

# Niching for Hippies

Interview with Alex Baisley

**Tad Hargrave:** Hi everybody, it's Tad from [MarketingForHippies.com](http://MarketingForHippies.com). I am here joined by Alex Baisley of [BigDreamProgram.com](http://BigDreamProgram.com). I'm so excited to be sharing Alex with you during this call. If you haven't come across Alex or aren't really familiar with him, you are in for a treat.

I met Alex years ago over the internet but eventually in person in Ontario. Alex has a real special genius for helping people figure out how to take all these bizarre interests, passions, strengths, things they're good at, and their fascinations and weaving them into something that can actually generate income for them.

What I really have loved about Alex's perspective over the years is it's very practical, very doable, very down-to-earth stuff. It's easy to go to workshops where it's like, "Find your life purpose, find your passion," and then create some huge empires, huge thing out of that.

You can almost feel ashamed if you're not doing this massive thing. Alex takes a little bit of a slower approach to it. The whole idea of niche projects in fact came directly out of his idea of income projects, people creating small, little projects, little things they could do that are small, doable, that could generate income for them right away and help them transition out of whatever they're doing.

I can tell you, I've seen so many people who were doing something they hated, a nine-to-five job working for someone else, then left to do something new without any kind of safety net. That can be a very stressful way to do it, especially if it turns out that the niche you picked, "Oh, I'm really excited about this," then you actually start doing it and realize it's not the thing you wanted to do, but you've totally abandoned your safety net.

His notion of income projects I thought was one of the most brilliant pieces. He's also really brilliant at helping people figure out what their niche is, and not just the niche in terms of the who, which we're really focusing on in this call, but the niche in terms of the nest. What is our place in the world?

He's so brilliant at helping people find that. I couldn't be more excited to have him here. Alex, good to have you.

**Alex Baisley:** Thank you so much, Tad, blushing a little bit there.

**Tad:** I would love it if you would start off giving people a bit of your background of how you got to be here doing this work, how you stumbled across the whole importance of lifestyle in this.

**Alex:**

Sure thing. I'm very familiar with your work, Tad. I know that you've been talking with everyone about the wound thing. I'm an example of that. I'm here doing what I'm doing now with the Big Dream Program because I was so bad at it all my life.

I made really bad choices in terms of my career and my work. The first one was commercial diving. If anyone ever sees a picture of me, I'm six feet tall and weigh about 50 pounds. I'm skinny. Skinny people struggle with commercial diving.

I did it for ten years, kind of fell into it. The last five years of it, I know some people can probably relate to this, every single morning that I drove to work, I had this sinking feeling in my stomach, "I'm not doing what I'm supposed to be doing in this world. I don't know what that is."

For another five years, I plopped in the ocean. Weird twist of events, I won't go in the whole story, but a very bizarre choice for me, I ended up on a reiki level one course. I wasn't open-minded to that kind of thing at the time but I did end up on this weekend course.

I wasn't too sure what I thought of it but long story short is I took a level two after that. It started really making a difference in my life. I was happier and lighter, and things were working better. I thought, "Wow, this could be something I would like to do for a living."

So I took every course I could take when I wasn't in the water. Eventually, I ended up opening my own reiki clinic. I was living in Ireland at the time. This gets in the second place where I made a really bad choice but I can forgive myself – I didn't know any better.

What I learned out of this has become my passion and my full-time work. I love it. That is this. I had a reiki clinic for five years, eventually moved back to Canada, set it up here. Everything was fine.

Five years into it, I was walking to work. Everything was better. I was warmer. I get to make a difference in people's lives. Everything was awesome. I couldn't understand why I was going to work, feeling this pit in my stomach again. It scared me actually.

We had made a big life change, my wife and I, to be able to do that, as you can imagine, compared to commercial diving. I thought there was something wrong, I can't be content or something. This went on for another two or three years.

I'm the primary breadwinner. My wife and I chose that one of us would stay home with the children, or at least most of the time. There was a lot of pressure and a lot of stress in terms of making that work. I thought, "Am I changing my mind again? What's happening here?"

It did go on for another two or three years. I didn't know what else to do. It was one day, an April day. I remember it so clearly. We rarely have these big blinding flashes in our lives. They tend to be more slow flashes that take years.

It was after lunch. I was sitting there having a coffee and it all came totally clear to me of what the problem was. I realized that I'm a gypsy by nature. I really like to be out and about, have a free schedule, and be able to travel.

I had built myself a business of my own accord, of my own free will, that felt a lot like a prison. I realized that I was inside nine to five in the same office, and loving the work didn't come into it. I loved it for a few hours but past that.

It seemed so obvious looking back on it now, but I realized that in that moment, for a lot of people, especially creative, smart, buzzing, change the world type people, lifestyle is not a luxury. Now that I'm working at this full time, I'm seeing it over and over and over again.

It doesn't matter if you want to be a carpenter, hair dresser, reiki master, a speaker, or whatever. For a lot of us, we have to figure out what kind of a lifestyle we will thrive in and then build the business to suit that. It may not be a magic bullet, to use that crazy term – or silver bullet is it? Doesn't matter.

But it's a solid foundation, a foundation that works with the person and who they are. Long story short, that's how I ended up here. I was doing the reiki and finally decided, "You know what? I care so much about life direction." It was the thing I loved working with reiki clients the most on anyway.

If they came in with a sore shoulder, I cared but if they came in saying, "What am I doing with my life?" I really cared. I loved that. I came alive. I thought I had some ninja skills. I certainly had a lot of experience of what it feels like when it's not right so I decided to make a workshop around that and see if anyone would show up.

Beginners luck, I had 25 people I think show up on the first workshop. I never looked back. From that April afternoon, three months later, I had built myself a completely different style of business where I was in the reiki clinic one day a week, which I still am. It's awesome.

That's the long and short of how I ended up here.

**Tad:** I love it. What really strikes me is Alex and I did a few workshops in Oakland, California together. We called it Marketing for Hippies and Gypsies. It went very well. It really struck me one time is when we talk about marketing, how do I make what I'm doing unique for the client.

A lot of what Alex is talking about in terms of really figuring out what the lifestyle is that you want, the lifestyle you thrive in, and what are your own quirks and uniqueness-es that you can be bringing more to what you do, that also then makes what you do really unique.

It's easy to start with who do I want to work with but you can also start with what is the kind of lifestyle I want, what is unique about me, and how do I bring that into my work, and reverse engineered of who would be into that. Who would be drawn to that, what kinds of people, kind of the yin yang of niching. Both of those can work really well.

The thing I'm most excited to talk to you about today, Alex, is this idea of income projects. I've never actually talked to you about this but I'm curious where this idea came from for you. I think it's a brilliant thing.

**Alex:** That is such a good question, and you know what? I have no recollection of where it comes from. I don't know if it came out of my own life or if it came out clients. I know I work a lot with clients, and I worked with even more of them back then, who had jobs.

I work with more primarily people who are already starting to slip into entrepreneurship now but they still had jobs. Nevertheless, they had things. They certainly had a dream, some sort of dream of self employment. That's how we ended up talking, but what to do?

There's enormous pressure about that when people try to make some decision about the rest of their – people get so caught up around making the perfect decision around this. The truth is it's impossible. It's like saying, "What's going to be my favorite song for the next five years?"

Nobody can do that because you don't know what's going to come out tomorrow. The kinds of people that are on this call, certainly I'm guessing probably if you look back six months into the past of your life, you've changed a lot in six months. You've changed a lot in the last year.

You're going to change a lot in the next six months so we can't know who we're going to be, what exactly we're going to be doing or interested in. I found that people get so caught up in making perfect decisions about what sort

of business, or even within a business, decisions like niche that they wouldn't do anything.

You get someone with an astonishing gift to share with a few people or maybe the whole world, and they're not doing anything. They slump back to their job. That was breaking my heart. I knew it didn't have to be so.

When I looked at a lot of us that are doing some form of entrepreneurship full time, what you see in almost everybody you work with are projects. You see they're doing a project for a month, for six months, or something like that. They may be very similar to each other. They may have some differences.

Income projects seem to be what's already out there. I just noticed it and named it. What I found is that when we started talking about that with clients, it totally opened up a door. They were totally willing to try something, like on a Saturday.

There was one guy I was talking to. He was a full-time laborer. He had his own company, a carpenter and whatnot, very heavy labor that he was doing, a lot of sinking fence posts, basements, backyards, and all that kind of stuff. He liked his work but had five children and was also wondering if he could do it all his life.

He thought it would be nice to have some break from the heavy labor of his job. When we got talking about income projects, we had talked before, this guy and I. We're friends. We share pints once in awhile. We talked before and had no particular breakthroughs.

But once I brought up income projects, we got talking about something he's interested in, straw bale homes. I think I probably told you that story before. Do you think it's appropriate to tell that short story right now?

**Tad:** I've shared it a few times actually already in this. It's a great example.

**Alex:** I'm glad you said that. That's an example of how an income project can be a very freeing and can unlock the creative juices that we're good at in the first place that get squashed when we're trying to make some big cranky decision for the rest of our lives.

**Tad:** I'm wondering if you can share other examples of income projects that people have come up with, that were low commitment, or things that we can experiment. I'm wondering of other ones you've seen.

**Alex:** It's a good way of saying it, with the low commitment, partially because it allows a person to try something with almost no risk, and you will learn from it absolutely. What you learn can then make the next decision that much better.

I think the other big reason to talk about, just before I share an example, is that – I don't know how to bring this up without going into the whole big thing. We're vulnerable. People are vulnerable. We're scared in some cases that people won't like us or they won't like what we're offering.

There's a certain amount of stage fright involved in entrepreneurship that goes with it. I don't know if that ever completely goes away. When we feel like that, we can, and I know I did for years hide behind building something perfect, or as close to perfect as I could get it.

I would make these grandiose plans. What started off as an idea would suddenly grow arms and legs, all of these things that I thought should go into it. It was the grandest idea in the world by the time I got finished with it, and completely unwieldy and often impossible to start.

I have a box full of journals full of those sorts of ideas. Sometimes, they work but so often they don't. Ideas in terms of income projects, niche projects are like planting apple seeds. Not every one is going to turn into a tree.

Anyway, to go into a story about low commitment, there was a woman in Wales. Stop me again if you've shared this story already. The single mom?

**Tad:** The straw bale one I think is the only one of yours that I've shared.

**Alex:** She's been an artist all her life, not just an artist. She's really, really good. She's one of these people that everything she touches turns into artwork. She can't make a cookie without it being beautiful and you want to frame it. It's amazing.

I always loved this woman. We knew her when we lived in Ireland but she always wanted to be able to use this talent to make a living and make some kind of contribution to the world. She did it in small little ways here and there.

She made sushi for a local place and whatnot but it was never much of an income. It was just a little bit of money here and there. She always dreamed of being able to do more with it, that feeling we have inside of that there's something great in me trying to get out.

We got talking about income projects. What brought it up was I talked to her after not seeing her for a few years when we moved back to Canada. I said, "What are you doing now?" She's considering taking a course in art therapy.

We talked about it. I asked her how long it was. She has children at home. She was going to do it in the evenings. It was going to take five years to complete this course, an open university course.

I said, “Wow. Are you excited about it?” She said, “I don’t know if I’m excited or not but I really want to do something with my art.” “Do you have any thoughts of what you would work at when you’re done?” “Most of them get employed in the hospital system, which is great, in Britain.”

That’s what she figured she would do. I asked, “What are the hours?” I know one of her most important lifestyle things was her kids and being home, when her kids get home from school at least. Really, when we were talking, I wasn’t trying to dissuade her from it. I was just wondering, it was a big decision and it wasn’t sitting well with me.

We talked for a little while. We ended up coming up with an idea. It only took us half an hour to come up with it. The idea was like the idea she had been waiting for, for years. I don’t mean to have such a buildup to it because it really was a very small, simple, elegant idea.

It really came completely out of her mouth with the right questions. Here’s the thing. We got talking about who, back to your niching. Who do you really feel for these days? The story came out that she fairly recently became a single mom, got divorced, and went through that whole grieving process of divorce.

She ended up finding that she had developed a lot of friendships at the school with other single moms. It started off a practical thing that they could babysit for each other and that kind of thing but then of course, there was the emotional bond there of common experience.

She found that that was great. It was very supportive. She found it helpful for the first few months. Then what happened was she started to find that there was a lot of, at least in this particular group, bitterness, complaining, and staying stuck.

She got to the point where she really just wanted to start a new chapter. She found that it was becoming a negative place to be even though she loved them. That was bothering her.

The second thing, I don’t know what question brought it up, was she said, “It’s amazing how many of them talk about my art and how much they would love to explore their creative sides.” She was finding it was almost a common wish with the women she was with.

Long and short of it is we ended up coming up with this idea of an income project that would cost nothing to try. It was this. I wondered if some of those women would be interested in coming to her house on say Monday mornings, after they had dropped off their children at school and had some free time anyway.

If they came for the morning to her house, she would teach an art project. She started really thinking about that. Then she decided she was going to add something to it. Once you start thinking about niche, then you're thinking about people so you can add stuff to it instead of just thinking about the theme which was art.

She decided she wanted to see if they'd be interested in this whole idea of a new chapter, a new beginning as well. Were they feeling the same as her about the whole bitterness thing? She made this poster for the wall, a tongue in cheek thing, "No bitching aloud," with an arrow through it.

She was going to bring in something inspiring at the first of every session like some quote, some use of video, or something that would be opening feeling to a new chapter, then do the art project, have tea, biscuits, and all that kind of thing.

When we really stopped to work it out, we reckoned that even people, some of them with not very much income, could definitely afford the ten or 12 pounds, whatever it was, Euros now, to come for an art project.

She reckoned, she was living on government assistance at that point which was a tremendous embarrassment for her. She never thought she would be in that position. She worked out that with just Monday mornings with just a handful of people, she could earn the same as she would on the government assistance.

When I said, "What do you think of that idea? How does it compare to the art therapy idea?" She said, "It's way better. This is exactly what I want to do." I thought that is so cool, I'm so glad. We always get this feeling like these things are right in front of us. Often, we're just looking a little bit too grand.

The idea of income projects and your take on the niche projects, I think it's going to set so many people free. I think the people who are listening to your course and taking this on board, trying niche projects will be miles ahead of the people that are in their room all by themselves building a very large project that hasn't been tried for them yet.

That wasn't a short story, was it?

**Tad:** I loved that, it was a great example. Can you share, there are two that come to mind. One is the literary pub crawl. The other one is the triathlete podcast guy.

**Alex:** Sure. The literary pub crawl was a guy, I don't know if it exactly relates to niching or not but it certainly relates to an income project. He wasn't trying to build a career for himself or anything like that, nothing big and heavy. He was just a student and needed to earn some extra dough.

Pretty much the only choice that he felt he had was working at Tim Hortons or something like that. He would have done it. We ended up chatting. Is there something else? I asked him about his interests.

He was very honest with me. He said, "I really only have two interests, pubs." He liked his beer, "and manly authors, like Ernest Hemingway, Hunter S Thompson, the man's man authors like that." Oh right, I get it. "But I can't make money off those interests."

I remembered thinking, "Don't be so sure. This is fun." We come up with this idea together, a literary pub crawl. It was really elegant. I smile from ear to ear when I think about it.

The idea was that he was going to organize a pub crawl. I don't know where to start the story. He was going to charge x amount per head to go on this thing. There were a few aspects to it. Most importantly was when you went into a pub or each pub, he was going to read a passage from one of these amazing authors, just a drop jaw passage that would make you go, "That's amazing!"

You'd listen to that, get this tiny tidbit of appreciation for the author. Then you would be served the author's favorite drink, a mojito in Ernest Hemingway's case, some kind of run daiquiri for Hunter S Thompson, etc., you get the idea.

There was this really fun aspect to it of getting to drink the drink that Hemingway drank. There was all sorts of elegance in terms of the finances around it. He wasn't looking to earn a lot of money, just a little bit more than minimum wage maybe.

It's been a couple years since I've told the story. I can't remember the exact figures but the basic idea is that he called all the pubs ahead of time to set it up, make sure there's room, make sure the bartenders were alert to the drink. He was able to get a discount from the pubs for bringing a group of people in.

He got the discount. Instead of keeping the discount for himself, he passed the discount right on to the people. They were paying, I'm going to say \$20. I

can't remember exactly, to come on this literary pub crawl. But why would they? It was just drinks, unless they were super interested in it.

The way the math worked out was that they ended up getting discounts on their drinks all along the way, and they stopped at quite a few places. They pretty much paid for their literary pub crawl fee. He more or less got his fee from the discount from the bars.

I thought that was a really fun idea. We were talking about wounds and stuff like that. A lot of businesses are based on that sorts of things, mine too but every once in awhile, you encounter one of these fun, light ideas. That was definitely his.

**Tad:** Nice. The triathlete podcast one?

**Alex:** It's been a couple of years since I've told that story too. The idea, I'm trying to get my facts straight, he had a corporate job I think. He got laid off. He was trying to figure out what he wanted to do, what he could do.

Often, we're not honest with ourselves I think about what we really want to do. We just think, "Okay, if I have to work, this is the kind of area I would like to do in." Sometimes, it's really helpful to go to a coffee shop, pub, or sit by the beach and say, "Let's be honest. If I didn't have to work, what would I be doing?"

Often, there are gems in that. Don't be so sure, maybe there is a way you can make income from that. That reminds me of another story of a guy going through the Adirondacks for a couple of months.

Anyway, this guy got laid off. All he really wanted to do was train to be a triathlete. He loved it. He loved triathlons. I have some family members into that sort of things, and friends. Those people are passionate when they get into that. It's a lot of work.

Sometimes, it becomes a problem in the sense that if they have families. It becomes a third job to do it well. He thought, "I'd love to be just doing that." I can't remember the middle bit but basically what happened in the end is that he set up a business for himself online, virtually, basically being a resource for triathletes.

He loved to read triathlon magazines. He devoured material online. He realized he put a lot of time and effort into that. He wondered if he brought a lot of that material, even filtered a lot of that material and brought it to one place online, would it be something that people wanted.

He ended up creating a membership site. I think it was \$17 a month he was charging for that. He just kept adding stuff to it, which when you have your niche, then you realize what they need and want. You can add different things that you wouldn't think of to that because of the niche.

He added logs where you could actively log all your details for your exercises. It would spit you back graphs of your progress. I thought this was the best bit, that he did podcasts. That was one of the ways he promoted himself. He did them from the bike of all things. I thought that was brilliant.

He's probably breathing a bit hard, sweating over his microphone but triathletes are used to that. They don't mind that. It would be different if I was doing it. It would just be creepy. I thought that was awesome.

I think there's such a lesson in that for all of us, including me. This is a real evolution, even though this is my focus. It focuses me to be more and more honest every few months about what do I really want to do, what do I really, really want to do.

It's such a great place to start even the niching question because picking niches is one thing. If I just said I didn't have to work, I'd probably want to socialize at some point, or want to interact with people, even secondhand, I'd want to read their books or hear their music or something.

We interact with each other even if we're not together socially. The ways that we like to interact with other people seems to me a really good guise as to maybe how we could set up our business.

What I was leading to there was the coffee shop thing, which you've talked about. If I didn't have to work, if I went to a coffee shop, what kind of a coffee shop would I like? What kind of people are in there? If I ended up locked in there for hours, what would I love to be talking about?

I can answer that easily. I think most people can. How about is it possible then to build a business based on interacting with the people in the way that you want to interact with them, together in a group or whatever that looks like, out camping, hiking?

What are the topics? Who are they? What kind of personalities? What do they do? That's a really good start to the niching discussion. I think it's very guiding.

**Tad:**

I agree. You had mentioned something about the Adirondacks?

**Alex:** I just met this guy in the Adirondacks. I'm not a happy backpacker. I just don't like it but my son loves it. Three dads and a whole bunch of kids, we all ended up in the middle of bear infested Adirondacks. It's a beautiful place but I didn't sleep a wink.

I met this guy who was hiking the Adirondacks. He was an engineer who left his job on purpose for months. He had spent, I think it was two months or close to that just doing the Appalachian Trail and loving it. He was disappointed when we met him because he only had a few weeks left before he had to go back to work.

Of course we ended up in a big discussion because I'm so interested in this kind of stuff. You're doing this, this is unusual. It's very unusual for an engineer to take time off work and hike for two or three solid months. He was the coolest guy, quiet but a really nice personality.

I thought there's got to be a way for that guy to earn money doing that. We didn't come up with a totally crystal clear idea but I bet you if we put that in front of your group now with all the creativity in it, that you would probably come up with 40 or 50 possible ideas of how that guy could share that experience.

I even talked about, "Would you be willing to carry a satellite phone? Would you enjoy sharing bits from the road?" He said, "Yeah, that would be great fun." I don't know if anybody would want that exactly but there's got to be a way to do it.

It comes back to the whole idea of setting up a business based on what we'd be doing if we didn't work. I definitely have more stories, some you may not even more so if you just want me to pull out a story or two –

**Tad:** Yeah, just keep going.

**Alex:** There's a woman that I'm working with right now. The last couple stories, I haven't really asked their permission if I could share them but I don't see any reason why they wouldn't. I think they would be very happy about the publicity.

I'm working with a woman at the moment. If the story appeals to you, you can get in touch with me and I can get you her name and details. This story was surrounding her daughter. Her daughter had a hard time in school. They went to the Waldorf school. It was definitely an alternative school, very fit for an artistic, creative child like this.

Nevertheless, this group class environment wasn't the best for her. She made it through into grade seven or eight and decided that she can't do it anymore. They decided to consider the whole homeschooling thing. I wasn't really aware of homeschooling. I wasn't aware of these details about it.

For a lot of people, it's basically taking the same curriculum from the school and doing it at home but they decided to pioneer something. It took a lot of bravery because they took a lot of heat and questions from other family members, from other people that said, "You're messing up her future."

They decided to design their own education for her. Basically, it came down to the daughter. She's totally a mature, ambitious, wonderful, curious person, beautiful person. What would you do? What would you like to do?

We're asking the same questions as entrepreneurs, as grownups. It's a wise question, "What would you like to do?" She ended up designing her own education based on what she was passionate about at the time and trusting that her own passions and heart would lead her.

They had a really hard time making these decisions but they finally got their heads around them. It took a lot of pressure. They weren't even sure they were going to make it through but they almost had to. The education she designed, this girl, for herself for the year is like a dream.

She was working in a horse barn two or three mornings a week doing all the work around the barn and getting free lessons, and learning all about the business of horses, loved it. She pursued her own art and creativity in her own time. She started exploring writing, illustrating fantasy stories, storyboard type things.

She explored a bunch of different things. She was very interested in massage. She was interested in anatomy, a few similar things like that. Between herself and her mother, they found great mentors. She was able to visit and chat with a doctor for awhile who helped her get her head around the chambers of the heart and all the anatomy.

She came home and illustrated notebooks of this stuff, none of it with any particular intent. Just as you're listening to this, you think a child designing their own pass forward based on their passions has got to be a good thing. It just has to be. This is intuitively.

She did all of this. She didn't care for reading. She didn't care for math. In the first year, she did very little of either so there was none of this usual pressure.

By the second year, through a weird twist of events, basically a friend was reading a book that she thought interesting, she ended up reading the book.

Once she got started, she couldn't stop. She read the whole series, then another series, and another series. She was reading all the time. This kind of thing can come up and take its place in the natural timing of life.

Math, she discovered that though she didn't like math when it's theoretical, she really took to math when it came to the business of a horse farm for instance. She started teaching herself business math. The whole story is a big success.

She's two years into it now. Here's where we're coming to the story. Her mother and her have gone through so much pressure, tears, insecurity, joy, and success with this journey that the two of them have taken that almost nobody knows about. They want to know if anyone wants to hear about it.

They want to know if anybody else is in the positions where they're feeling alone and they want to design maybe something for themselves. They're stuck because the world doesn't want them to. It's very current. We're just talking about it now. I'm just about to send out an email to my list, introducing people to this woman.

It's so simple and elegant, and costs nothing in terms of talking business now and income projects in the sense that she's just going to be on the phone. If you want to have a free conversation I think we talked about for 20 minutes or something like that just to see if she has something that would be helpful to that other parent.

If so, you can book a session. It costs x amount of money. You can talk to her and perhaps the daughter, almost a counseling style thing from a person that's been there and walked that road. I can't remember why I started that story, Tad. I just find it very moving.

I intuitively feel like there are people out there in that position that go, "Oh, I didn't think of it. I didn't know I could design my own education for my child." I think she's going to make some waves.

**Tad:**

Really, that says for me how often we figure something out in our life. We experiment, we try, and we get good at something. We develop some skills. Yet how seldom people go that next step of thinking other people might actually be interested in knowing that.

Or it's easy to assume, just the other day I went to do a meeting with the group called See Returns, carbon community. They go into homes and do energy audits and retrofits. I sometimes still feel like, "What do I have to say?"

But I was sitting there, "Oh, I know a lot." It reminded me, they were sharing their own marketing. I could see the blunders they were doing. It's very easy to discount what we know and to discount the experiences we've had.

There might be people who would be so grateful to learn it.

**Alex:** I think so. That's the beauty, Tad, of income or niche projects is a person can try it out. I think an ideal income or niche project, you might disagree with me on this, I don't know. I often find an ideal at least in theory is once we have an idea, can we float it out within a couple of days in such a way that we can get some feedback?

For instance, let's just write something about it or do an interview. Let's just float it out on Facebook, or find people with a lot of friends and Facebook and see if they'll float it out for us, just to see what the reaction is. I didn't do that my first years. I would always hold back until later.

It would take me forever to do this. I find that people who do that are starting interacting and engaging around this topic with people right from the very start. They often do an easier and better job with their business journey that way I think.

**Tad:** Yeah. That's something I talked about in the intro, one of the blunders of people with their niches. They try to do it on their own. They don't have any conversations with people. I think the idea of floating is really important.

If you hone in on a niche, it's really clear, you get good grades of, "Yes, that's a good niche," and you feel really excited about working with that niche around their problem, and you come up with a project, you're really excited but you float it out.

This is something I've been noticing. If the response isn't a super enthusiastic, "Wow, how do I find out more information about that?" it's probably not ready.

**Alex:** It needs tweaking.

**Tad:** One of my fun projects this summer, it could be an income project but I've just chosen to give the money to the artist is doing a bunch of secret streetcar concerts. We have a trolley in Edmonton.

**Alex:** I saw some pictures of that on Facebook. It looked awesome.

**Tad:** It's been so great. This trolley goes across a high level bridge. It's 150 feet above the river. It's the highest river crossing of any streetcar in the world. It's a 100 year old streetcar and a 100 year old bridge. The streetcar took 35,000 hours of volunteer time to restore it. It's amazing.

We've been renting it out. We'll take the streetcar to the middle of the bridge. It stops in the middle of the bridge, over the Edmonton River Valley at sunset, and there's a concert on it. We charge \$20 a person. The streetcar costs about \$300. The rest of the money goes to the musician.

I could make money on it if I charged a little bit more. I've been happy just to let the artist have all the money but what's interested in terms of a case study of a project is I've been asking people, "What are you doing for fun this summer?"

People ask me back. I mention the streetcar thing and say I'm doing a secret streetcar projects. Not everybody, but so many people's eyes widen.

**Alex:** It has that instant thing.

**Tad:** "How do I get on the list? How do I find out about it?" For me, if you're not getting that kind of a response where they're actually actively asking to be on the list or saying, "I have a friend who this would be perfect for," if you're not getting that, it probably needs to be tweaked. It probably could be made to be hotter, more engaging, more fun, more simple, or more something.

**Alex:** That's true, or a slight change in the who, maybe the same idea to a slightly different who.

**Tad:** Yeah, exactly. Ultimately, it seems to start with the who in terms of really honing in on that which is why if you have that who clear, the project almost inherently are going to be a lot more attractive. Still, it's good to float it out and see what the response is.

If you're not getting that popping response, it's good to just pause and be like, either we need to tweak the who. Maybe it's too broad and vague or tweak the project itself.

**Alex:** That makes so much sense.

**Tad:** Any other stories or examples come to mind of projects?

**Alex:**

There's a guy I've been working with recently. I love this. I never considered this niche before. He's a guy that was in the corporate environment all his life, absolutely went through the overwork, burnout of that environment, and ended up moving into a business, coaching, corporate coaching if you will.

He excelled at that because he's great at what he does all the time but he really started thinking about a couple of things. One is his lifestyle and dreams like being able to walk his daughter to school, the simplest things that become so precious when you don't have them, and a who, a very particular who.

His who is – get this for close and defined – the person in a corporate environment who has been promoted to a leadership position, and they're in their first two years of it basically. I couldn't even relate to that niche myself, until he really started talking about.

Then I got really excited about it right along with him because there are a couple of very set things that go on for a lot of the people in that position. They've often been promoted from non-management positions. They were just good at what they did.

Suddenly, now they're managing people doing that thing, which is a whole different thing altogether. Maybe in fact they shouldn't be or they would chose otherwise, but many of them really do like it and want to navigate these brand new waters of working with people.

That alone sounds very intriguing. He had clearly five or six really solid ideas of how we could help these people. They had one serious common problem. That was in the first couple years especially, they felt too shy to go to their boss or superiors to ask for help if they were struggling because they were scared it would look like a sign of weakness.

“Maybe he wasn't the right guy for the job.” Because of that, they don't necessarily often receive help from within the corporation or they just get the cookie cutter corporate stuff, which is not always helpful.

This guy is a third party. He's helping these people but even more than that, that's just the tip of the iceberg because the bigger part of the iceberg is the fact that he's focusing very much so at least in his wording, he's filtering the kinds of things he talks about on the people who are the new leaders, the new corporate leaders, people who think differently, people who are sometimes of a younger generation. They're not the old guard anymore.

The corporate world has a lot to answer for and that kind of thing but that doesn't mean everyone within it thinks that way. He started talking about all

of the amazing new ideas and new ways of thinking that are in a lot of these organizations.

It's not necessarily getting fueled or nourished, the idea of having people together in group classes and so on that are all in the same position so they can almost nourish each other and give each other the courage to make braver decisions for the world.

It's an amazing project all the way around. Steve Gazard is his name. I thought that was a really cool niche. Honestly, I don't think I've ever worked with anyone that had such a defined, clear niche. It does make it so easy.

I've never been that fortunate. I've never been able to define my niche as clearly as that. I just got to get it enough that I can make things work. I thought that was a good story.

**Tad:** Anything else come up for you? I have a couple I remember.

**Alex:** Got one you're thinking of?

**Tad:** The life coach with the hiking.

**Alex:** Yeah, that's fun. What would you call that, a niche project or an income? It doesn't matter. He is a life coach in Colorado, a wonderful guy. He hosted a workshop that I was traveling around teaching workshops. He hosted me there in Colorado, a lovely man, a life coach.

He was feeling a bit bored I guess with the work. Bored isn't quite the right word but stuck, like something needs to shift. Really, he was in a similar boat as myself in the reiki clinic. I think when it really came down to it lifestyle wise, where would you rather be instead of in your office talking on the phone, even though you love your work and your clients.

He said, "I'd be out in those mountains." He looked wistful when he talked about it. I remember saying, "I wonder if it's a dumb idea or not. I wonder if anybody would like to have their life coaching session with you out on the mountain or hiking on the mountain.

He said, "I never thought of it." Bless his heart, probably the next call he got from the client he works with, he said, "Here's this funny idea for you, what would you think of the idea of going up the mountain and having our session that way?" The guy was thrilled.

They hiked this mountain. When they were done, the client said, "That was the best session I have ever had in my life and by far the best session with you

as well. Can we do this more often?" Of course they did. He started mentioning it more and more.

You know what else he did? This is a fun story. John Foster is his name. He does also, started from a similar kind of idea, moto-clarity he calls it. He does these motorcycle trips in the summertime. I can't remember how long they are.

They go from place to place in a convoy of motorcycles, all people that enjoy that, and combined with life evolution type things. He would obviously explain it much better than me but he gives people questions and things to think about, exercises perhaps to be doing, thinking about, meditating on while they're driving from one place to the next.

Then when they stop for lunch or something, they have a little chat, "What did you think of that?" It's this inner evolving type of conversation. It's not just about the bikes anymore. I thought it was such a brilliant idea, so smart, blending a lifestyle interest with something we're quite used to, which is life coaching or something like that, for at least those of us in the business.

People can blend that. People can blend something like life coaching with camping, parenting with kayaking trips. You're naturally onto something interesting. It's taking the lifestyle interest that you have already and blending it with the who's that you like and float it out, and see what happens.

**Tad:** That's so great. I love that as a niche project.

**Alex:** It doesn't have to be his fulltime income. As a matter of fact, maybe if it pays, he's thrilled if he has several weeks on the bike doing his favorite thing but I expect he probably does earn money from it.

**Tad:** It's funny because he gets to be on the bike and gets that quality of life. I imagine the people who want to be a part of this, that's what they want to be doing too. They get to be on the bike. They get an excuse to be around those kinds of people.

I'd love it if you would talk a little about your notion of people paying for experiences.

**Alex:** I would love to. I'm not money expert, that's for sure. It's not necessarily my strength, helping people with it. But I've come to the conclusion at least for myself and my clients that there are four ways that a person can get money that I can think of.

One is someone gives us, government, patron, spouse, or even past investments, we're giving it to ourselves. Number two is we get a job, which in the countries we're in is a free choice and a form of self-employment if you will. I'm agreeing to be here for x amount of hours and do this. You're agreeing to pay me every Friday.

The third way, and this isn't hierarchy. These are all equal, whatever you can do and want to do. The third way is one form of self employment and that is to sell products or services. Obviously, selling soap, toothbrushes, really cool homemade candies, but also things like life coaching sessions, massage sessions, or workshops and so on.

The fourth way overlaps with the third but is a completely opposite way of thinking about things. The fourth way is to design experiences for people. That experience could take the form of an hour long massage but when people that I work with start thinking about the idea of I'm not just selling a massage, I'm not just doing a massage, I'm creatively designing experiences for people.

Suddenly, something astonishing happens almost always, instantly, within three or four minutes. They start getting really creative. They start thinking about the whole experience. This person is here. They start thinking about the room. They start thinking about the music.

For one woman, it led to a whole other income for her. That was after starting to talk about the experience of giving a massage. She was a massage therapist. When we got talking about that, we ended up talking about favorite who's as part of the discussion.

She absolutely loved brand new moms, moms about to be and moms that have just become if you will. She loved working with them. She admitted that it was because it was very easy to be a hero with them. They were quite stressed out and tired.

A normal massage, she's still a hero but she started thinking about designing experiences for them. It started to get her thinking outside past the confines of the room that they were in. She started thinking about their lives while they were at home.

One idea that came out of it was she started thinking of the idea of one minute or less, even 30 second meditations for when a new mom is tired, stressed, and hitting the roof, these short little audios.

She started to get really creative about all these little simple, elegant ways she could improve, she might be able to improve the lives of these new moms even outside her clinic. She started developing these ideas.

Where was I going with that? I can't remember. I got off on a tangent.

**Tad:** To me, what that says is if we think about the journey of the person that we're working with on. There's the journey of the single mom. She's island a. She's exhausted, overwhelmed, snapping at her kids. She doesn't want to be.

Island b is she's feeling rested, relaxed, peaceful, pampered, craving to be taken care of because she's taking care of everyone else maybe. If we think about that island b, she's really craving to be taken care of, to be pampered, to be relaxed, then the question is how could we create that.

How do we not just offer her the tools but how do we create the experience of her being pampered, build everything around how she wants that to feel, like what would island b be like for her and how can we create that in the experience of working with us.

If we do that, if we create that experience of being so taken care of and pampered, you better believe she is going to want to be coming back but it also gives so many more ideas for the types of projects that we might do.

If we're going to do a retreat with being pampered in mind, could we bring in a masseuse?

**Alex:** There you go, it suddenly unlocks all the creative ideas around that.

**Tad:** It's a different massage. It might be a retreat for young dudes. It might be about adventure. It might be about pushing it, rock climbing, that extreme stuff but it might be very different. It's very hard to get creative when we have no idea who it's for.

If it's just, "Oh, I want to do this energy healing retreat for everybody," then it's all about the boat, all about energy healing. It's hard to get creative and hard to come up with really neat things.

**Alex:** It is and it's harder to sell often, certainly not as stand-out-y. Often, I think even more importantly than that, we're not as engaged enthusiastically as we would like to be. When I set up my reiki clinic, I didn't know I was doing it incorrectly at the time but I set up a reiki clinic the same way my teacher and every other reiki person in the whole world sets up a reiki clinic.

It was cookie cutter. I didn't even think otherwise. But to really start thinking about the experiences, designing something new and fresh, based on what you care about, don't even get me started. I love that whole subject. Designing experiences for people, I think that's where it's at.

I do think that one curious thing I've noticed with those of us that are shy about selling, about marketing, about asking for money for things, it's easier for most people who feel like that to tell people about an experience they've designed, that they're opening the doors to than it is to tell people about a service they're offering.

I don't know why that is but I can feel it in my body that there feels like a difference. Maybe because we've actually focused more on the other people in the experience scenario, I don't know but it tends to free people up a little more. I notice they get bolder about sharing what they have coming up.

**Tad:** That's true. Thinking about the difference if I were to say, "Hey, I'm hosting a house concert," versus, "Hey, I'm hosting a streetcar show," they're excited about the streetcar show because it's unique. It's different. It's a whole experience to be on the bridge at sunset over the river valley listening to a concert. It's much easier.

Part of it is really putting some thought and care into how we make this such a cool thing that we're excited to share it. I could have a house concert. I might share, "It's going to be house concert but it's an old timey dress up theme, bow ties, suspenders, flapper dresses."

Suddenly, people are more excited about it because it feels like an event. It feels like a happening. It feels like a whole experience. It doesn't take a lot. You don't have to do a ton. It doesn't take 100 things. It might just take a couple things.

I think the source of those things that can make our niche projects really unique and different comes from focusing on who is this group, what is it we could do it make it extraordinary, special, and the kind of thing they'd want to tell everyone about and have it as a cool thing to share.

**Alex:** It often stems out of the quirky stuff that the entrepreneur is interested in, in the first place and didn't think maybe it had a place in the business. Usually, it's leave it out at your peril, bring those quirks in.

**Tad:** With niche projects, somebody might just say, "I just do energy work." Great. Level two, "I'm going to do a workshop on energy work." Cool. Another one might be, they think of a particular niche, "I really like to work with young

men around becoming men, going from being boys to men.” Cool, that’s great.

Still, I feel like you have a really clear journey you’re taking people on. You have this boat. You’re taking them from island a to island b. What I love about your work so much and what I think you’re so brilliant at is helping people really design that boat itself so that the boat is something exciting.

Then those young men or whoever the target market is would see that boat and be like, “Oh my goodness, that’s my boat. I totally want to be on that boat,” which is what makes the marketing so much easier because there’s a resonance.

I don’t think I’ve mentioned it in this course or even to you, this idea that there are four different levels of marketing. The first is you can be better than other people. That’s something, where you demonstrably are producing results faster, more easily.

**Alex:** You’re just plain better.

**Tad:** That’s tricky because it’s sometimes qualitative. It’s hard to measure. Then somebody else might just get better than you. The other one is first. You can be the first one in the market to do something. There’s a whole bunch of marketing theory around positioning, books by Al Reese, Jack Trout about positioning and branding, about the advantages of being first. There’s that.

Third is just being different. You’re just unique. You’re not trying to even compare yourself to anyone. You’re just saying what you offer is a different thing. It’s unique. If you’re into this, if it’s a fit, you go here.

But there’s a fourth level of resonance where you walk into a coffee shop and it grabs you. There’s something about it, I love this particular coffee shop.

**Alex:** I feel so at home here.

**Tad:** These are my people. When we’re thinking about the niche projects, it’s not just about trying to make it better or even trying to be the first one out there. Making it different is good but really, how do you make it resonate? How do you design and paint your boat, have the right kind of sails, and everyone is wearing the certain clothing or whatever on the boat?

Then people are like, “Can I live on this boat now? Can I be on this forever?”

**Alex:** That is so true. The way it’s set up in the first place, the structure of it, the structure of the business, are you doing life coaching sessions from a

telephone or on a mountain? Then the personality and individuality you're bringing to it which is another story about Mark Volmer, which I need to try to get in here at some point.

**Tad:** I might be having him do a bonus call too. I've been working with him trying to create one. I'd love it if you would share his story.

**Alex:** That would be great. I've really, really enjoyed working with him. I think that he has a lot to share, both in actually what he's sharing in his business but in his take and viewpoint in business design. He's got a really refreshing way of seeing it.

Acupuncture school and all that sort of thing but he found himself focusing on one topic, even though it's broad and has many different arms and legs. The one topic is that when people come out of holistic schools of some variety, whatever they took, just like me with the reike, there's very much a tendency because we don't necessarily know any different at that point, to make it like everybody else's massage clinic and set up your acupuncture clinic just like that.

I won't even get into it now but you often tell the story of the dentist. It's a fitting story of how you can recreate what that looks like. Mark decided to really focus and find out a lot about, and he's awesome at it, helping people especially when they're first starting out but at any time.

Maybe they've grown a bit tired in their practice, finding out what's amazing about you. What is amazing about you as an individual? You do some kind of healing modality. Way underneath that, much bigger than that, you have something healing about you. What is that?

Let's bring that. Let's touch that. Let's decide that your personality and who you are, as authentic as you can be is possibly the biggest healing gift that you have. Just by being yourself, you will free people to do all sorts of things in their lives.

Acupuncture then becomes almost the excuse to get together. He talks to people about that. He has a brilliant series of questions that are great to help navigate people. It's not something to figure out all at once. No one figures out themselves all at once, but just being able to unlock some doors and windows, and let some personality out, and some light in.

He's going to wonders in holistic community, that guy. I just thought that was another great example of a niche project. It starts with a niche. What can we

do? We have a lot more to talk about, Mark and I. He has amazing plans. We lost touch when I was traveling but watch that guy.

**Tad:** It's interesting for the niche project piece, he created this workshop around how to, I think it was called "Your Hidden Gems." His Web site is [HiddenGemHealing.com](http://HiddenGemHealing.com) for those of you who want to check it out.

Have you seen his new Web site? It's so beautiful.

**Alex:** No, I saw all the text and content for it but I haven't seen it since it was finished.

**Tad:** It made me jealous. He had this notion of this particular need of holistic practitioners who aren't bringing their authenticity into it as much as they could. He thought, "Why don't I just try doing a workshop?" He just led a little workshop as an experiment. He made some money. People loved it. They raved about it, so simple, so easy.

**Alex:** Then he did another one and another one, got really good at it and is leading into a longer five week thing where it gets into not just the personality but almost the energy of the person and what about their energy is really strong, and what can we bring to the fore in the healing practice, great stuff.

**Tad:** Are there any other stories or examples you can think of, of cool niche projects or things that people have come up with?

**Alex:** It's not exactly a story but it's something I think about a lot. I know you and I have had conversations about this. I don't exactly know where it's going but it just comes up a lot. That's the idea of when we are truly struggling coming up with a niche project or settling on a niche, or we really become a little bit clearer about the personality of people that we would like to work with but not so clear on definitions. They're not so clear as truckers, dentists, or moms or something.

We basically have a personality in mind. I do think that there is an angle that can be tried there in terms of exploring the niche in a real practical, feeling it out kind of way. That is to borrow other people's niches. It can work.

That has been a lot of what I've done as a matter of fact. I have this workshop that I started three years ago about finding your calling in life. I have a very broad idea of the personality of people that would be interested in that. They're going to be creative people. They're going to have a bent towards independence, self employment possibly.

They probably like to travel. There's a personality but there was no clear definitions. With your help, at the time, you know the story, I found I was able to get introduced to other people's niches like yours so the people in your community, that follow your work seemed like a very good fit for what I was doing.

You talked about me and we ended up doing some workshops. For the person that is either really stuck or just cannot come up with something of a more clearly defined niche, I do think you can wander towards this on the road by borrowing other people's niches and seeing if it works.

For instance, that same workshop that you helped me promote around Canada, turns out it also very much applies to people that work with vibrant single moms, who also are adventurous about their lives and often very interested in self employment and so on.

There are people like me that can almost experiment by glomming onto other people's niches. I wanted to throw that out there as at least a discussion topic for people to think about it.

**Tad:**

What I like about it is sometimes you can't articulate. You have a feeling about it. You might see somebody else out there who is already doing something, who is reaching the kind of people you'd like to reach. You have that intuitive sense, "Their people would probably like my stuff. I don't even know why. I can't articulate it."

That is something to explore and to sit with, "What is it about their people? What is it about them that attracts these people?" I think that can be a great doorway into what is my niche, just to look at in a theoretical way, but also in a very practical way, it could be like, "These are the kind of people I'd like to work with. Can I do a partnership with them? Can I work with them?"

**Alex:**

For instance, I'm making this up off the top of my head, but let's say some people start with a niche, this mom designing education for her daughter. That whole idea came out of a niche. The niche is clear but other people start with a gift, a skill, or an interest.

Let's say someone has been through a depression in their lives. It's been a big deal. They've found ways. Long story short, they have a workshop or something around depression. That's the kind of thing that they could look around to people like you and me, and all kinds of people that have communities and work with people, and say, "I have this thing on depression. I'm wondering if any of your people would be interested in this, or is it something you can float out?"

I'm thinking one way to decide who might float something out for you is thinking about it the opposite way, about who would you promote. Who's stuff out there, what kind of stuff appeals to you so you would share it on Facebook, or that you would promote them?

Then chances are it probably might be reciprocal. At least you're on the kind of people you might try out. I've been thinking of this off the top of my head I have to admit. I find it an intriguing topic.

**Tad:** Yes. To me, as a minimum, that can lead to potentially a niche project. That can be a niche project where you're not ready to do a workshop, you're not ready to lead an experience but you know somebody else who is. They're the type of people you'd like to work with.

You could be bringing them in. You could be hosting somebody else's workshop and make money off that. You can still get paid if somebody wants to host me and bring me into their community. We're happy to pay them for that.

**Alex:** That's very true. I love the stories. I love the opportunities that I've had to now after a few years have seen a lot of these stories and have a lot better sense of what works more easily for people. Definitely, the lifestyle, even figuring out the next chapter of what you would like your lifestyle to be like, I think that leads to so many points of clarity around niche and how you structure your business.

I think the lifestyle is a real salient point. I think the designing experiences for people is a really salient point in this whole discussion. You told me some stories of some of the things that people are working on in your community. I love the stories. They're great.

Long story short is I'm glad to be here discussing them with everybody. I hope it's helpful.

**Tad:** As we move to wrapping up, I'm wondering if there are any other things. I think for most people, they think of service providers, life coach, holistic practitioner, permaculture types.

There can be a workshop is something I can do or there can be a talk. That can be the obvious thing. I'm wondering if there are any other types of projects that you could name that you've seen people do, that aren't the typical just workshops or talks.

**Alex:** Now you're really testing me. It does seem like I attract a lot of would-be speakers, people that want to communicate in that way. The first idea that's

coming to me is not my story at all but yours. I don't know if you've shared it already but the story of the dog walking woman, going around to the health food stores and all that kind of stuff. How did that go? Is it ringing any bells with you?

**Tad:** No.

**Alex:** I'll paraphrase and maybe do a bad job. The basic idea was –

**Tad:** Oh yeah, in New York.

**Alex:** Wasn't it the people that were new to town? She would show them where to source different organic things.

**Tad:** It was this woman who was really passionate. It was in New York. I did a workshop there, which was a bit of a disaster but I got this story out of it. She was really passionate about organic food and people knowing if stuff is genetically modified and all that.

She was passionate about that. She loves being outdoors. She didn't want to be indoors as a lifestyle piece. She also wanted to spend more time with her dog. She really loved her dog.

This idea came to me, "What if you did walking tours where you could have your dog and walk people around Manhattan, Brooklyn, or wherever, and take them on tours of grocery stores?"

There could be so many different things. It could be a gluten free tour of Manhattan or of certain boroughs, certain neighborhoods. You walk people around, take them into different holistic clinics or grocery stores, and really introduce them, and walk them through the store and point out, "Here's what's real. Here's what's not."

She so lit up. I don't know if she ever did it but her eyes lit up. I really agree with you. I think what stops people sometimes is they get a cool idea. Then they immediately start building on it and think, "That would have to turn into this whole thing. I'd need all these systems."

Slow down.

**Alex:** I need the Web site, I need this, that, and the other thing. Then it's unwieldy.

**Tad:** If a niche project is a real hot idea, if you have a real good niche, you've really thought about how to make it cool and interesting, these are things that

are not too hard to get a response on, like the streetcar shows. They fill up so fast.

When I did a workshop called the Hot Box where I did this whole day long workshop, those filled up really quickly, probably because the numbers are small but also because it was a really particular kind of experience.

It can be easy to over complicate this. It can be easy to turn a niche project into a whole new business versus having a little thing to try to test out, and then to build on if you get a good response.

**Alex:** This is really making me think of an interesting question, off the top of my head again but I'm really enjoying the discussion. It makes me think that one valuable place to start an exploration of niche might be where would you like to be? Where would you most like to be?

I love to be in the mountains, I'd love to be in a coffee shop, I'd love to be at home. Those sorts of answers, I'd like to be travelling, then lead to ideas about what an income could be structured like, a group meeting in a coffee shop, or this dog walking type scenario around New York.

If you're home by yourself, maybe you're interacting with people online. The where would you like to be, and if you didn't have to work, who would you like to interact with and hang out with? I can't help that that would be a pretty good start.

**Tad:** That makes me think of the story of a condo realtor in Seattle who loved the cocktail lounges.

**Alex:** I love that story. Tell that.

**Tad:** So, there was this condo realtor in Seattle. And he loved hanging out at cocktail lounges. Just loved the scene. Especially this particular one. So when he meet people and they wanted to talk about their condo quandries and he didn't have time he'd say, "Tell you what, why don't you visit me this Tuesday night at this cocktail lounge from 5-9pm. You'll love it and it's nice and quiet on a Tuesday night. We'll have drinks and talk shop." So there he was, hanging out at his favorite cocktail lounge where he knows everybody, and potential clients would come and ask him questions.

He would be so generous with his information, go over papers with them, and help them understand it. He had apparently a 70% conversion ratio of people who became clients because he'd give them so much they felt like they wanted to give back.

Also, they'd build this relationship and trust with him. When it gets to the point where there are all these logistics and details to handle that we don't know how to handle, who are we going to go to? Of course our friend who bought us a cocktail and hung out with us.

It didn't make him any money immediately but totally fit his lifestyle, was really fun, and got his tons of business.

**Alex:** I expect that may have been the only marketing he needed to do at some point.

**Tad:** What a fun thing. Think about how much easier that might be to promote. You meet somebody at a party, they have questions. "I don't know if I want to do it here at the party. Let's talk about it in a bit but you should come visit me at this cocktail place. You'd love it. It's fabulous."

It's a whole experience again that you're inviting people into. "I'm going to talk to a condo guy at a cocktail lounge," hilarious.

**Alex:** That's true, and a lot less intimidating possibly than, "Come to my office Tuesday afternoon and we'll have a chat."

**Tad:** Right, "Where I'll try to close you hard."

**Alex:** Yeah, there would be the fear of that.

**Tad:** It would be interesting to think about the environment you want to work in. Also, necessarily then that helps filter people because your ideal clients would also probably be clients who would love to be in that environment with you, or would love to know that you were in that environment.

Maybe you're a life coach and you just work out of a coffee shop, and you do all your sessions while you're sitting there.

**Alex:** Why not? Going back full circle to the first of our discussion is you don't have to make that one decision for the rest of your life. It can just be a trial thing so on Tuesday mornings, you're going to try a coffee shop, see if it works, see if you like it, see if other people like it.

You can try it out at no cost, throwing it out on Facebook or to an email list, or just telling all your friends.

**Tad:** Totally true. Let's wrap it up. If people want to reach you, work with you, or are curious to learn more about you, your Web site is [BigDreamProgram.com](http://BigDreamProgram.com). I'm curious what you have coming up or how people could work with you, or how they can get your support?

**Alex:** These are my favorite topics. I expect all the people who are listening to this are playing with entrepreneurship, and probably underneath all of that, even under entrepreneurship, they're just independent spirits. They're the kind of people that I certainly love to talk to.

I would suggest, I have such a variety of things on the go in terms of ecourses that are available right now as well as free stuff and videos, there's quite a bit on my Facebook page, Big Dream Program Facebook page. Go to the Web site and drop me an email. Tell me what you're interested in or what's up with you and I will totally point you in the right direction.

That would probably be easier than trying to list stuff right now. I'm doing a lot of online stuff right now which I love. It's very accessible for people of course. I also love to travel. You helped me figure that one out. It's almost a niche in of itself.

I just wanted to see the Rockies with my kids. My wife doesn't care for road trips so much. She gets carsick and grumpy. I said, "How about I go?" So the kids and I travelled across Canada and back again to the other coast, and taught workshops along the way.

It was the experience of a lifetime. I was leading to a point. I did it by borrowing if you will or by being introduced to other people's niches, people like yourself. It was supposed to be a great wrap up point and I lost it. Oh well.

**Tad:** Skype kicked me off.

**Alex:** That reminds me I was being interviewed for a radio show at some point. It was in an university radio station. It was in a cave somewhere in the middle of Unionville. It was just myself and the person interviewing me.

She asked me this question. I was just starting to answer. She signaled that she had to leave the room and let somebody into the studio. I was left to answer the question all by myself in a dark room staring at a cement wall, and I completely blanked. I couldn't even think of what it was that I was trying to say. She had to come back and rescue me. It was similar to that experience.

**Tad:** Thank you so much for joining, Alex. Everyone, I so recommend checking out Alex and his coaching. He does such a brilliant job at helping people weave in all their quirks, gifts, strengths, and lifestyle choices into reshaping the boat to be something that is inherently and authentically attractive to the kind of people you would most want to work with.

The flip side of the coin of doing this niche work, this niche work is in some ways the yang side of all this where we pick a target, focus, go out. Alex has a lot more of the yin of figuring out what we want, picking that space so we can be attractive to people.

His stuff is so brilliant. I try to weave in pieces of it but the process he can take you through, especially on the one-on-one coaching that he does over six weeks is pretty extraordinary. He and I have done a bit of work together where he was helping me. It was really affirming and wonderful. I can't recommend it highly enough.

Thank you so much for joining us. We'll be in touch. I'll email you audio and transcript of this.

**Alex:** Thanks everybody.