

Niching for Hippies

Week Three Transcript

It's week three believe it or not in the Niching for Hippiess Course. There has been so much activity on this group in the last couple hours. It's been really wonderful seeing you throw up your comments. It's super excellent to have you here.

Let's recap what we've done. In week one, we're really just talking about the seed. We were just storing things up and looking at our own life experience, of what that might have prepared us for in terms of the niche. Last week, we delved a bit deeper into that.

Also, we've been starting to put some kind of container around it, talking this idea of the big circles, a general sense of who we want to work with, including the type of person, the quality that we would want, the general sense of what they're struggling with. That big circle is kind of like the flower pot container that has the soil that everything else is going to grow in. It's like one of those gels you put over a light, and the light changes colors. It filters everything.

We talked about this. This week, we're going to start diving into the idea of the little circles. The little circles are where things really start to pop. We've been laying a lot of the groundwork. This call is going to be very practical, a ton of examples. I think you're going to like it.

What have you learned so far?

I'm curious for you, what did you learn about niching, about this idea of the big circles from writing and reading everybody else's big circle? Let's take a couple of minutes and write on the wall . . . Okay, let's see what we got.

Big lessons that come from the big circles so far. Loraine said, "Niching isn't separate from the why of journey, the point of view." That is 100% true. I think sometime people look at niching as the thing of, "Let me think through what I want to reach with this target market." Of course those people want to resonate with your why, your point of view.

They're going to be people to whom you are credible and helping, which is going to connect their journey and your journey. Niching is connected to all of this. Bob says, "It's easier to go big circle to start." Generally, I find it sometimes people start with a really clear small circle but I find that if we don't talk about the big circle stuff, and sometimes it can seem slow and frustrating, but if we don't talk about the big circle piece, then I find that it doesn't seem to work as well or people get frustrated.

Most of us, it's important to start where we are clear. The big circle is the place to start. I remember going to a marketing workshop. They're talking about niching. The guy who was facilitating, this woman shared a target market, said, "This is the one I want to work on." He slammed her and said, "No, that's not good enough. That's not specific."

I could just see her traumatized by that. She wasn't going to speak up the rest of the workshop. She felt like a failure around niching. It struck me that everything she had said, that he said was too vague and general was actually perfect for the big circle. I think it's really important to give ourselves a place to plug in things.

Not everything is going to be a good small circle but it might be a good big circle. Mark said, “It’s okay to look for a target of very specific niches, even in terms of a client’s level of awareness of certain things.” That’s true. It’s interesting.

I want to flag that because I think that can be a complicated thing. I don’t know if we necessarily always want to target the level of awareness but to realize that around any particular journey, around any particular issue that people are struggling with, people will be at different levels of awareness.

It’s important to have strategies to meet people at different levels because we talked on the other call about the three percent, seven percent, 30%, all of that. We have three percent of, “I’m ready, I’m looking for it, I will buy one if they offer it to me.” Seven percent are open to it, exploring. 30% are open for the future, 30% are clueless, 30% are no.

People are at those different levels of awareness. Most marketing just goes for that three percent. I would say if your target market was people who are clueless, that’s a really hard target market. I wouldn’t necessarily target my level of awareness but I would be aware that people with any particular issue will be at different levels of awareness.

Julia says, “I could easily help someone else with this as I understand and appreciate the concepts but it’s not working for me yet.” Keep breathing. It’s always easier to help other people.

That’s great, Larry was saying, “I realized I’m getting a lot clearer about my niche and a lot closer to making it happen. I feel more confident about where I’m headed.” This is really important. Sometimes people say, “I don’t feel very confident in my business. It’s a self esteem thing so you go to a workshop to do a bunch of healing to feel more confident.” Sometimes that’s true but sometimes, it’s honestly just that things actually aren’t that clear. Of course, you don’t feel that confident because there’s not a lot to feel confident about.

Lonnie said, “I had a decent idea of who my folk where but kept thinking my whole business, not releasing into the idea of just a project.” That’s good. That’s actually the whole point of the big circle is to think in general for your whole business. That’s perfect. You’re in exactly the right place.

Colleen said, “What I’ve learned is being much more specific about who I want to reach, even in my big circle.” Yeah, the big circle, even though it’s general, even though it’s anyone we want to work with, it’s still that flower pot. There are still walls to it. There’s still a container.

Marguerite said, “The more specific, the more powerful it is. Also, when characteristic are linked with the suffering above island a and b are clear in the paragraph of the big circle,” yes, that makes it so much better. We’re going to be talking a lot about that during this call. Details are powerful.

In the big circle inherently, it often ends up not being that specific. Sometimes, over time, it really does refine but especially as we get into the little circle, that's where the details become extremely compelling.

Carolyn said, "Many of our circles overlap. It's easier to focus on other's circles than to develop my own." Sure. Given that a lot of people here are in holistic work, that been overlapping, which has been great. I know some of you have been doing this, reading other people's things, and noticing, "Oh, that's a great phrase. Maybe I could use that for my own." That can help you clarify your own.

Tamara said, "I'm surprised how much the big circle is about psychographics in many cases." Yes, that's one we're going to go into in this call, the idea of inner realities. The value of world view often ends up really defining things more.

Marcus said, "I also start wondering how we go about from establishing this, the niches, to finding the best way to communicate with that group." Something we're going to go to, not so much in this call but in future calls, this starts to happen. As the niche gets clearer, we start wondering about the practicalities. When it's vague, it's really hard to move to any practicalities.

Lorraine said a really important thing here, "Big circles look different written from the client symptoms versus our diagnosis." My clients are people who need to be more grounded but I'll guarantee you, that's not how they experience it. That's not how they articulate it. They may just feel nervous all the time or they may feel like they're wanting other people's approval.

We want to always be looking at these things, or additionally be looking at these things, not just from our diagnosis of what our take is, but what their symptoms are. Those are great. Awesome work, everybody. Those are really clear, powerful lessons to take from it.

Some things I noticed from reading your Big Circles . . .

Okay, here are some additional things I want to toss up that I noticed from reading all your big circles. First of all, it can be very hard to find hubs from the big circles. Some people are like, "I don't know where these people would hang out." You're probably not supposed to get it quite yet because the big circle inherently is so broad that it's hard to find hubs. That's fine. That's actually not the rule of the big circles.

Sometimes, it will help you find hubs but it's harder to find hubs from the big circle. When we get to the little circles, it's so much easier to find hubs but it's good to notice that because sometimes people will do like what you wrote out for a big circle, and say, "That's my target market, that's my niche." Then they struggle with their market and don't realize why they're struggling.

The reason is because it's a big circle. It's broad. If they were just to come up with a smaller circle within that, everything would move a lot faster. Remember the big circle is mostly for us

as a filter. This isn't something we've put out a ton in marketing materials. You won't build a project around it.

This is largely an internal thing. It's a filter to make sure that we're attracting the right people to us. It comes in some places in marketing in a general sense but the most compelling thing is we'll be the small circles. The big circle, we'll keep refining over time, same with the little circles.

But the big circle, every single client you see can give you more information about the big circle to help you refine that, what you want, etc. Just keep paying attention as you work with people, as you talk with people which people draw you in and fill you up with energy and which ones are draining you.

Here's another thing to notice. Notice if there are any of these qualities of clients. "Oh, I really don't want this kind of client," if there are any that tweak you, that really bug you and frustrate you, you feel a lot of judgment coming out. It's really different to say, "It really brings out my best when clients are like this," or, "I really love it when my clients are like this," or to say, "It's not really a fit if my clients are this way," versus, "They should absolutely never," have a judgmental, critical tone of people.

If it triggers you in that way, there's probably something internal for you to look at of why there's such a resistance in yourself, a judgment in yourself to those kinds of qualities. Another thought, the big circles shouldn't ever go against human nature. There were a few phrases I saw on some of the big circles, suggesting clients would never get defensive, they never resist growth.

The challenge is people are defensive sometimes. People do resist growth often. We want to be careful that our phrasing of the big circle isn't something that we're trying to find an impossible person, "This person will never get defensive, no matter how much I critique them and no matter which way I critique them." That may not be possible. We want to be mindful of that.

The framing, "It really brings out my best when I'm working with people who _____" versus "people *have* to be this way". Another phrase was "people who don't question that I have their best interest at heart". People *may* question that.

That could actually be the moment where things shift and they do trust them because of the way they responded to the lack of trust.

"I don't think you have my best interest at heart," that could be a moment to turn things around and to show them you really do versus immediately saying, "Oh, you're no client of mine then!" You might pause and say, "I'm curious what I might be doing that's having your respond this way?" We want to be mindful which of these qualities are reasonable, unreasonable, and which of these are coming from a wounded place in ourselves, and which ones aren't. Just some thoughts there.

Here's a big piece. This really came to me in the last couple days reading this. Whatever you wrote down for your big circle, in terms of the qualities you want, they're punctual, they're on time, they're open-minded, they don't resist growth, they're not defensive, they're open to change, they're ready to do work, all of those types of things.

Whatever you wrote down for your client, you need to be that to attract them. You need to embody that really strongly to attract those kinds of people. Sometimes what I find is people in their big circle, and it's interesting as I reflect back to it, people I've worked with, when they articulate it, it's like they're articulating a perfect person, a person who has no flaws. Then I wonder why they would even want to work with them.

Sometimes, it's an expression that they are actually incredibly harsh with themselves. They have this perfectionistic attitude in themselves and they project that on their clients. Whatever it is that you are wanting in a client, you're going to have to be that. If that's an unrealistic thing for your client, it's probably a way you might be being unrealistic or hard on yourself. I don't know if that lands or makes sense but it's something that came up. I invite you to sit with it.

Also know that **you can help educate your clients so they become dream clients.** This is why the sales funnel can be so important, to have levels of things. Before they work with you one-on-one, maybe there are workshops or talks they can go to, or videos they can check out. There may be ways to actually educate people about what kind of clients you want to work with so that by the time they actually come to you and work with you, and in the process of working with you, there's a way of building that relationship, of educating them so that they know really explicitly what being a dream client for you looks like.

Sometimes, people will say, "I never want people to be late for sessions," but they never have any real system or conversation to make sure that people know that being on time for session really matters or that canceling isn't okay. They get bitter and resentful, and just fire their clients, say, "I don't want to work with you," or secretly resent it and continue to work with them.

Instead of that, we want to make sure we have a system and a way of working with them, some rituals and routines in working with clients that help educate them to become the best kind of clients. Don't think that when clients walk in, they're going to totally get that. They may not understand how to be a good client. We may have to educate them.

Sometimes, there can be a training process. There's a great book, The One Minute Manager. Sometimes, you have to have a really clear agreement with them and reward them when they do it well. Really appreciate them and acknowledge them for that.

Also, a small thing to red flag, sometimes, I've come across practitioners who just want clients who are obedient, who will do whatever they say to feed their ego. I've actually seen people who are, "Clearly, the problem is not on my side. I'm an amazing healer. If fear or shame is coming up, that's them getting in the way of the healing process. That's getting in the way of work. That's their fault."

My belief is that as a service provider, those things are going to come up for people. It's actually our role to help them through those. Sometimes, people just want clients who are going to do what they say so they can do their thing and not have to deal with the realities in another human being. That's something to think about.

Those are some thoughts and reflections that came out for me in reading it. Thank you all for being so vulnerable and putting out your big circles. Now we're going to start talking about the little circles. Everything I'm about to say for the little circles really could fit for the big circle because sometimes, there are circles within circles within circles.

Your big circle, you may have three smaller circles and within each of those circles, you might have three smaller circles. Within each of those, you could keep drilling down. This is really just about circles but we're going to start talking about in your case three little circles within the circle that you have.

Three core elements of your little circles

There are three elements that are critical to have in a really solid small circle – demographics, psychographics, and the journey.

The **demographics** are the outer thing. We talked about this in the intro. They're age, gender, ethnic background, their income level, parental status, marital status, what they do for work, their profession, the industry they're in. Those are all the demographics.

It's actually an important part because it can help shape a bit. For some of you, those really came in. There was an age range or an ethnic group or a gender you were focused on. The demographics matter but the challenge is again, most people just think only demographics.

The **psychographics** also matter. The psychographics, I'm going to give a cursory overview here and in the homework, a ton of really specific questions to dive into each of these to help you refine it for your little circles. The psychographic are the internal things.

They're the values, the worldview, the community that they're a part of, their aesthetic, their vibe, how they see the world, their philosophy, the internal things that they share as a community of people. Demographics can create communities, like the retiring community, the empty nesters, people who work in a certain industry. Those are demographics. There are communities that form around that.

What I want to suggest is that the strongest communities tend to form around the psychographics. Demographics can often happen to us. Psychographic are a bit more of a choice. They're more deeply felt. They're more internal. Just because somebody is black doesn't mean they believe certain things.

Just because you're a man doesn't mean you see the world a certain way. The internal things, that's where it's at, psychographics. You'll notice how a lot of what you came up with in your big circle had to do with that, the psychographics, much more so than the demographics.

The third part of the **journey**, and we're talking about the journey from island a to island b. A mini recap, you have this person, this client who is on island a. They're really sad and frustrated and in pain because they have this problem. They want to be on island b where they have some result. They want to make that journey from island a to island b.

Your business is the boat that can take them on that journey. The more specific that journey is, the better. When we talk about the journey, I want to have that in the little circle. Consider the different between these three journeys. One person says, "I help people with problems get the results they're after." That's the most generic. That's everybody on the planet. I don't even know what it means, it's so general.

Then you could say, "I help people on the journey from bad health to good health. I help people on the journey from 'I'm broke' to 'I have money,' from bad relationships to good relationships, from stress to be at peace." Those are a lot more specific.

You might even get more specific within each of those about the types of journeys but when we weave them all together, we get a lot more clarity about the circle. For example, to say, "I work with parents in Calgary who are between 25 and 40 years old," that's the demographics, "who are really into green conscious living, alternative schooling. They're really passionate about good communication. They're into spiritual work, but they're not that woo-woo. They're not into crystals and everything but more into nonviolent communication, they pass on the meditation, let's say." That's the psychographics.

I'm thinking a picture of a type of person there. The journey there is that they really struggle with parenting in terms of being too authoritarian or too permissive. They struggle with how to do that. Island a is, "What do I do?" Island b is that they are strong centered, loving, and kind with their child even when their kid is testing them the most. That's the journey.

I hope that you get that by combining all three of them, we get much more dimensionalized sense of who that person is. What's interesting is once you get a really clear small circle like this, what starts to happen is people just are like, "Oh, you should talk to this person. Have you met my cousin? He has all that kind of stuff."

You'll have ideas of products and projects that you can do with these people when it's really refined like this. Let's pause and see if there are any questions about that because that was some technical stuff. I hope it's clear but let's pause and see if there are any questions around those three, demographics, psychographics, and the journey.

You will be getting a ton of materials after this to review and refine but if you're super confused right now, speak up. I love it, Debbie said, "I think the process might be like sculpting, chipping away at what I don't want as a client. What remains is the ideal client." Yes, totally.

"Is there a better island a, the need or the problem? Does one drive them more into the journey?" This is where, it depends on how we're defining need. The important thing is island a is about the symptoms that they are aware of themselves. Sometimes, when we say need, we're basically saying, "This is what I think they need."

That's useful. That's our point of view. What drives them into wanting to work with us, what makes us relevant are their symptoms, what they've experienced, not our sense that they need to be more open, more accepting but is their own pain, their own experience as they would word it, as they would articulate it which is why having conversations with these people is really important so we can hear about how they talk about and articulate it.

"The example that we've solved through together is helpful," good. Let's keep going. I put up a new file. If you go to the top of Niching for Hippies Six Week Course, About, Events, Photos, and Files in the Facebook group, you'll see this file, Niching Case Studies. You can use this or not. The links are there so you can check them out later.

Niche Examples

I wanted to give you a bunch of examples of niche businesses to encourage you, inspire you. You can do that later. A lot of these are on my blog so you can actually do a bit of an interview about how it's working for them. It should hopefully inspire and help you. Here are a few of them.

First of all, there's **Alex Baisley with the Big Dream Program** who we've talked about before. I adore his stuff. He was this commercial diver for years and had a lifestyle he didn't like. Now he's become this lifestyle coach and helps people figure out how to, instead of one day making enough money to retire, to have a quality of life they want. How do you start with the lifestyle you want now, and back your business and projects into that? It's really brilliant stuff. That's his niche. That's a particular journey he helps people on.

The Uncaged Life, similar, Rebecca Tracy, a good friend of mine from Toronto, does life coaching around helping people get uncaged, people who were living a life they don't want to live. She's more of a outrageous, bold personality. She decided to move into a van, live in a van, travel around, and build her business on a laptop as she travels around the world or North America, or doing rock climbing. She really wants to help people bust out of their comfort zone and live the kind of life they've always wanted to live.

Nancy Juetten is an amazing PR person in Seattle, a really brilliant, wonderful woman. When she first started, this is an interesting thing of how niches can change and become more authentic over time. When she started, she felt, "Of course, if these people want to be seen in the spotlight,

want to be big, huge personalities,” that’s who she thought she wanted to work with as a PR person.

She realized that she actually is a very introverted person but had to adapt in her life to get by. She’s realized a lot of her clients that she loves working with most are the introverted ones who still need to get exposure, but are introverted and shy, and need some help in terms of getting exposure. That’s what’s most satisfying for her in terms of a niche.

HolisticMBA.com is a Web site for holistic practitioners, an MBA program, brilliant work. Notice they’re not just saying, “Conscious marketing for everybody.” They’ve picked this niche of holistic practitioners specifically. It’s brilliant.

The Happy MD, a colleague of mind, Dike Drummond who I met in California. When I met him actually a few years ago in a different niche, he was working with helping men around the midlife crisis. He had this workshop called – and talk about a great niche project – The Three Hour Midlife Crisis. He would in this three hours help men really get clear about what they want, help them transition through this midlife crisis, and did coaching around that.

He had gone through that himself. What was more interesting was I reached out to him because I said, “I want to feature you for this niching thing,” he said, “My niche actually changed.” I said, “How?” He said, “For years, I was a doctor. I was an MD. I got totally burned out, which is what got me started looking at life coaching and holistic stuff, the midlife crisis thing. But I realized those are the people I really want to work with.

“If I had known me now, if I had been able to get my help as I am today ten years ago, I’d still be a doctor,” so he created a Web site, The Happy MD. He works with doctors, helping them deal with the burnout and stay balanced and sustainable in the practice. It’s brilliant.

At the same workshop I met Dike, I also met this other woman. She stood up during one of the niche exercises. She was an Asian woman. She said, “I grew up with a very critical mom.” Her experience is a lot of moms in the Asian community have a critical attitude. She said, “I want to do a workshop for Asian women who have grown up in a really critical household. I want to call it **Release Your Dragon Spirit.**”

She got all these Asian women who were also life coaches to speak on it. She said it was the most wonderful, fulfilling experience. She organized a teleseminar basically called Release Your Dragon Spirit and got some really nice attention to it. It wasn’t a huge, huge thing but it was a start. You could tell it was so meaningful and fulfilling for her.

Here’s the interesting thing too, about being explicit versus exclusive. Do you think there might be other moms from other ethnic groups that might also be critical with their children? It’s one of those things where I know that there would be women attending that who weren’t Asian, who were black women, Native American, white, whatever, Hispanic because the core journey still resonates with them.

This is the funny thing. The journey is really the hotspot of this. When you look at those three, the demographic, psychographic, and journey, the journey is the center of it. The next circle out are the psychographic and refining the details are the demographics. I think the demographics are actually the least important part.

If the journey is really clear, you'll have people who don't fit the demographics or psychographic coming. There's a woman who I'll talk about in a second who is a mortgage broker. She doesn't do any kind of green, holistic anything. She's sort of a hippy but not totally. She's becoming more hippy. She would come to my workshops.

I remember at one point we were talking about this. She said to the group, "Yeah, I'm here because I just resonate with what Tad talks about and because it's relevant to my journey," even though she doesn't necessarily fit within life coaches, permaculture practitioners, holistic practitioners. It's interesting.

The Institute for Part-time Entrepreneurs, there's this woman who realized that most of the business networking groups and support groups out there were for full-time entrepreneurs. A lot of the assumptions about their members is they were full time. The strategies they suggest were really relevant for people who could do it full time.

She wanted to create a network for part-time entrepreneurs, people who had a lot less free time and would honor and acknowledge that, and have their products based on that. I thought that was brilliant.

Kris Ward with AbundantYogi.com was a yoga teacher. She was sick of seeing her friends be broke and have this nobility of, "I'm broke but that's just the dharma." They couldn't sustain themselves but she had the provocative notion that you could be a yogi but also abundant. It's interesting because it's actually broadened a bit. It started with yoga but it's broadened to holistic practitioners in general.

The Cool Vegetarian Blog, my friend Jeff in Winnipeg had all these different interests and passions. He came up with this cool niche project which has actually grown pretty big. He's a raw vegan guy. He's just like, "I just feel like all the science is there but I don't want to talk about that if I were ever to write a book. I don't want to talk about recipes because there are so many recipe books. I don't know what to do."

I was just like, "Dude, you travel around the world, you meet with celebrities all the time. You hang out with Woody Harrelson. You have the coolest lifestyle. I feel like that's a piece that's missing that you can talk about, how you have a cool lifestyle as a vegetarian and not be annoying about things, what you do about Thanksgiving and all this.

"You travel around, you could be interviewing people, doing video blogging, video interviews of folks and put that on your blog. I'd call it 'The Cool Vegetarian.'" I tossed it out, he loved it, and ran with it so he has this blog, The Cool Vegetarian. It's super awesome. He's gotten so many hits. He's been building up his platform.

I don't know how much he's monetized it at this point but sometimes, a niche project, some of them are monetizable, some of them aren't. Some of them just build you a platform you can monetize later. I think that's more the approach he's gone.

There's another woman who I met in Toronto. She's this jewelry marketing genius. It's interesting because jewelry is a product. How are your niches? She's created her jewelry with target markets in mind. There are specifically three lines or three collections of jewelry she has. One is the house of rock, which is a unisex line that is geared toward men and women that are looking for slightly edgier pieces, inspired by rock music, urban culture, and individuality.

Then there's the duchess collection, which is the more girly and frivolous, inspired by childhood keepsakes, antiques, etc. The last one is the believe one, which is based on world religion, spirituality, and what inspires people. Notice that each of those three types of jewelry all have a different target market in mind.

Yoga for Round Bodies we talked about. I've heard about hair salons that are eco friendly hair salons, or child friendly where they actually have childcare built in which is so beautiful. A mom, who is haggard and run off and wants to go to a salon to get treated can go because they have childcare so she can treat herself.

Carrie Klassen, with PinkElephantCommunications.com is one of the most brilliant, lovely people I know. She is the Audrey Hepburn of marketing in my mind. As a niche project, she created a product called the Lovable Homepage Workshop.

She does marketing work in general but created a product for people on how to write their homepage which I can't recommend highly enough for you writing your homepage because it will help you take everything we're working on and turn it into a homepage that really grabs people. That kind of a product can be an example of a niche project.

Marketing for Artists, Marketing for Hippies, Marketing for Artists. This woman created a whole Web site and coaching program based on helping artists, crafts, artisans, painters, photographers, helping them figure out how to market their stuff. Wonderful, very specific target market.

This mortgage broker who came to my workshop focused on young women who were in the process of moving out. They're at home, partying or having fun and being at home is not working for them anymore and they don't have the freedom. They just want to move out but can't afford it, etc.

The Therapy Vault, a woman was a therapist. You hear so many secrets from people. She didn't have anyone to talk to about that. She thought, "If I'm going through this, this idea that those things which are most personal, I bet there are other people, not just therapists, who are struggling with having all these secrets they can't tell anyone."

So she created this Web site where therapists could go anonymously, in a very safe way, share the secrets they'd been hearing in a way that could never be traced back geographically or connected to them. It was a brilliant niche project.

Escape from Cubicle Nation, Pam Slim worked in the corporate drone for years and finally was like, "I'm sick of this. I'm sick of selling my soul in this corporate structure. I want out." She created this blog called Escape from Cubicle Nation, which is a great title. She wrote this big manifesto about it.

Let's pause there. That's a bunch of examples. I would love to pause first of all to see if there are any questions at this point but also if anyone has any examples they would like to share that you think would be inspiring for other people. Julia was asking about me coaching somebody through the process but I think we may do that next call because we want to focus right now on the little circles.

I want to go through an 11 point checklist when you're thinking about little circles. I'm going to have you all share one on the wall. We'll do some conversations and coaching based on what you put up there which will give us some useful things.

You're going to get this in a document too. Here's an 11 point checklist meaning sometimes people will come up with a big circle and say, "Okay, it looks right. Here's my little circle." It will have the demographic, psychographics, and a journey, yet it doesn't work. Having the three criteria is the beginning but it doesn't necessarily guarantee it's actually going to happen.

Let me go through what I think. This is seven of these I got from Bill. Here are the things I think are most important. Think about this as you're starting to think about the little circles. You might want to pick one of them to think through. I imagine you've already given some thought to what the little circles might be, what one particular subset of your big circle might be.

I want you to take a minute, don't write it on the wall. I want you to reflect on what one of those little circles might be. Just jot it down, clarify it a bit. Pick one little circle. As I go through these 11 points, I want you to filter what you just wrote down through that. If it's tricky, just do the best you can. Pick something to fiddle with and we'll go from there.

11 Point Niche Clarity Checklist

Here are the 11 things. Whatever you have, think about it through this.

The first, most important criteria is just "is it clear?" There's the old adage in marketing that "A confused mind says no." A lot of times, when people say their target market, usually, they're talking big circle stuff so it ends up being unclear and confusing.

When I say clear, what I mean is when I say it, you should immediately know if you're in that group or not. You should immediately have a sense of you are that or you aren't. You should also

know immediately if you know somebody like that. Literally, a person's face should come to mind or multiple faces.

There should be a, "That's me, I'm that person," or, "That's me." There shouldn't be any fuzziness about it. That's the most important thing. When you think about the little circle, think about if you said it to somebody, would they know immediately if that was them? Would they be able to identify somebody else?

Number two, there need to be enough of them who can sustain you. Again, one small circle may not be your full business but it has to be enough of them who can pay your full price to make it worthwhile. That seems obvious but is really worth thinking about. Sometimes, people will niche so narrow in a small circle that there aren't enough of them to make it worthwhile.

Or there's 100 of them but it's not like they're all going to buy. You want to think about this, notice it, do a little research, and do a little poking around. When I say enough of them affording to pay you the full price, that's important because sometimes, people say, "All of my market can't afford to pay me." That's wonderful.

What you have there is a nonprofit. It's a different model. It's wonderful. I love nonprofit but you still need to sustain yourself. You still have to pay rent, eat food. Then the model becomes you have to do fundraising and get money from other people because the people who you're going to be working with can't afford to pay you. If you have a nonprofit model, that's fine.

Otherwise, if you're doing it as a business, you need to have enough people who can afford to pay you full price, and sometimes people pay more so they can donate their services to others. That's fine but whatever that total combination is, you still need to get your needs met. That's important.

Number three, are there particular places where they congregate and hang out in person, online? Basically, are there hubs? You can go through those first two, yes, clarity, yes, there are enough, but there are no hubs, and that can kill it. I'm putting these, by the way, in my mind, in sequential order.

As you go through each of these, these are different levels and filters. If at any point you get stopped, if you don't make it to probably six or seven here, it's probably not that strong a niche. If there are no places they hang out, if you can't find them, if they don't have established, high quality hubs and communication networks, whether that is a Web site, magazines, etc., that's probably going to kill it right there. Then you have to reach them cold. That's very difficult.

Number four, can you honestly say you care for, respect, or even love your tribe? This is where the whole finding the wound in the niche connection becomes so important. This is where really pulling from our life experience can matter so much because there's inherently empathic connection. Sometimes, if somebody randomly picks a cynical target market, I think you're just going to lose steam.

You're going to lose your mojo. You're not going to be that inspired. Other people who are much more passionate about that community will of course do better because they're going to work harder and people will feel that love and care for them much more. My colleague Carrie Klassen says, "Life is both too short and too long to spend with people you don't love."

Number five, this is critical. This starts getting to the journey piece. **Do you know what the result is that you know your tribe would be willing to pay for?** In other words, what is island b? What is it they're craving? What is the specific result they want? Here's a thought. That result, if you can't say it in three words, it's probably too complicated.

The result that people want is better sleep, better sex, better communication, to be able to meet girls, to be able to meet guys, to lose weight, gain weight, gain muscle, etc. Results that people want are oftentimes very simple in terms of their experience. We may have a whole diagnosis of what that's really about, etc. They want to feel at peace, they want to feel relaxed, comfortable, understood.

Do you know what that result is that this small circle will be willing to pay for? It's got to be something that they want bad enough that they're willing to invest something. Of course, in this culture, it's all about money. If you gave our rites of passage as business people from time memorial, some of those rites of passage weren't simple, they weren't risk free. They required a huge investment emotionally and physically.

There's a result around being a man, being a woman, being an adult. There's something people want enough to invest. They want a sense of spiritual cleanliness or connection to spirit that comes from doing those initiations. They want it bad enough to invest something. The investment could be time or money. In business, we're talking about money.

If they're not willing to invest, there are some results we want, "Yeah, I wouldn't mind feeling more relaxed," but it's not like an urgent, you really want it. It's not a craving for them. It's hard to build a business around that. You could have a club around that, conversations about that but you may not be able to build much of a business. Do you actually know what the result is that they want, that they'd be willing to pay for?

Number six, are you passionate about delivering that result? My colleague and friend Bill Baron who I got a lot of these ideas from, he really realized that the result his clients were craving was they wanted more clients. A lot of life coaches and practitioners, a similar crowd to who I serve, really wanted more clients.

He is so passionate about helping his clients get more clients because he struggles. When he began as a life coach, he couldn't get new clients to save his life. Then he got really good and wanted to help other life coaches not have to go through that struggle. Are you genuinely passionate about delivering that result and helping them get that?

Number seven, this is where the rubber meets the road in terms of niching. Do you want to be known for delivering that result? When we talk about marketing, there's this whole conversation about branding, about your platform. What do you want to be known for? A lot of people want to just be known for the boat. "I do yoga, I do life coaching, I do NLP, I do nonviolent communication."

They talk about the boat a lot. That's nice. That's one thing to be known for but one of the most important things to be known for is the result, island b. Do you want to be known for delivering that result? There's a result for the big circle and there are particularly major results for the smaller circles.

Let's just say you're at a party. Bill was at a party. Someone said, "Hey, that's the guy who helps service based professionals get more clients." He'd actually be thrilled to hear that. If I was at a party and someone said, "That's Tad. He helps hippies figure out ways to market that don't cost a fortune," I'd be thrilled. Do you want everyone to know that? If you don't, it's something to reconsider.

Number eight, do you have the expertise or desire to commit to being an expert in delivering those results, another big one? Sure, you can help them with your own experience but are you also willing to keep studying, keep learning, and keep being a better expert. I don't even know if expert is the right word.

Are you willing to keep growing yourself so you can help them get that result rather than saying, "Here's what I did, and it works for me." Do you love the idea of craftsmanship, of refining what you do, getting better at it, making an art out of it? Are you curious about the approaches that other people use and the tactics that can help get the same result, even if it's different than what you did because it all helps get the same result?

Maybe you used meditation to get out of depression but maybe there are nutritional things that can help too, or exercise, and all those. They don't just want you to be an expert in sharing your story and your journey, though that is powerful. They want you to be an expert in the result.

Number nine, can you identify other players who are creating successful businesses serving this market? This is really important. Sometimes, people say, "Oh, lots of other people are already doing that so I won't." No, wrong! If there are other people doing it successfully making money, that means there's enough of a demand. That means there's a market. It's a wonderful sign if you see other people doing it.

Now, there still might be a market within that. There may be people responding to it but maybe there are certain things that you could be bringing to the table that they're not bringing to the table that would help a lot, that would be unique and different.

Number ten, they're aligned with your why, with your purpose. There's a reason you do what you do. There's a bigger purpose. There's a passion you have. Whatever that cause is, maybe the

cause is optimism, women's health, social justice, men's issues, or local food. Whatever that is, ideally, your target market is going to be so passionate about that cause as well.

There's a woman I knew who did breast massage. When we really talked about it, what it was really about was women's empowerment for her. That's so different. Her clients would be drawn to her because she was so passionate about that issue.

If you're really passionate about an issue, your ideal clients are just going to be passionate about it. If you're talking about it, and somebody else was like, "Uh, no, that's not a big thing for me," it's going to be less of a fit.

Number 11, they agree with or are intrigued by your point of view. They agree with or at least are intrigued by your point of view. In terms of the journey from island a to island b, you've got a take on it. You have a particular perspective, a way of going about it that you think makes the most sense.

In terms of diet, there's raw food, vegan, primal diet, macrobiotic, vegetarian, whole food, local food, very organic, so many different perspectives for food groups. Your ideal client is going to be somebody who either already agrees with your point of view, "Yeah, that's how I see it too," or at least they're in a place where they're open to that point of view that you have.

If you were a pagan healer, you would have a real hard time attracting fundamentalist Christians as clients, even if – consider this – all those other ten things were true. Even if all the other ten were true, if you got to number 11, and they walk into your office, and you have a horned god statue on your wall, and you're asking for a blood offering when they come in, it's not going to work.

Vise versa, if you were a fundamentalist Christian healer, if you were a faith healer, they came in and were pagan, and you're busting out the Bible, put your hand on the Bible, "It burns, it burns," it wouldn't work. There would have to be some shared worldview for there to be a fit.

Those are 11 things. These are really useful to think about in advance. If you can get a small circle where you can check off all 11 of those, you are so set. Then it gets so easy to make this work. If you're missing a few of them, it gets harder, especially if you're missing the earlier ones.

That's the 11 point checklist for your niches. You're totally going to be getting a copy of that in more detail as I said to go through and work with.

Your small circle in a single sentence . . .

I'm going to give you a sentence to fill you. I want you to take five minutes to write it and put it on the wall. Then you'll be getting some coaching, and coaching each other as we go through this for a small circle.

This isn't a small circle you're committing to for the rest of the six weeks. You may change it after this but I'm going to invite you to pick one small circle within your big circle. What's important here is you don't need to name any of the big circle stuff really. You don't need to say a bunch of that because we already know what your big circle is. That's already clear.

If there's something that's really important, you can put it in but right now, we just want to focus on the small circle, knowing that it's filtered by it being a seed planted in the pot of your big circle. It's in that soil.

Here's the sentence: "Know how blank kinds of people struggle with blank problem? What I do is help them get blank results." When we say struggling with a problem, it's the problem they know they're struggling with. This is their symptom. The result isn't just a generic result. It's something they are craving, willing to pay for.

That is the sentence. Pick a little circle and type it up in this form. Before you do that, let me read a bunch of examples because it may help make it clear in your head. You know how a lot of holistic practitioners struggle to get enough clients and feel gross about marketing? I help them figure out authentic marketing strategies that feel right to them.

You know how parents struggle with being too authoritarian or too permissive? I help them figure out parenting strategies that feel authentically right for them but also help them stay loving, calm, and tender, even when their kids are tempting them the most.

A graphic designer might say I work with independent natural health clients who are frustrated or bored with their current logo, Web site, or marketing materials because they know it doesn't really capture who they are anymore. I help them create materials that really pop and totally express who they are, and grabs people's attention.

A realtor might say you know how a lot of adults with disabilities in Seattle are struggling to find a home that they like and they can afford but feel overwhelmed and confused with where to even start to apply for financing? I help them find homes that totally fit their disability or situation, and to find the government funding that can sometimes be available to help that happen.

You know how a lot of homeowners really want to be more green and energy efficient but feel lost and overwhelmed with where to even start with that? We help direct them to the cheapest, most effect, perfect fit resources through our Web site.

A printing company might say you know how there are a lot of travelling business people who show up in Calgary hotels and freak out because they realize they need to do a lot of last minute printing work for their conference or visit, and have no idea where to go, who to trust? We help them get their materials back at a very quick turnaround so it can be ready for their conference, and they can look really good to their bosses, etc.

There's a few examples. I hope that gives a sense of what it might be. I invite you to write out one of your little circles and give it a try. When you've done yours, I want you to read other

people's. This is where you're going to give them a one through ten as a rating. You can also shower them with encouragement, appreciation, questions, and things to help clarify and refine it.

A ten is this is so totally clear, I know completely if I'm in that group or I'm not, I can picture people, I can think of somebody who you should talk to. That's a ten. A one is just wow, that's everybody, I don't really get it. As Martin Luther King, Jr. talked about, this is where we practice both unconditional love and uncompromising truth.

This is the safest place where we can give each other that feedback because otherwise, you take it into the marketplace, and it fails and is more embarrassing. This is where we can really be supporting each other, giving people very clear, honest feedback. How clear is it? If it isn't, if we get a bunch of twos and threes, leave feedback to help them reflect and help them hone.

As we move into the niche projects, we do want to be having these small circles that are really clear. This can be a good way for people to practice. Let's take another few minutes and put up your things. This is great, everybody. These all look really solid and strong, nicely done.

If you give them anything less than a six, any way you can be supportive of them getting clear, showing here's what feels fuzzy, here's what feels vague is a real help for people. Here's the homework for next week. The main homework is just to hone that small circle, to really refine it. This sentence thing, this fill in the blank is the main thing.

I'm going to send you some more resources that may help give some additional edges and little refinements, and polishing on it. Next week, I think most of you are pretty close to it, but I want you to bring your most polished, refined possible circle. Next week, we're actually going to go into the niche project, taking that small circle and have it turn into something that could either help build your reputation, get you clients, or whatever it is you want from the niche project or give you a chance to explore that.

I'm open to any questions you have at this point or anything you're wondering about in terms of as we move forward. Next week, we do turn it into a niche project. One thing I really invite you to notice is how much clearer these small circles are than the big circle.

When you look at these small circles, or most of them, how much easier it is to think of somebody in particular, to think of hubs, to think of how they might market it, to think of what they might offer them than it is for the big circles. It's so hard to do for the big circles. Then people feel like failures or like they're stupid for not being able to figure out how they market it.

They think, "Oh, I'm just bad at marketing." That's not it. It's just that the big circle isn't usually as refined as you even got it. Even as refined as you got the big circle, it still would be very hard to come up with any marketing strategy around that. I would struggle and I've been doing this for ten years.

Notice when we have these little circles, how much clearer things get for you but also for everybody else. At this point, we're not focusing on how we do it yet. The trajectory is the first week is about seeds, generally what do I want to do, who do I want to work with. Last week, we started to refine that a bit with the big circle, putting some demographics, psychographics journey constraints on it.

This week, we're looking at experimenting with a particular small group, picking one of those. You may have three but let's just take one of them, one that you'll be excited to do a project with. That's all that we're doing right now and over the next week. It's just for you to really sit with that, refine it, and make sure you have one that fits all 11 of those criteria as best as you can.

Of course, even the ones, "Do I want to be known for this?" you might now, and that might change later. That's okay. That's all we're doing over the next week. You might start thinking about a particular project you want to do.