

Marketing 101 for Holistic Practitioners

Six Week Coaching Program

Week Three:
Identifying Your Perfect Client

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Tad

Hargrave: Hey everyone, it's Tad Hargrave from Marketing for Hippies and we're on our third call. So to recap where we've been so far: On the first call, we talked a lot about the three most fundamental things you need for your business: your platform, the container, and the paths. Last week we really went deep into your platform and this week we're going to go deeper into your perfect client. So you're going to get some hand-holding on how to navigate this tricky, sticky wicket of who you work with.

This is hands down the most important issue in marketing. Your niche, your target market, chosen audience, tribe, whatever you call it, every choice you make in marketing boils down to this. So what I'd love to do is start off with a little bit of discussion from the Facebook wall. I would love for you to share your sense of...Some of you have already done this in the homework so feel free to cut and paste this out if you've already done it. But, who is it that you work with? So let's get some of these on the wall. I know it's in some of your platform pieces. Some of them have been shared in a document – about twenty of them shared. Some of you haven't shared it publicly, which is great. But I'd love to see, who do you work with, in a general sense? Then I'm going to do my best to support you by coming up with something really tangible and usable out of that.

So let's just post on the wall, who do we work with? And maybe make sure you tag it with, “Who I Work With” in all caps, if you can. “WHO I WORK WITH” or “WHO” or something, just so we can flag it. Let's just take a minute to do that. Okay, it's starting to come in. This is great. Thank you.

So what I want to do is talk about – and feel free to keep posting. Thank you Diana, Loraine, Barbara. There's some more. Okay, let me just give this one more minute, so we can make sure that everybody's focused. One more minute to post who you work with. So again, if you can tag it with “Who I Work With” in all caps right before it, it will help us all keep track of that. “Who” in all caps is great. So Loraine, Mel, thank you.

Okay, so when we look at this idea of “Who” is our target market, we're fundamentally looking at a community of people with a shared set of needs and experiences. So, I'll repeat that: a community of people with a shared set of needs and experiences. By a shared set of needs and experiences, what I mean is, if you were to get them all in a room together and just invite them to talk about their life, you'd probably hear a lot of people saying, “Me too,” or “I go through the same thing.” Because they have a shared set of needs and experiences, they also can recognize each other in public. Interestingly, they can notice each other, “Oh, there's a hipster. That person is a punk.” There's often a certain aesthetic that is shared in a community. Not always, but often.

So when we look at it in that way, a community of people with a shared set of needs and experiences, we start to get really curious about what are those needs? And what are

those experiences? When we're talking about who we're working with, we're talking fundamentally about Island A. We spoke in the beginning about the platform, the container and the paths. Then last time, we drilled into just the platform piece of that. So first there were three things, then we drilled into one of those that just had six parts to it. Now we're drilling into one part of that. Actually, one part of one part of that. The Journey is one part of that, and the Journey has three parts, Island A, and Island B, but also who's on Island A. We're really drilling into, well, I guess one part of that – Island A. Who is on Island A, and what is their experience that would make what we do relevant?

There are **three core elements** that you need to have, I think, to have a really clear target market. I'm going to invite you to look at what you just did and see if there's anything that you might add to it. It's just a starting exercise and we'll zoom in and out throughout this to give some more context.

So, three elements. The first are the **demographics**. The demographics are going to be things that are the outer things. They're the things that you can tell from outside without knowing too much about the person. They're going to be things like age, gender, ethnic background, their marital status, their parental status, their location, geography, where they live, the profession they work. Don't worry about this list, I'll be sending you all of this included.

So that's the first thing, we need to know the outer things. And here's the thing, sometimes age matters. Sometimes, it doesn't matter at all. Sometimes, gender's the thing. Sometimes people are more focused on men or women or transgender or, you know, or that. Sometimes geography matters, sometimes it doesn't. So the point of demographics is we don't always have to make a choice in them, but sometimes there is a preference. Sometimes there is something that shows up as a clear piece of who we work with and a bit of our focus. So that's the first thing.

The second thing that we need to look at are what is called the **psychographics**. Those are the internal pieces. Those are the things that they value. What they're drawn to. What they find themselves talking about. What's important to them. What's meaningful. Gives us a sense of what's inside. The psychographics are a really important piece, because marketing by demographics, you know, I could say, black males, ages forty to fifty, living in Seattle who make sixty thousand to seventy thousand dollars a year and who are lawyers. It's okay, but I don't necessarily assume that they all see things the same way, that they all value things the same way. If we took out the lawyers piece, we've got all the rest: black males, ages forty to fifty, living in Seattle, making sixty to seventy thousand a year, that sounds so clear. And yet the challenge is, where do we find them? Just because they're black and male and that age and make that much money, doesn't necessarily mean that they hang out in the same spots, believe the same things.

So demographics are useful in figuring out who we're going after, but it's not everything.

We also need to know the psychographics, the internal kind of stuff about people. And again, I'm going to give you a list with a lot of questions that can help.

And the third piece that we need to know is **the Journey**. What's Island A and what's Island B for them? And in this case, we want to focus on what's most real for them, which is often Island A. But what's their current experience? What is life like for them right now? Three things: the outer things, the demographics; the inner things, the psychographics; and the journey that they're on. The problem that they have and the result that they want.

So now I want you to look back over what you wrote and I want you to see if any of those are missing and see what you might add to help refine that. So let's just take a couple of minutes and look back over what you did and feel free to comment on your own piece. Once you've done that, I'd invite you to look at two other people's and see if you can put a comment on theirs. So if you see that someone already has two comments, take a look at someone else's. So: outer, inner, journey. Let's take a few minutes to do that.

Okay. So, feel free to keep perusing as we talk. That's a good start. For me a lot of the outcome of this is for you to just get a sense of where you're at now with this. I know some of you aren't even sure at this point, because you're just starting. But it's good to get a sense of how this is landing with people, and is it clear? So those are the three elements: the demographics, the psychographics, and the journey. But there are six criteria that I would list up as important and we're going to explore one of them with each other in a kind of fun way. We'll give you some honest and hopefully loving feedback. But give you a bit of a reality check about how clear what you're doing is coming across.

So here are the **six criteria of a good target market** that I would have. The three elements are the demographics, the psychographics and the journey. The six criteria are as follows.

The first is, it needs to be something that's clear. That when people hear it, they get it right away. They understand immediately if they're in that group or if they're not in that group. If I said doctors, lawyers, backpackers, vegans, Christians, Muslims, yoga students, yoga practitioners, you would immediately have a sense of who I'm talking about, and you would know if you were that, and you would know if you were not that. You would also probably get a person's face that would come to mind right away. An image in your mind, "Whoa, this person that I know could use this." That's what I mean by clarity. There's an immediate sense of "Are they that, are they not that?" "Do they know somebody or don't they?"

The second criteria is, "are there enough of them?" And specifically, are there enough who can afford you? Because sometimes people are really passionate, they pick

their target market and they say, “Oh, my target market are these lower income teenagers.” That's awesome...and none of them can afford you. Their parents can't even afford you. Then you're at the place of being a non-profit. Which is great. I love non-profits and let's see more of them. But it's good to know that. It's good to know what kind of situation you're entering into. Sometimes people will have a situation where they have some of their higher income clients who pay for some of the clients who can't afford it. That's a fine model. But overall, you do need enough who can actually afford you so you can sustain yourself, whatever that means for you. Whatever that amount is.

So, number three: Can you find them? Are there hubs? So if I were to say, “Get me a list of all the ice cream shops in North America,” you could do that. If I were to say, “Get me a list of all the people who like vanilla ice cream in North America,” - very difficult. Because there aren't any hubs. I don't know, there's probably some damn Facebook group with ten thousand people on it, “I like vanilla ice cream” group, but you get the sense. This question of, can you find them? Are there hubs? Which we'll get into when we talk about the paths in much more detail. This question is often a make or break question around a niche. If I can't figure out any hubs, you can't figure out any hubs, and nobody we talk to can figure out any hubs, it probably means there aren't any.

So it's either a very clear group with no hubs - which is unusual, because it's a community of people with a shared set of needs and experiences, so they often create their own hubs at some point. It's either a clear group with no hubs, which probably means it's a new thing, or it's not that clear, because there aren't hubs, so it's not a group. So I just work with people who are stressed, and of course that's so broad that there aren't many hubs for that.

So, first one: Is it clear? Second: Are there enough? Third: Are there hubs?

Fourth: Do they share your point of view? It's very hard to work with people who have the opposite point of view to you. I've been joking at workshops, it's like, if you were a fundamentalist Christian, and you went to some...I don't know, pagan healing thing, didn't realize what it was. You just walked in and saw horned gods all over the wall and, I don't know, they asked for a blood sacrifice. You'd be appalled and you'd run away. But similarly, if you were a pagan and you walked into a Christian place and you saw crosses everywhere and Bibles, it just wouldn't fit your worldview. If you were a hardcore raw vegan and you went to see a naturopath, and it turned out that – you assumed that this naturopath would be into a raw vegan diet, but they're all into primal diet and eating raw animal products, it just wouldn't fit. So fundamentally, whatever your point of view is, whatever you started to articulate and describe in your platform piece, they need to basically be on the same page. They need to probably be in agreement with you about that point of view. So that they're like, “Oh my gosh, this person sees things the way that I do.”

Number five, they need to be aligned with your ‘Why’. Whatever the why is of why

you do this, it should be something that whenever they hear, they also get excited.

And sixth, that you love these people. So to recap: it should be clear; they should be able to afford you; you should be able to find them; they should be aligned with your point of view, or agree with it – definitely aligned with your why; and these should be people that you love and care about. I tend to filter any target market through those three, or through those six things.

So what I'm going to invite you to do now is we're going to take five or more minutes, but I want you to read through people's descriptions. And I want you to give them a number from zero to ten. Zero is like, I have no idea who this is, I can't even begin to imagine. And a ten is, this is so crystal clear for me, I know precisely who this is. I can think of somebody, somebody's face came to mind. Or I'm just clear that I don't know anybody like that and I'm not that, but it's extremely clear. There's no fuzziness. So zero is totally fuzzy, I have no idea. Ten is crystal clear.

So I'm going to invite you to look at as many of them as you can, and let's take about five minutes. And I want you to write. Let's see who gets the highest rating, who gets the lowest rating and we'll explore why that is. So let's take five minutes right now.

And don't worry if you're feeling like, “Oh I know mine's not clear.” Or you don't feel ready. It's totally fine. But doing this is going to help us give some examples of ones that are really clear and what's not clear and then we can know also who needs the most help and who could use some support. So if you're feeling a little antsy about this, it's okay. You're in good hands. That's why you're here. So, yeah, keep going. You're doing great.

I'm noticing some of you are posting brilliant little bits about what else you'd like to see that would help it be a ten for you. Tim Corcoran gave Mel a seven and said, “More point of view and why.” So that's really great. So if there's something that pops out at you like, “You know what I'm craving to hear more of is about this.” That would help me understand who it was.

About one more minute. Isn't it so funny how easy it is to see this in other people's stuff and how hard it is to do it for ourselves? You guys are being great. We'll take one more minute.

All right. So let's keep going. This is so great, everybody. I suggest that you look at your own and see sort of what the average rating was. There are a lot of lessons to take from this. But here's something I want to lift up. There are two different pieces that we need to consider when we're looking at a target market, or who we're reaching. I want to lift that up as a...I call it “big circle, little circle.” And I'll send you a blog post. With this that has a little video with some funny jokes at the end, that you can watch. It gives a pretty good description of this.

Basically, when I think of the big circle, I think this is the criteria for anyone I would ever work with. When I think of the little circles, if you think of it like there's a big circle with three circles inside it, like a Venn diagram, like kind of, together, the little circles are the subgroups that I might focus on. So for myself, big circle could be conscious entrepreneurs, subgroups could be like, holistic practitioners, permaculture providers, green service providers, that kind of thing. So you've got the big circle, and the little circles.

For more on Big and Little Circles - go here: <http://www.marketingforhippies.com/big-circle-little-circles/>

When a lot of people talk about target markets, I think what they're saying is the big circle. Often. The big circle is going to be a few things. Number one, it's going to be – you'll hear a lot of people say, “I want to work with people...” I saw an example, people who are ready to do the work, people who are ready to change, people who are willing, and actually that's a very important thing to know that that's what you want as a big circle piece. Because that's going to be true of anybody you work with. If that makes sense. You know, people are stressed, they're going through transition, likely a big circle thing that they show up on time, that they pay you on time, they refer business – big circle.

Here's an exercise that I would suggest you do for homework. This is especially useful if you have been in business for a while. If you're new, it's a little trickier, but you can still think about it. The exercise is this: I want you to make a list of your top ten clients who you've loved, and the top ten clients who've really drained your energy. So the top ten clients that you're like, “God, if all of my clients were like this, I'd be ecstatic. I'd just be so happy.” And ten that's like, “God, if all of my clients were like this, I'd go out of business. I would stop. It would just be too stressful and draining.” So you make a list and then literally go through name by name. This is something you can do by yourself, but it's also useful to get a partner to ask you these questions, sort of interview style so you can really talk. This is where the marketing buddy...I suggest also, whether that's somebody in the group or somebody else, but there's so many brilliant people, so feel free to send each other messages on Facebook. Set up a call.

But whether you do this by yourself, or with others, you go name by name. So with the list of clients that you loved, you think, “What is it I love about John Smith?” And just keep writing. Keep talking until you're done, until there's nothing else to say. Then, what is it you loved about Jane Smith? And talk and talk and talk until you're done. And similarly down the list. At the end of that you will have a very clear, real-world glimpse of what's most important to you in a client – the qualities, the values that you would want in clients. So that exercise will take you pretty far in terms of the big circle.

The little circles are where things get really interesting. Because the big circle - you

know if I say, “conscious entrepreneurs who are ready to really handle their marketing,” and all that – you know, show up on time for workshops, do homework in between sessions, that's good, but it doesn't necessarily help me find them. So if we look at the six criteria, that's clear; there are enough who can afford to pay you; there are hubs; point of view, why; and I love them, the thing where the big circle falls down is on the clarity piece. And because it's unclear, it's hard to know if they're enough. It's also, because it's so fuzzy and unclear, we don't know if their hubs...It's easier for me to find hubs on holistic practitioners, or specifically, massage therapists. That's very easy to find hubs for. Massage schools, magazines, newsletters, blogs, events. But “conscious entrepreneurs” is pretty vague.

So the big circle - sometimes we have a name like, conscious entrepreneurs, people in chronic pain, cultural creative, and all that, but those are diagnostic terms. And those diagnostic terms, it's like a label that we put on them, and it's really useful for us, but it's quite honestly not that useful in the marketing, because very few people even with chronic pain, wake up in the morning thinking, “Boy, I have chronic pain.” What they think is, “My joints always ache. I always have this headache, stomachache. It never goes away.” Does that make sense? They don't connect or associate to the label that we give, but rather to their own symptoms.

So, conscious entrepreneurs. Nobody wakes up in the morning and says, “Boy, I'm so excited to be a conscious entrepreneur. Cultural creative.” Unless you've read Paul Ray's book, or been to a talk about it or heard it, not that useful. Paul Hawken just wrote a book called, “Blessed Unrest.” So if you said, “Oh, my big circle is people who are really involved in the Blessed Unrest,” it doesn't make any sense to you unless you've read the book. So it's useful for us, and I wouldn't get rid of it. Because I think it's good for us to have a shorthand. You know, I say, “I work with hippies.” But it's funny I just went down to Black Diamond, Alberta and there were people saying, “I'm not going to the workshop, because it's for hippies and I'm not a hippie.” So you know, nothing's perfect. It's a useful thing for us, not so much for the marketing. So I hope that makes sense.

So the little circles are where all the criteria start to show up. Where things get a lot clearer. One of the challenges that happens with this idea of, “Who do we work with?” is that there's often a lot of fear of nicheing. There's a lot of fear of focusing. Which is understandable, because you probably love the variety, you love working with so many different kinds of people, and if you pick just one group, then you're going to lose out on everybody else who's not a client. Which is why I want to suggest having three little circles that are your primary focus. Meaning eighty percent of your focus goes towards three little circles, three sort of sub-groups, if you will. So, in my case, holistic practitioners, permaculture providers, green service providers.

So you have your big circle and you get as clear as you can. That's kind of the lens that you look at all your clients through. Then you've got three little circles. And each of

those little circles gives you a lot to work with. Much easier to find hubs for a little circle. The point of view and the why, by the way, are probably big circle things. Those particular things might show up for a small circle, but that's probably going to be big circle.

Once we have a particular little circle, then we can start to explore more. I say three because I find that when people try to think of one, they freak out. It's like, "Oh, it's a loss of freedom. Now I'll have to give up everything else." So I do want to talk about this a little bit, this fear of losing out. What we're really talking about here is trying to find people who are a perfect fit for you. The ones that you're just going to love them. They're the people that you're best able to help, you're most qualified to help. These are your people. Where it just feels so wonderful and they're so happy to pay you. Part of getting there is with this notion of the perfect fit. Remember when we rewind to the first class, when we talked about collapsing and posturing, we talked about composure. And that composure was all about the commitment to the truth of, is it a fit?

So this is where we really start to clarify, what does that mean for us, that it's a fit? When I say that it's three little circles, I don't mean that we're committing to them. There are things you can experiment with.

First of all, you can be explicit without being exclusive. You can be explicit without being exclusive. Meaning, you might even say, "I'm just going to take this one little circle and focus everything on that. I'm just going to focus on permaculture providers." You will still get other clients.

I was just at my workshop in Black Diamond this weekend. There was a woman there who was a mortgage broker. She's not green. She's not holistic. And yet she was like, "I was so drawn to your work anyways." This happens all the time. When you have a really clear platform, even if you're so explicit about who you work with, you don't have to be exclusive. Other people will show up and you're welcome to take them.

When we talk about the fit, I've just been thinking about this notion of the white-hot center lately. Like the bullseye, the center of the target, the white-hot center. These are the people who are a hundred percent perfect for you. It's almost like – this is a terrible metaphor, so please feel free to help me find a better metaphor – it's almost like a black hole. You know that thing in the center that sucks everything in, and you don't have to be exactly in it to be drawn to it. That's a terrible destructive – well, maybe it takes them to an alternate universe or something.

My point is, if you can define what that center is, like maybe it radiates out and draws people in, even if they're not exactly perfect, they still might be drawn in and you can decide whether you're going to accept them or not.

So we can be explicit without being exclusive.

These things can be phased in, and probably should be phased in, not dropped in directly and immediately you have to change all your marketing materials, etc. There's also this notion that, “Oh, well if I focus on something, I'm losing others.”

I want to share the uncomfortable truth that you are already losing people. **You're already losing people.** There are some people who are just naturally drawn to you, and others who aren't, because of your platform. With whatever level of clarity it's at right now, one of those six levels, people are already drawn to it or repelled by it. Period.

So the idea that you're suddenly going to stop losing people, or start losing people is a myth. It's already happening. The only question is, are you drawing and attracting the people you really want? And are you repelling the people you don't want as clients in the first place? That's already a dynamic.

When we have a little circle, one of the ideas that I'm going to be putting out for you to fiddle with, and we'll be focusing more on in future calls, is the idea of a niche project. A niche project. The idea is that you would take one of your little circles. One that you're most excited about, that you have the most energy around, and come up with a particular project around it. So that could be a workshop, it could be a tele-class, it could be a series of coaching sessions just for that group. But it's somewhere where you can focus. Because hands down, trying to offer something, like, “Oh, I'm putting on a workshop for, like, the 'Succeeding at Life Workshop 101'” is not going to get as many people coming to it as the “How to Create a Website as a Holistic Practitioner” workshop. There's so much more draw when it's specific, when it's based on a particular journey for a particular group of people. It's immediately more relevant, and there's also more credibility in it. I see people all the time trying to fill workshops. The challenge, usually, is that the workshop title and focus is so generic. You are probably losing clients, because you're so generic, for some of you. That happens. They'll say, “Well, this one person offers me exactly what I want, this other person seems to do a bit of everything, so I think I'll go to the person who's offering me exactly what I want.”

So part of the direction we're going here is to help you define the big circle. To get that as clear as you can. To pick three little circles and then to start thinking of projects – to pick one of those little circles and start thinking of projects for those.

Let me pause there and I'd love to just hear any reflections or questions that you have at this point. So, where are you at? Let's take two or three minutes to write some questions and I'll start responding.

So part of the question is geography. I'm wondering if there's the potential for you to do some stuff virtually. That could reach people out of your geography. One of the laws of nicheing I've sort of come up with is the **Inverse Law of Geography**. That's what I call it. So the Inverse Law of Geography says that the broader your geographic reach is - like if you say, “I could work with anybody anywhere on the planet” - the broader that

is, the narrower your niche can afford to be. But the narrower your geographic reach is, you know, you just live in a village of ten people, well you have to be a jack of all trades for everything – you only have ten people. So you can't afford to niche too narrowly. I think that's part of the dynamic. One might have to be broad, and one might be able to afford to be broad in a smaller area.

You know, there's a woman in Orangeville, Ontario. She's the only yoga teacher in Orangeville, and her classes do fine. Because she's the only yoga teacher. So sometimes there's something about the population. Could they pay, could you travel on certain days of the week or the month to go to other places where they would pay? That's a really excellent question. I'm not sure I have any particular wisdom except to honor the struggle of that. But to also be thinking. Sometimes we want to think, “Who are these people? Who does live here?” And that might become a little circle. Like, who are these people? Or if we had to break it down, like, who are they and how could I come up with something tailored just for them? That they would really resonate with? That would be particularly relevant to those people? So that's something.

Loraine. **“Okay, so for starting out without a large base yet, what do you recommend for identifying smaller circles?”** So, I saw that question come up a lot, **“How do I pick the smaller circles?”** Boy, this is the trickiest thing. Let me give you a bunch of options. I'm going to send you also a bunch of exercises that might help you wheedle down to that. Exercise number one: Look at your existing client base. Look at who you have. I know, Loraine, it sounds like you don't have a large base right now, but even so, look at who you've got. Who's already coming to you? Because there's probably a reason that there's certain people who keep coming back and there may be something there. I often invite clients to look at their client base and divide it into three groups. If you had to divide it into three groups, the ones that pop out the most, what would they be?

You also might ask yourself, who is it that you are super-excited to work with? Maybe there's just a group that you're like, **“I'm thinking of working with crafters or actors. I've been thinking of doing something for permaculture folks.”** So for me, I got introduced to permaculture a couple of years ago – three years ago, I think – and it blew my mind. I was so inspired by it. I saw this video that some of you may be familiar with called, “Greening the Desert.” If you haven't seen it, go see it. It's on YouTube, five minutes long. I got really excited, but it took me a few years before I went, “Oh, maybe I should focus on that as a target market working with permaculture practitioners.”

When I started doing the marketing workshops years ago, they were just for conscious, holistic kind of businesses, and I noticed that half of the people who came were holistic practitioners. Half of them! I was like, “Wow, maybe I should have a workshop just for holistic practitioners.” So part of it is noticing who's already coming. Noticing where our interest is. Maybe there's just a topic or something that you're really fascinated

about these days. That could be a chance to explore, doing a particular project. I know that question, “What is a niche project? What examples might there be?” There are like twenty-nine that I can think of, so don't worry, I'll give you a list of those.

I'm creating (slowly) my workbook. The “Niching for Hippies” workbook. And it's going to be like 150 pages. I'll definitely let you all know when it comes out. I'm going to give you a bunch of stuff that I've been working on in there that nobody else has seen. So, hooray! I think it will be pretty useful.

So there's that. How else can you come up with the small circles? Oh yeah, one of the biggest ways – I can't remember if I've spoken to this before - but **your deepest wound is likely one of your truest niches**. Your deepest wounds are often the doorway to your truest niches. The things that you've struggled with, that you've gone through personally, are often the things that you are most qualified and best able to help other people with.

This seems to happen again and again. I was doing a workshop called the Hot Box in Calgary yesterday. There was a woman there named Lee and she had struggled with depression and anxiety for years. Three attempts on her life. Now she's started a non-profit and she's so passionate about supporting people with depression and anxiety. So sometimes it's really direct like that, sometimes it's not so direct. But to look at where you struggle and again, I'll put up a document in this Facebook group with a list of all of those things. Some of the stories and examples.

That's probably the best place. Often people are – I hear this again and again at workshops, “Oh, my target market is people just like me. People who have struggled in the same way, but they're just a few steps behind.” So there's often that.

Deborah Epstein said, **“Just want to agree with the concept that it's so important to narrow the focus and not think that everyone is your ideal client. There are definitely people who invigorate me and people who drain me. Not interested in working with the drainers. There must be somebody else out there who resonates with them. It doesn't have to be me. When I'm drained, I'm not able to do my best work with others. It's not a service to the broader good to say that everybody is your ideal client. There are absolutely enough people out there who are in my 'Love Pile' as I call them. I know it's just about us finding each other.”**

Deborah, you could write this book yourself. Brilliant! That's very true. I love this “Love Pile” concept. And this is true, you know, I know some people who went through depression and the thought of working with other people who have depression is appalling. She's just like, “I can't go back. I can't deal with it. It's too draining.” Whereas other people are so drawn to working with other people who are depressed. Some people – the people that I would be, I never want to work with, that I find annoying or frustrating, other people are really drawn to. So, I would resonate with that.

Lishui said, **“I know a couple of really insanely profitable entrepreneurs. For instance, Steve Pavlina's Personal Development for Smart People. I've thought of just marketing to the same people with different product.”** Cool! Again, my sense is that the Smart People is the big circle. I'm loosely familiar with Steve Pavlina's stuff. It's the point of view he has. It's the point of view and it's the why that people are really resonating with, being drawn to. This idea of people not spending all this money on personal growth being taken advantage of. There's a real cause here. He's got a real perspective and take on all of that. On the personal growth world.

So I'd say the Smart People is the big circle. And I'd be curious if you had to break that big circle down into sub-groups, what would it be? Like, conscious entrepreneurs, how would I break this down? I'd be curious with the Smart People, because you're going to get more traction with a small group. Sometimes that's where we need to start. We pick one group and we really focus on that for a while and it's really not marriage. It's not a lifetime commitment. It's good to think about.

Bill Baren, one of my colleagues talks about **niching and how it's kind of like dating.** Like you're dating your niche. You don't have to marry it. That's too much. You might freak your niche out. Or worse, they might say yes and then an expensive divorce. It's terrible. Who keeps the kids? But you can date your niche. You can say, “Let's do a project. Let's try something small and see if I like it.” Because sometimes just thinking it through is really helpful.

I had a friend, she wanted to do yoga for kids. Because she taught one class a week, she thought that would be great. She said, “That could be my niche.” When people say, “My niche” like it has to be one, it doesn't just have to be one. I think it's good to have a clear, big circle. But you can have a number of small circles. I probably wouldn't have more than three, because it gets to be overwhelming. Teaching kids yoga. That would be great. Then the next day, she calls me. She's like, “I totally don't want to do this, because I know I'd snap at a certain point. I can do this once a week. But if I had to do it every day, I'd be like, 'You want to see your face on a milk carton, you little urchin?’” So she couldn't do it.

Okay, Sammy says, **“One group of mine is VC's – venture capitalists. But they always come through referrals from their friends. So I don't know how to create a project with them. Maybe I could put together a cleanse designed for their particular lifestyle?”** Interesting. Maybe. I don't know if that jumps out at me as a “Cleanse for VC's” - I don't know if that's a totally natural fit or connection there. Unless I'm not understanding their lifestyle. There may be something about it. But, yes, word of mouth is almost always how things are going to spread. Venture capitalists. What other projects could you come up with? I have some ideas which may come up when we talk about paths.

Mel said, **“I love doing the listing of my ten worst clients. Because it helped me decide that there was a group in my niche that I didn't want to work with. Very empowering to refer out to someone more suited so that I could love my clients.”**

Yes! This is so good. This is obviously true on a personal level in our lives. There are some people who, for whatever reason, we're just not a fit. In permaculture gardening, there are some plants that grow really well together and there are some plants that don't. Some plants actually hurt each other. And there's nothing wrong with the plants. They just grow better in different combinations. And if we're spending all our time trying to survive with these plants that are trying to kill us next to us, because they're just being themselves, we have less energy for the people that we do love in our lives. And people for whom it is a fit. That's the same with our client base, absolutely. It's okay to fire clients. It's okay to let go of clients that are in a fit, for sure.

Paolo asks, **“Do you need market research to choose little circles? We could be drawn into a losing niche.”** Yes, that's very true. I know nothing about market research. I wish I did. But if you use those six criteria, it's really helpful. You can do a Google keyword search where you can see how many people are actually searching for certain terms which can help you. Which I know almost nothing about. But market research, thinking it through, asking people about it? Definitely. Seeing are there hubs? Are there places these people hang out? How many of them do there seem to be? I would definitely do that before I would invest a lot of energy into a particular small circle.

Deborah said, **“I appreciate you naming the fears. As you were speaking them, I felt so clearly how I have known all along what inner circle I was supposed to be communicating with explicitly, yet have been scared to do so, as others might be alienated. Thanks for exposing the myth.”** Yeah. People are always going to be turned off and turned on by different things. Again, in business, I think there's this way that we mute ourselves. We try to become like, unoffensive to anybody. So we don't actually ever be ourselves. We don't ever share our real point of view. We don't speak with passion about the causes. These are the very things that would have people resonate with us so strongly. But we just mute ourselves, because we don't want to be offensive. We don't want to take up space, which is a form of collapsing, I think. When we just, “Oh, I don't want to take up space. I'll just be here.” Yeah.

Emilio: **“Does the niche project involve client participation, or can it be something I research, build, report on? I'm building an indoor sprout garden. Should I involve my clients in the project, or does documenting the project serve here?”** That is a really good question. I am a big fan of involving the niche in designing things, because they tell you so much smart stuff. I think you could do both.

I had a business when I was just out of high school doing workshops for student councils and peer support teams. And this was before email, before Facebook. I just read a bumper sticker that said, “When I'm a grandfather, I will tell my grandchildren that I am

older than the Internet, and blow their minds!” Anyways, so I had to call and fax, how archaic, yeah? So I had to talk to these student council advisors on the phone. I would just spend days doing this. And I would always ask the same three questions.

I would ask, **“How's it going? What's going great with your student council right now?”** That was nice. It always got them in a good mood. They always had something to be proud of. And I'd learn about cool projects that students were doing that I could teach in my workshops. So I learned.

Number two was, **“What's the biggest challenge right now? What's the hardest?”** And I would hear the same thing again and again. It was always apathy. Not enough sense of team. And these poor student council advisors, you know they're a phys ed teacher one year and they just got thrown into this job and they had no training. Which had me eventually develop a program for the student council advisors, not just for the students. So I would hear the same problems again and again. They basically broke my marketing materials. Because they told me what their challenges were.

Then third, **“If you were to design a student council workshop that would be perfect for your particular student council where you're at and your particular needs, what would it need to do? What would you want to see in it?”** And they designed my program. Eventually I would call and ask these questions and I just kept hearing the same things over and over again, because the niche is a community of people with a shared set of needs and experiences. A niche is a community of people with a shared set of needs and experiences. These student council advisors were a community. What's interesting is, there actually weren't many hubs for them. Yet they still had this shared set of needs and experiences. Because they were all going through the same kind of thing. When I listened to enough of them, I was able to design something that really works. I'm a huge fan of those kinds of conversations.

One of my colleagues who really lifted my mind – opened my mind to this idea of word of mouth marketing, and hubs and niche - Dominic Canterbury, who doesn't really do marketing anymore. Lives in Seattle. Lovely fellow. He would do a thing where he would pick a target market – he and his clients would pick a target market that would fit this kind of criteria that we're talking about and they would design an offer – kind of the boat for whoever it was on Island A and then they would sit down - they'd go for coffee with one of those people – they'd sit down and write it out, show it to them. And if the response they got was, “Wow, that's neat.” Ennh, wrong! If the response they got was, “That's very interesting.” The response they wanted was, “Wow! Oh my God! Hell, yes! Where's this been all my life?” That kind of response. You can't design a boat that gets that kind of response when it's going to everybody. It's just impossible.

So, Helen said, **“I'm understanding more how so important this clarity issue is and actually making myself look at what I want for myself and my clients.”** Yes, yes! Why not be happy and have great clients?

Mel said, “**Would a workshop on weight loss and a workshop on stress management, still focused on my niche, but different aspects of the symptoms be what you mean?**” That's a great example. Yeah, sometimes it's for the same basic group of people but for different symptoms, different problems that they have. Yeah, absolutely. That's perfect. You're a genius.

Am I so clear? No questions? I'm a genius! Any other questions?

All right, a few more questions coming in. “We need a joke,” from Loraine. And Helen says I'm that good. So there. Oh man. Okay, do you know how many Grateful Dead fans it takes to change a light bulb? None. They just let it burn out and follow it around for twenty years. Hey-o! Do you know why Grateful Dead fans never play musical chairs? The music never stops. These jokes are gold.

Let me give you a sense of where this is going and if any questions come up, put them on the wall. And then I'll open up the call to see if there's anyone who's not a part of the group who's just on the phone.

So where this is going is, we clarify the big circle. We make our best guess at the little circles. And we are going to pick one of the little circles and come up with a project for it as we move forward. Something we can fiddle with and experiment with and get immediate feedback on that's not committing our whole business.

Oh, and let me share this. This is probably one of the bigger thoughts I've had about niche marketing. You guys are going to get so many notes to check out. Seriously.

I've been referring to this as sort of the **yin-yang of niching**. See how this lands for you. **Two ways of niching: the yang way, the sort of directed way, where at the worst extreme of it, it's contrived.** You literally just pick an abstract target market, because you're like, “Well, there's an under-served community. I don't particularly care about it, but I'm going to – in a very contrived marketing-esque kind of way, exploit that target market.” If that makes sense. It's very explicit. You know who that target market is and you go after it. At the worst extreme, it's just this, capitalist, kind of gross approach.

The other way is this implicit marketing. The implicit marketing is more of this yin, where you go inside and you come up with something. And you really sit with it and you offer it to the world. At the worst extreme, it's like the starving artist who created this incredible art and nobody knows about it until they die. You know, the Van Goghs of the world. I want us to see that there's a happy medium. And maybe it's more of a spiral in some way, or a third option. But it's where you go inside and you say, “What is it that I want to offer the world?” Then you share that with the world. And you notice who responds to it. Those can become little circles. Then you go back out.

This is important. Some people will say, “Oh, I've got this new line of jewelry and it's going to be so awesome with the teenagers. Teenagers are going to love it.” But then teenagers don't, but middle-aged people or grandmothers love it. But you wouldn't have called it. You wouldn't have thought that at all, and yet that's what's so. So a lot of this is paying attention to who's really already responding to what we're doing. If you thought it was for teenagers, but the grandmothers love it, you might be at all the wrong craft shows. There's a woman I know – it's a funny geographical thing – this woman in Toronto was struggling with her work in Toronto. She went out to this small town and was swamped. Who knows why? So some of it is just paying attention to, where's the response? Then you can even craft something more clearly and fully for that group and then explore that even more. Then go back and sit with it, because it will also change. This is part of the challenge with niching, it can change over time.

Lishui says, **“We can't focus too much on what people can pay, etc. After all, the economy is in a very weird state. People might be paying in chickens and back massages for all we know.”** Could be. But to me this is a question – and I'll post this on the wall. Some of you might get a kick out of this. I'm doing a workshop that's called, in the Bay area, San Francisco, March 10, that weekend and it's called, “Fuck Money.” It's all about looking at different economic models of how to sustain ourselves.

<http://www.fmoney.eventbrite.com>

That's kind of a joke in some ways, but the point of this is, money is not a need. We don't need money. We don't need jobs. We need food, shelter, whatever the things are that we actually need, clothing. To me the important thing is, are your needs getting met? Collapsing is like, “Oh my needs don't matter.” Posturing is, “I don't care about other people's needs.” Composure, “Can we both get our needs met in a way that genuinely feels good?”

Okay, so let's go over the homework for next time to make sure it's clear, then you can ask me questions about it. So I'm going to send you a bunch of...Oh wait, got something from Lucia here, **“Most ladies that need my service are corporate. Not too interested in clothes and femininity. Those I like are the ones that already care for themselves, but want to achieve the next level.”** Boy, that's a really great question. This is where it gets down to choices. Because you know, for some people, they work a job and the business is a side thing. And that's okay, it really works for them. Some people have a target market they're really not passionate about, but again, that funds them to do the work for the ones that they're most passionate about. So I'd be curious, most ladies that need your service are corporate, and they're not very interested in clothes and femininity. I'd be curious to know what they are interested in. And if the case could be made that this clothes and femininity could help them get that thing that they're already craving, that they want. Like, do they want more success? Are they wanting more stability? I'm curious to know what they're craving and if a connection can be drawn there.

“The ones that I like are the ones that are already taking care of themselves, but they want to achieve the next level.” I'm getting the sense that the corporate ones don't take care of themselves? Is that true? So they want money, power, confidence. I'm seeing a good chance to get in here with these women and slowly convert them. And help them let go of the hunger for money, power and confidence.

It's an interesting thing. Let's say these women want money, power and confidence. What they're really wanting is maybe something deeper than that. If we try to lead with our diagnosis of what we think they need, or Island C even, it just doesn't grab people. Like, there's a woman I know, Jessica O'Reilly and she does these sex workshops. She's a sexologist. You know, best job ever! She has a workshop called “Blow His Mind.” And one called “Blow Her Mind.” And it's all about sexual techniques and tactics. She gets a way bigger crowd than people who do tantra workshops.

<http://www.marketingforhippies.com/marketing-lessons-from-a-sex-workshop/>

So sometimes we just need to offer people the thing that they actually think they need which is aligned with their point of view. Once they're there and we have a relationship and we can be educating them that there's more. So do they have a conflict with seeing money, power and confidence as related to femininity? Can they dress well without having to attach femininity? I guess I'm just wondering, Lucia, if you can go to them and say, “Look, I'm going to help you dress in a way that's going to help you make more money, be more powerful, and feel more confident.” And I'm wondering if part of the educational process that you can help them go through is seeing how taking care of themselves and honoring their femininity is a part of that process. And could actually help them be more powerful, and feel more confident and potentially make more money.

Or even finally get to a point where they realize, “Oh, that money isn't actually what I really want in the first place. Or certain amounts - I can actually live within my means and that feels better.” Maybe they really want happiness. I don't know. But I'd be curious about the kind of journey that you could be taking people on.

So, any other questions that come up?

Okay, so the homework. First of all, piece number one is the big circle. Define the big circle as well as you can. Again, I'll send you the video link for this. Think of your top ten best clients, worst clients. Just think generally, what do I want in clients? Define that with as much clarity as you can. Then, make your best guess as you're fiddling with three little circles, remember. You're dating these circles, you're not committed. How exciting, you've got three on the go at the same time.

So, date three little circles, and figure out your best guess. And if they change next week, that's okay, but take a guess. Then take one of those little circles and define it

with as much clarity as possible. And I want you to do a write up of that little circle with the demographics, the psycho-graphics and the journey defined. And you can do anytime between now and next week, we'll probably start off next week with some of those. But I would invite you to put it into the group and ask people for a grade. And I'd invite you to start that with the words "grade me," colon, all caps. On the little circle. So, on the little circle, invite people to grade you from zero to ten, and what would it take to make this a ten? What are you craving to know? Once we have that little circle, we're going to fiddle with it in the next call, even though that little circle is not our whole, everybody you're trying to reach, it's not the end all and be all. When we get to the container, and the paths, I just think it'll help to be fiddling with something specific. Even though it's not everyone you're going to reach. So I hope that helps and makes sense to you.

So we're going to be looking at the container as a whole and also as a project that you might be able to offer and that might work well with that group.

So that's the direction we're going to be going. Any last questions?

Okay, Lucia is saying: "**So which one should be my little circle?**" I would say women in the corporate world. I would say there are two little circles. There's the one, that sounds that they are already into their femininity, taking care of themselves. That's loosely defined. Then there are the corporate ones where they want the money, power and confidence. And that could be another little circle. So again, you could have multiple ones and they do overlap with each other a bit.

But I might keep defining each of those and what are the differences between them, what do they have in common? And you would pick one of those to focus on in the next one.

Any other questions?

I imagine that the reason there aren't any questions is because this is such a big topic. There's so much to consider, there's so much to go into and it's so hard to choose. And a lot of the work for this is just sitting and thinking and talking with a lot of people about this.

Part of what I like about this idea of niche projects is it takes some of the pressure away, because we do fear, like, "I don't want to get married to this niche and then go through the divorce," and then picking another one and then the drama of that. So picking a niche project takes the pressure out of it, takes the expectation out of it in terms of it being everything and giving us something we can fiddle with and in fiddling with it we apply the mindset and learn the process.

Tim said: "**I run both youth and adult programs, and of course in the adult program, it is the kid's parents who are my customers.**" Very true. He goes on to

say, **“For the course of this week’s homework, or for the course of the year for that matter, should I treat them like two separate activities?”** Uh, yeah. I would actually, for this next week. I would decide, do you want to focus on the youth program, or for the adult programs?

Part of the reason I’m asking you to do this is because it’s sort of the “Help me help you.” It’s going to make it easier for me to help and it’ll also make it easier for everyone to understand what you are up to and therefore give you resources and ideas. Because when we start to talk about paths one of the major things will be hubs, how to help people find you and maybe we’ll do a little brainstorm where people will come up with it. And if you put your big circle there, and you say, “I work with people who are stressed, who pay on time,” and all this, nobody will be able to help. I would for the sake of this, pick one, knowing that you’ll just do the same exercise for each of them.

And this is an important piece, why I recommend no more than three little circles, because the questions we are going to do - by the way I’m going to give you a ton of questions for this little circle, and you have to do that for each little circle eventually, so if you have twenty circles it’s overwhelming.

So I’m going to give you a list of questions which I think you’ll find super fun, and the best way to do this is with a marketing buddy and have them ask you questions and take notes for you.

<http://www.marketingforhippies.com/we-might-be-a-fit-if>

Somebody in this group, a friend of yours, you’re going to want to spend an hour to an hour and a half on this to really dig into it. But there are a bunch of questions about demographics, a bunch of questions about psycho-graphics and a bunch about the journey that’ll dig deeper and deeper. And if you try to do it for the big circle, it won’t be quite as juicy as it will be for one of the little circles.

Let’s just see if there are any other questions.

So Caroline said: **“This is interesting to me, I’m feeling a lot of resistance to limiting my targeting audience and groups. What about just being open to what comes my way, law of attraction and all that?”** I would say it’s great, and the law of attraction requires specificity and clarity in action.

I don’t think it’s a dichotomy, you can be open to what is coming your way and still be like, “Oh, I’m still attracting a lot of these people. Ah, I’m getting a lot of vegetarian moms, okay, maybe I should have a niche project for vegetarian moms.” Like, I was really open when I started, so I’d say it’s a good idea, but just be watchful of who is showing up. Like I was open to everyone, and then all these holistic practitioners were coming. So I did something just for them and I’ve got to tell you, filling up the

workshop with holistic practitioners is a lot easier than filling up a workshop with conscious entrepreneurs in general.

We have a funny relationship to limits in this culture, in that we see limits as something that confine us instead of define us. It's like the goal is freedom and the only way to have freedom is to have no limits. So then limits become the enemy. So I think that in business, that becomes a challenge and we resist it, resist something that is very natural. We can be open to everybody but it becomes hard to market, like, where do you put stuff? You can be open to what comes your way, and people will be drawn to your point of view. Your why, who you are, with no target market. There will be some people who just resonate with that, and still my question will be, "What are the paths? How are people going to find you? If you write something, where are you going to put it? If you are speaking, where are you speaking?"

So I would invite you to sift your resistance and see what might be under that for you. And remember, you're dating, this isn't committing to a certain group. Almost see it like this, think about it like a possibility. It's like coming up with a really beautiful present for a specific group of people. You're going to a gluten free potluck and you come up with an amazing gluten free dish just for that specific group of people. You're coming up with something specific for that group of people that they'll be like, "Wow, that was so thoughtful of you, thank you for creating that for us." That doesn't mean you have to do it again. You could, that would be nice, but you don't have to. It doesn't mean you have to repeat it, it just means you get to try it. And you'll probably get a better response with something that specific rather than something broad.

So, Tim said: "**My friend said I should just put up fliers in a coffee shop with tabs, with my number to take. Maybe I should just see who calls.**" I think that's fine, I would do that too. And still I would pick a little circle for this exercise. See what you can come up with. If you're really struggling, give a shout out to the wall and maybe other people can help.

Let's see what else there is, right. And we're at time. So thank you everyone, I hope this was helpful. I think you'll find that the homework is the most useful part of this and the application of what comes from it. You're all GREAT! I would love it if you would post your biggest "Aha!" Or what was most useful to you from this call. That would help if you would give me feedback, and I look forward to connecting to you all next week. Take care.