reading is.

Abby Marks Beale: That's a great first question because some people think speed reading is what Woody Allen says is reading War and Peace in five minutes. And it's a book about Russia. But that is not what it's about. At least in my world, the way that I work. Speed reading is, and this is my definition, it's a set of active mindful and conscious strategies that allow you to get what you need quickly from any reading material in an efficient and an effective manner.

Abby Marks Beale: It doesn't mean reading so fast that you don't understand. It's about getting what you need. So it doesn't mean for most people, reading thousands of words per minute. Most people, their beginning speed is around 250 words per minute. That's the average reading speed of people that haven't had any reading training since elementary school. And so when you think about thousands of words per minute, of course people are thinking that's superhuman. Of course they're thinking I can't do it.

Abby Marks Beale: And so that's true, they can't, but they can maximize where they are right now. And so that's what I talk about with speed reading.

Dori Nugent: So if I heard you correctly, you said the average person reads 250 words per minute. How fast? If we took your course, what's the average that we would improve to?

Abby Marks Beale: So it's the human factor, obviously, it depends. I would say if I can get someone to actually do the things that I am sharing to do. And some people, and I have to give a caveat that people are reticent to give up what they're comfortable with even though it doesn't work. And so when we finally get to do something different and you get to see some result, I say you can double to triple your reading speed. But more than that, you have active mindful conscious strategies that you can apply to all of your reading workloads. So it's not like every time you read, you're going to read at X speed.

Abby Marks Beale: I call it a gear shift. Everyone has a gear shift, just like you have five gears in a car. I think most of us are stuck in gears one and two. The slower gears. If we haven't had any reading training since elementary school, which most people haven't. So what my course does is helps you identify where you are. Now, let's say it's a 250 words per minute on average, but then how can you stretch and get into gears three, four and five?

Abby Marks Beale: And so there are very specific strategies. Hand method, cards methods, eye methods, eyes and brain methods, that you can apply. And it isn't just one thing. I give lots of choices. It's like a buffet of ideas and people figure out what they can do that's going to work best for them.

Dori Nugent: Oh, I love buffet of items. My gosh, I love that. That's fantastic. So when you sign up for your course, if somebody signs up for your course, you do an initial test to find out what their baseline number is on how many words per minute.

Abby Marks Beale: Correct. So the online course is basically the online version of what I had been doing for so many years until we could do online courses. And so my online course has what I call the baseline in module one. There's nine modules in the course, but there are 17 timed exercises. So they get to play and practice and experiment, and then they compare it back to where they start so their first reading can't change in the course, they can change all the other ones, they can play with all the other ones, but their first reading stays exactly the same because that's their baseline.

Dori Nugent: And you feel that even when you get to the point where you're reading faster, your comprehension level is still the same.

Abby Marks Beale: Your comprehension level could temporarily go down because the eyes and brain are now communicating differently. But for many people, part of what happens is that their comprehension either stays the same if it was good to begin with or if it wasn't so good. It becomes good because they now are focusing and they're doing mindful conscious strategies, active strategies that are allowing them to get what they need without them feeling like they're losing it.

Abby Marks Beale: It's a very different feeling that they get.

Dori Nugent: Well, I know for myself I need more focus.

Abby Marks Beale: And that's what this is, really. Speed is great for reading more and less time, but you don't get there unless you have concentration. So that's really what this course does, is it focuses your concentration.

Dori Nugent: So would you share how many words per minute you can read, or are you comfortable with that?

Abby Marks Beale: Sure, people ask me. So as I mentioned, there's a gear shift and so I can read as slow as anybody if I'm reading a legal document. I'm not a lawyer, so to me it's unfamiliar to me or reading a contract. I can go slow. But when it comes to reading things I am familiar with or things that I'm just looking for some basic information. So the range could be anywhere between three to 400 words per minute on the lower end and probably 1200 to 1500 on the upper end.

Abby Marks Beale: And so that's my range. But there are some people, you know, if you look at the Guinness Book of World Records, the guy read 25,000 words a minute. I'm like, that's superhuman. That is not what most people can do. And so if we can get you from 250 to like 300 to 1200 awesome, man. It's great.

Dori Nugent: Oh, my gosh. I'm sitting here just wondering if our FEP family just had to pick their mouth up off the floor numbers.

Abby Marks Beale: It's so doable for what I do is doable.

Dori Nugent: Right? Well, this is good stuff. This is really interesting. So let's talk about reading books and getting faster and just reading a book, right? It's summer, you're on the beach. You want to open a book and read. What are your strategies? Could you share your strategies on how to read faster?

Abby Marks Beale: I have to laugh because if you're on a beach and you're just reading for pleasure, you can read any way you want. You can read slowly. You can read quickly. You can fall asleep reading. It doesn't matter. But when you're reading, the thing that most people have the issue with is more reading for work, reading for school, reading for personal professional development. And that's the nonfiction stuff, and that's harder to read, and that should be not used all the time on a beach.

Abby Marks Beale: Just like you don't want to read it before you go to bed, because those are not the positions or places that you need to be. If you're going to be reading a business book, you really need to put yourself in a concentrating place, sitting upright at a cleared off desk or table without a lot of interruptions, your phone on mute and your computer off and no dings and bings and people coming in. It's just like you have to create this learning mindset when you're trying to learn something.

Abby Marks Beale: So when you talk about the beach, I'm like, do whatever you want on the beach. I don't care. You're not going to bring your schoolwork. I hope anyone who's

listening is going to school. Don't bring your schoolwork to the beach. Enjoy the beach. My goodness.

Dori Nugent: All right. I do love your strategies. For like you said, if it's a business bulk and you're in the environment and you're in your office, I like the idea of clearing your desk, turning the phone off, because, again, I told you I need more focus in my life, and I would be the one oh, the phone didn't what's that? What's, this document over here on my desk?

Abby Marks Beale: Yeah. We have to find ways to focus and not use that. What do you call that when you get distracted really quickly? The bright shiny object theory. You see something's like, oh, look at that, look at that. Then you come back to where you started, like, oh, yeah, that's what I was doing.

Dori Nugent: Yeah. I often say, Dory the fish. I mean, it fits me perfectly. Exactly. What what's over here? Oh, over there?

Abby Marks Beale: Yeah.

Dori Nugent: All right.

Abby Marks Beale: We are all guilty of that, but good.

Dori Nugent: That's okay. So you kind of hit the strategies for when we're reading books. We all know online reading is uber, uber popular, so let's talk about strategies for online reading.

Abby Marks Beale: So online reading has a very different component in certain ways because where the light hits it, that it comes from the inside instead of when you're reading on paper, you're reading from light from the outside. It doesn't move, it doesn't flicker. So it's a very different animal. Plus, you have ads and you have noises and you have things flashing at you if you're reading on web pages. And so what I encourage people to do is learn how to read faster on stable paper, books, magazines, whatever first.

Abby Marks Beale: And then once you do that, then there are certain strategies, and I teach it in my course how to adapt them to a computer screen. So one thing, there's one website that I'm going to recommend, and I wish I could demo it, which I do in my courses called Belinereader Beeline Reader. If you read a lot on screen and you want to get rid of all the ads, and you want to make it just strict from left to right, only text, it's the most amazing thing.

Abby Marks Beale: It color codes the text. It makes it strictly into fixed line lengths, and it gets rid of the ads. They call it activate. It in clean mode. So beeline reader. Check it out. I think it's just great for people that read on screen at least, too. It's not even necessarily for speed, but just to get rid of the distractors.

Dori Nugent: All right. I like the fact that our FBP family can't see us, right? That gives them a reason to go to your online course to check this out.

Abby Marks Beale: That would be good.

Dori Nugent: Well, I love the fact that you said magazines, because I love a good magazine. And the younger generations out there are like, what's a magazine?

Abby Marks Beale: Hey, we're allowed to have our magazines. If they don't like it, well, tough. It's okay. They have online they have their online blogs and whatever that they read. So they have theirs and we have ours.

Dori Nugent: Yeah, I'm still from the generation you ripped stuff out of the magazine and then pinned it up on your wall or you saved it in a folder.

Abby Marks Beale: So now there's evernote clipper. I use evernote clipper for that online. So you can get evernote and you can clip your web pages and put them into folders so you can keep your stuff in a different way and it doesn't stack up and it's not burnable.

Dori Nugent: Thank you for getting me up to the date and time. So I appreciate it.

Abby Marks Beale: Sure.

Dori Nugent: All right, let's get back on track here. And I'd like to ask you, how do we get faster with our rating? I know if we go to your course definitely will help us, but just overall, how do we get faster?

Abby Marks Beale: There's so many different things that a person can do, but the physical part is one of the best things, and I share this a lot, is about getting started using a white card when you read. Now, granted, when you're reading on screen, you can adapt it. But just bear with me. If you have in front of you magazine article, let's say, or a blog post, and you want to read it quicker, and I say here's a white card, use it, it'll help you. And you'd be like, well, where am I supposed to put that white card?

Abby Marks Beale: And so most people say I'll put it under the line that I'm reading. And so you think that that's going to help, but then what you're doing is leaving exposed all the material you've already read, giving you the opportunity to reread or regress is what we call it, and blocking where you're going. And so you want to take that card and you want to put it above where you're reading to push you to go down.

Abby Marks Beale: So the tendency to move that card becomes a lot less. And so it's a way about focusing your attention on the line that you're on. So if you're doing it on screen, you line up your text to the top of your screen just like your ruler area, and you use your scroll down bar. And if you can get your scroll to go one or two lines at a time. So when you're ready, you click that and it just goes up into the dark, just like using a white card.

Abby Marks Beale: So you can do it both on screen, both on paper. And it's just another way of focusing your attention on just that because there's so much around it and it just makes it easier.

Dori Nugent: That's fascinating. I've been doing it wrong the whole time. I was always under.

Abby Marks Beale: It's not wrong. You could be more efficient by putting it on top.

Dori Nugent: Perfect. I'm going to focus better and be more efficient. I'm going to be a new lady for 2023.

Abby Marks Beale: Okay. All right, I like that.

Dori Nugent: I kind of touched base on this a little bit earlier in our episode. I talked about the comprehension aspect of when you start to read faster. How is that impacted the comprehension?

Abby Marks Beale: So it really depends on the person to a certain extent that some people when they read, as they focus more, their comprehension stays the same or improves because they're focusing better. Some people, when they start to read faster, they drop comprehension. And that's also very expected because the eyes and brain are now communicating differently and they're going, what are you doing? I don't get this. You're going fast and I can't keep up.

Abby Marks Beale: And what happens is in a short period of time, the brain does catch on when the eyes do feedback, more information. So it's a temporary thing, but people are uncomfortable with it. But I walk people through it, through my course. And people do email me during the course. There's an email button on the screen that says here, email Abby if you have any questions. And between me and my staff, we get back to people and answer their questions as they go through it.

Abby Marks Beale: Comprehension is an interesting piece. You have to have your own background knowledge. I don't build background knowledge in the course except how to read faster. Your background knowledge is all those books and all that schooling you had and all that vocabulary that you've had over the years, and then it's about understanding what you're reading. So I don't build the comprehension, I just build the focus so that you can comprehend.

Dori Nugent: I love the fact that you said, okay, hey, you're going to get slower before you get faster, primarily with the comprehension. And, I mean, that makes sense because anytime that you're changing something, you always do set back. But then usually once you get used to it and comfortable yeah. You usually score forward.

Abby Marks Beale: Yeah, exactly. So I'm glad you see that. Yes, that's exactly what can happen.

Dori Nugent: Abby, I have one more question for you when it comes to nonfiction, what's your advice or your tips on how to get through a nonfiction book without falling asleep?

Abby Marks Beale: Great question. So basically what happens with nonfiction because it's mostly facts that are being presented to you in some sort of an order, that if you again putting yourself into a place that is a workplace sitting upright at a desk, table and without distractions. But knowing that all nonfiction material, be it newspapers, magazines, academic books, business books, anything that is a how to, are all written the same way.

Abby Marks Beale: And that way is called outline form. Anyone who's an author starts their book and they pitch their book to a publisher and they have to provide an outline. So they write from an outline. That's pretty much what you see in a table of contents. But why is that important? It's because when you are reading that nonfiction book, all you're doing is reading a fleshed out outline. And if you know that and you can find the outline so you don't fall asleep because you're looking for the writer's outline, it's basically found like in the first paragraph or two that gives you your introduction.

Abby Marks Beale: But then if you just read first sentences of each paragraph and stopped and went to the next first sentence and stopped and next for sentence, you're going to see how the author piece together their thoughts so that you then decide, what pieces do I want to spend my time on? Just like in this podcast, some people know the structure of it and they might skip around and go, I want to go here, I want to go there, I don't want to be in there.

Abby Marks Beale: It's the same thing. And that outline is standard in all any published nonfiction, I should say. And so once you know that and it's like getting into a helicopter and being 10,000ft up, let me look at the structure of this thing before I start walking through it. And it just makes it so much easier and you remember it better and you learn more as you go through it.

Dori Nugent: This has been a really fun episode. Thank you so much for coming on today. It's been a pleasure. I would like for you just to take a few seconds, should I say, to talk about your book. You're an author.

Abby Marks Beale: Yes. And I'll be honest, I never wanted to be an author. I never wanted to write a book, but because I taught speed reading, I was asked to do that. So one of my books is called Ten Days to Faster Reading that I published. It was published in 2001, still in print. I also created an audiobook because not everyone's to read in order to learn to read faster. So you can get that as an audible called Ten Days to Faster Reading and I also created the ebook for that.

Abby Marks Beale: Then The Complete Idiots Guide was published in 2008 and that book went well, but it did go off the shelves. So then I bought the rights to it and I now have a new book out called Speed Reading: A little known Timesaving Superpower that's available on Amazon as an ebook or print version.

Dori Nugent: We will make sure that we put all the links to your books in our Show Notes so that any of our SVP family, if they want to take a look at your book or purchase your book, we'll make it super easy for them to get right to it. A special thank you to Abby Mark Spiel

for joining us today. Abby's contact info is posted on our Show Notes, so please feel free to reach out to her for any follow up questions.

Dori Nugent: The show notes are found at www.fitnessbusinesspodcast.com. Now while you're there, hit that subscribe button so the Show Notes will be delivered to you each week in your inbox. In just a handful of seconds, I will introduce you to our first guest of the New Year, author Larry Levine. Looking for a gym wipe that is gentle on fitness equipment but tough on eliminating germs? Look no further. Vapor Fresh gym wipes are specifically designed to be safe on all gym equipment, and the fact that they are the only plant based disinfectant wipe on the market makes them the top choice.

Dori Nugent: Vaporfresh wipes come in two convenient sizes. The smaller canister is perfect for home gyms and boutique studios, and the jumbo refill roll fits perfectly into the dispensers. Vapor, fresh wipes, 100% happiness guarantee.

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Dori Nugent: Please welcome Larry Levine to the Fitness Business Podcast. Now let's hear whose fitness brain he'd like to pick over a cup of coffee. Hey. Fitness business podcast family. I have Larry Levine with me. He is our guest next week. Larry is the best selling author of *Selling from the Heart*. Hey, Larry, thanks for joining me.

Larry Levine: Hey, how's it going dory? I've been looking forward to this. We are going to have a fantastic time.

Dori Nugent: We are going to have a fantastic time. I can tell before we have you come on and do your episode. We just would like to get to know you a little bit better. So please start us off with something that's on your bucket list.

Larry Levine: First thing that comes to mind in my bucket list is going to Japan. I'm just fascinated with the Japanese culture, everything about it. So I'd say my bucket list item would be going to Japan.

Dori Nugent: Good bucket list item. I like that one. Now tell her business brain would you like to pick?

Larry Levine: I'm going to go way back on this one, Dory. So one of my favorite quotes is, what's forever old is forever new. It's one of my favorite quotes is, I'd love to pick the brain of Andrew Carnegie if he was still alive.

Dori Nugent: Okay. Yeah, that's awesome. Last week's guest went with Henry Ford.

Larry Levine: So we're kind of right. Same era.

Dori Nugent: Yeah, I like that. I like that. Okay, how about the most visited page on your website?

Larry Levine: I would say my book page. It would be selling from the heart netbook where they could get a free autograph copy of my book.

Dori Nugent: I saw that. I saw it on your website. I'm like, nice. For a free copy, you just pay shipping and handling.

Larry Levine: But I'm telling you, guess what everybody's.

Dori Nugent: Getting for Christmas is.

Larry Levine: All right.

Dori Nugent: And how about, I know since you're a best selling author, we can't wait to hear what book you recommend and.

Larry Levine: It can't be mine because it's just a really crappy book, right? Dori?

Dori Nugent: You said that, not me.

Larry Levine: I'm only kidding, people. I'm only kidding. I promise you. I'm only kidding. No, but in all seriousness, it's right in there with Andrew Carnegie. I would say Mental Dynamite.

Dori Nugent: Okay. All right.

Larry Levine: It was a conversation between Andrew Carnegie and Napoleon Hill that took place in 19 eight. And they turned the whole conversation a couple of years ago into a book through the Napoleon Hill Foundation. Fascinating. Fascinating read.

Abby Marks Beale: Awesome.

Dori Nugent: We will put a link to Amazon books on our show notes so that everybody can just click and receive. Fantastic. All right. And finally, what would be one oh moment of next week's episode?

Larry Levine: I would say this is why you need to bring authenticity to the forefront so you do not get labeled as an empty suit.

Dori Nugent: Cool. You're leaving us in suspense on empty.

Larry Levine: I am.

Dori Nugent: All right, fitness business podcast. Make sure you join us next week for Larry Levine. He's the author, like we said, of selling from the heart to figure out his mystery of his episode. Can't wait to see you guys all back next week. And you too, Larry. Thanks so much.

Larry Levine: It's awesome.

Dori Nugent: Well, that wraps up 2022. I can't believe it. Another amazing year with the most loyal listeners and fascinating guests. I swear, it was only a month ago that I was interviewing Dre. Baldwin, our very first guest of the year. His message was so motivating that it made the perfect episode to kick off a new year. Fast forward to today and we're at the end of the year, and I want to say Happy Holidays to each and every one of you.

Dori Nugent: My wish is that you stop to enjoy all of the simple wonders that the holiday season sprinkles on each of us. Enjoy your time with your family and thank you for being a part of our family. Happy holidays, everyone, and see you in January. I've said it from the beginning. We couldn't do this show each and every week if it wasn't for a few special companies. So I'd like to say thank you to our founding partner, Active Management.

Dori Nugent: Our partners keep me, MyZone, ISSA and Hapana, as well as our advertisers REX Roundtables, MX Metrics and Vapor Fresh. We believe what you leave behind is not what's engraved in stone monuments, but woven into the lives of others.