



Crystal Clear

Five Simple & Proven Ways
To Describe What You Do
So That People Get It
(even when it feels hopeless)

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"How the F#@* do I describe what I do?"

I hear some version of this sentiment from most of the clients I work with. I want to talk with you a bit about a topic that a lot of people I meet (especially service providers) seem to struggle with. It's a question I get a lot . . .



"How do I articulate what I do in a way that is clear and compelling?"

Is this you?

- After you tell someone (who you genuinely think you could help) what you do they often say things like, "wow. that's really interesting . . . say . . . I've got to get some punch . . ." You can tell that, the more you talk about what you do, the more you lose them.
- When you're talking with someone you know you could help, you can just tell that they aren't 'getting it'.
- You have a strong sense that the way you're describing what you do now (in person or in your marketing materials) isn't as strong, compelling or clear as it could be.
- What you do is **difficult to sum up** into a nifty catchphrase (and you've likely tried). It might feel like, "well, either have to say it in 5 words or 5000 words" but you can't find the middle ground.

You hate the idea of crafting a scripted 'elevator pitch' you need to memorize.

If this is you, I think you'll find there's hope.

I'm going to share with you two cookie-cutter templates that 90% of the people I work with are able to use with much success. As you work through this, I predict you'll begin to feel oceans of blessed relief pouring over you as the words come together and you begin to breathe again knowing that, next time you are faced with this question – you will have a clear and compelling answer.

The answers you come up with will serve you equally well in person, in a brochure, on your website or in live talks.

In truth – articulating what you do is only part of the conversation. You'll also need to look at some other elements that won't be covered in here such as:

- what to do once you've described what you do
- how to follow up after that conversation
- how to engage people in an open and authentic conversation about their situation (vs. just going into your pitch)

But, this should get you started. Let's start by looking at the common blunders and how 'not' to do it.

The hidden reason most people struggle to articulate what they do

Let me share a secret that has proven to be a huge game changer for so many clients I've worked with. It is as the core of 90% of the challenges I see people have in putting words to what they do in a way that it actually lands with people.

Imagine this: your ideal clients are living on Island A. They're not happy there because they have some burning problems and symptoms they don't like. And every night, as they fall asleep, they dream about being on Island B. On Island B they would get their fondest wish, a result they've been craving for years. Perhaps on Island A they are sick but on Island B they are healthy. On Island A they are broke, but on Island B they have enough money to sustain themselves well.

Your business is like a boat that could take them from one island to the other.

Simple.

But here's the blunder that's all too easy to make when describing what we do... we talk about the boat. And they don't care about the boat. They care about the journey. Of course, we care about our boat. We think our boat is amazing. We've invested thousands of dollars and hundreds of hours into making it. So, when people ask us, 'What do you do?' our answer tends to be something like, 'I am the proud captain of this sweet boat.' That can sound something like, 'I am a massage therapist.', 'I am a plumber', 'I am a life coach.' or 'I am a permaculturist.' And those are all boats. They're all the way we've chosen to help people get from Island A to Island B. But that's it. To them, our boat is simply a means to an ends.

The key in getting people's attention when we articulate what we do and sorting out very quickly if it's a fit for them or not is to stop talking about the boat and to start talking about the journey.

On a basic level that could sound like, 'I help people who are sick to get well.' or 'I help people who are lonely meet someone special.'

It's not that we never mention the boat, it's that we tend to not start with it (unless it's a very well known boat - then the job is to show how our boat is different that all of the others - but more on that in a moment).

An example of what not to do for not-so-easy-to-describe holistic practitioners

Ever have the feeling that people really don't 'get' or understand what it is that you do?

Let's say you're a holistic practitioner who does energy work. (or a life coach, osteopath, ecstatic dance teacher, hakomi practitioner, or deep ecologist).

When you try to explain what you do by telling them that, "*I do theta healing.*" Most people have no idea WTF you are talking about. Whenever we use jargon or 'industry speak' . . . it loses people. And a lot of the terms in the holistic scene are jargon. Deepak Chopra would understand you. Joe the Plumber wouldn't. Transformational, pranayama, asana, blissful, synergistic, cellular level – these words may mean absolutely nothing to potential clients or students.

A thought to remember: the confused mind says no.

Read that again. It's so important. You want to make it easy for people to understand who you

are and what you do – not hard. A client of mine wrote me this a year or so ago . . .

“The other day at and after my morning exercise class, one of the participants handed me what, by the looks of it was promotional flyer for an event (4x6 card). I thanked him but as it was visually 'complex' I just pocketed it and walked home. Later when I had the opp. to read it I found it visually over the place and was truly challenged when I found it to have no date, or event. Puzzled by this I approached the gentleman the next morning and made inquiries. When I asked what he was promoting, and noted that it didn't have an event listed or a date he responded, as if letting me in on a secret "You hafta read between the lines, it's self promotion". I repressed all of my urges in the moment (to burst out laughing, or to scream..."that's really BAD marketing") by thinking that I could just tell you about it for a giggle.”

Here's another real life, example: This one is from a poster I saw recently might be a great example of how *not* to do explain the 'Theta Healing' work you do.

"Theta is an extraordinary healing modality where "quantum physics and metaphysics converge at the speed of light." By accessing the Creator from the unconditional 7th Plane of All That Is deeply entrenched unconscious beliefs that contradict and sabotage lasting efforts to heal core issues, soul wounds, past traumas are cleared when the Creator's own definition/understanding/perspective are downloaded into your circuitry. Old programmed cell receptors are closed down and new ones that are now God-encoded are opened up. Simple, easy to learn, Theta will not only vastly increase your intuitive abilities, your life will be changed forever as the love held for the Divine expands exponentially within you."

What the . . . ?

This poster will confuse the hell out of anyone who isn't already intimately familiar with energy medicine, theta healing or intense psychedelics. Now . . . if that's the market they're going after, I give them an A+. If not . . .

What is not clear in this write up is: *who* it's for, *why* they would want it, *what* results it produces. It's written in a complicated New Age jargon that even some hardcore newagers would have a hard time (and *have* when I read it out at my workshops).

This is example is extreme – but not entirely unusual.

Another important point in all of this is humility. It's okay for others to brag about us, but, when we're describing what we do, coming across as arrogant never works. What follows is an example from a website I came across a few years ago. Notice the incredible amount of jargon (which I've put in bold) and arrogance that comes off of it by suggesting they may be the only viable solution.

*Introducing the **hybrid philosophical foundation** and **socioeconomic arrangement** to achieve economic security, universal quality of life, peace and sustainability.*

The _____ philosophy, **operating principle** and action plan are a single but **multi-dimensional package** that holds the potential for **revolutionary transformation** to secure our future. The philosophy is rooted in nature. The **operating principle** models **evolutionary self-organization** – the natural process by which simple parts self-organize to build our complex Universe. And the action plan proposes to rearrange the ways we live, work, commute, consume, manage, educate and govern ourselves, a community at a time. This is a systemic, **synergetic solution** to sharpen America's competitive edge, attain energy independence, secure quality of life and move us toward global peace and sustainability.

Humanity's agenda for the 21st century is the race against time to survive and thrive and our window of opportunity to win this race is closing rapidly. Study the _____ concept, understand its power to secure our future – and take action! Your heart and mind invested in the _____ Solution may be our only hope.

Here is another example of jargon I found in someone describing themselves. Again, I've bolded what I see as jargon :

Middle aged movement maverick who helps people reboot their **dysfunctional movement patterns** that are either causing pain or a reduction in their participation of active healthy living. I start with a **systematic functional movement screen** to identify areas of **immobility and instability** and then use a **multi-disciplinary movement recipe** gleaned from over twenty five years studying the mind body to help people learn how to change their **dysfunctional patterns**.

An example of what not to do for easy-to-describe businesses

Let's say you're a realtor (or dentist, plumber, injury lawyer, window cleaner or anything that everyone already understands).

You're at a party and someone asks what you do. And, oh my! They're someone who could really use what you have to offer. How exciting.

So, of course, you say *'I'm a realtor.'*

Wasn't that easy?



Yes. And you're screwed. Why? Because now you're a commodity. There are hundreds of realtors. And now you're just one of them. So, now the only thing to differentiate you from the other realtors is . . . price.

Screwed.

Networking at some events can be a lot like the old TV show 'Cheers'. Except . . . nobody knows your name. And nobody's glad you came.

An example of what not to do for those who sell sustainable products

Let's say you sell a product. Some widget. Maybe it's some clothing (or journals, dog biscuits, supplements, essential oils, handmade drums etc).

Someone asks you what you do.

So you say, *"I'm a clothing designer."*

Cool.



But - again - you're a commodity now. Sure, maybe you say, *"I do eco-friendly fashion design."* And that's a world better. But - it won't be for long. That industry is growing fast. And then? You're a commodity. Plus - I can promise you that most people will have no idea of the incredible, painstaking work that goes into creating what you do.

The lesson: relevance and uniqueness

When you describe what you do to people - they are filtering it through two fundamental lenses.

1. Is this **relevant** to me?
2. Is it **unique**? (i.e. better than the alternatives)

That's it.

But in order for it to even be registered as relevant - it needs to be clear. The confused mind says 'no'. So it needs to be clear what it is/does and how it's unique and better.

The best way to do this is always to relate what we do to something they already understand. This is usually going to be one of two things. First, it could be our profession (if it's a commonly understood one) and second, it could be relating to a common experience that they or their friends might be having.

What you don't want to do is start from a place of talking about something they've never heard of. Or saying something they're super familiar with and not illustrating how you're different.

Some additional wrinkles:

If you're describing what you do to someone who has no knowledge of your industry or capacity to hire you it's very different than if someone has both.

The Industry/Fit Quadrant

<p>Knows your industry and you're not a fit to help them</p> <p>This person could be a great source of referrals. Focus on educating them about how your work is unique and different. Ask if they have any friends or family dealing with the situations your treat.</p>	<p>Knows your industry and you're a fit to help them</p> <p>This person is a potential client. Focus on educating them about how your work is unique and different. You don't need to tell them anything about how you do your work – unless it's to contrast it with how most others do it.</p>
<p>Doesn't know your industry and you're not a fit to help them.</p> <p>This person could be a great source of referrals. But you need to start with a super basic education about your overall industry. If you're a Reiki practitioner you might need to start with the concept of integrative medicine, and then into alternative medicine etc. Do not start talking about Reiki immediately with them. You'll lose them.</p>	<p>Doesn't know your industry but you're a fit to help them</p> <p>This person is a potential client. Again – educate them on your industry, not your modality. Focus big picture.</p>

COOKIE CUTTER SOLUTION #1: for easy-to-explain things

If what you're doing is commonly understood (e.g. doctor, electrician, carpenter etc.) and someone asks what you do, the path is really simple. Tell them what you do - and how you do it differently. You do this by acknowledging the 'industry frustrations' and then illustrating how you're different. The industry frustrations are the things in your industry that annoy or frustrate people.

For example: plumbers. Plumbers often show up late, charge more than the initial quote and don't fix it right the first time. Those are examples of industry frustrations.

Try this format and fill in the blanks:

"You know how a lot of _____ do _____?"

Well, we do it _____ way instead."

What goes in the blanks?

"You know how a lot of <INDUSTRY> do <INDUSTRY FRUSTRATIONS>?"

Well, we do it <U.S.P.> way instead."

A few examples:

- "You know how a lot of **plumbers** show up late (or make you wait all day), charge more than the initial quote and don't fix it right the first time? Well, we schedule a specific time and guarantee we'll be there within 15 minutes. If we're later - you don't pay. We also guarantee not to charge more than the initial quote on the job quoted and, if we don't fix it right the first time it's on us.
- "You know how a lot of **dentists** cause their patients pain, use mercury and other toxic substances and the whole situation is really sterile and scary? Well, we have an holistic dental practice where you are welcomed warmly with some herbal tea, or fresh squeezed carrot juice and given foot reflexology while you're treated. And we use no mercury or other nasty things like that."
- "You know how a lot of **marketing workshops** are crazy expensive - like \$2000 for a weekend? Well, what I do is offer the entire weekend on a pay what you can basis. So, people attend the entire workshop, attend a great Saturday night party with other green leaders in the city, and get an incredible 600 page workbook to take home - and then, in the last seven minutes - pay whatever they want (based on what they can afford.)"

COOKIE CUTTER SOLUTION #2: for hard-to-explain things

But let's say that what you do is something that no one really 'gets' or understands. They just aren't familiar with it. They've never heard of it.

That's actually not a problem most of the time. What you're offering won't even be a 'fit' for most of the people you speak with. That's fine. But . . . when you *do* run into someone who you think might just be able to use what you're offering - it becomes an issue.

After all, maybe you do Gabriel Roth's Five Rhythms work, *The Work that Reconnects* (say wha . . . ???), you do Quantum Touch or Rolfing. Or maybe you do some weird technical computer thing that's hard to describe.

If someone asks you, "*And what do you do?*" and you reply with, "*Oh I do The Work that Reconnects.*" or, "*I do Reiki*" or "*I do Theta Healing.*" etc. You. Are. Screwed. They have no idea what you're talking about or if it can help them. In this case you don't want to tell them your title of modality.

In the case of 'hard-to-explain things', there are five things people need to hear. Five ingredients. And, just like ingredients need to go into the cake in a certain order - they need to hear these elements in a particular order for the most impact and clarity.

But to take a step back . . . Here's the big picture - *whatever* it is that you do, you need to communicate it from *their* perspective - not *yours*. You need to focus on what they're *getting* - not what you're *giving* them. This distinction may seem subtle, and it is, but it's often the difference between people understanding what we're talking about or just pretending to.

Part of what I value in the kinds of statements we're about to get into is that they are conversational and colloquial in tone - so it doesn't start sounding like a scripted elevator speech. And I think that's key.

When you ask somebody "what do you do?" and their eyes roll back into their head and they go into their spiel - it feels very strange on the receiving end. The point isn't to give them a pitch but to let them know "here's who I target and here are the kinds of problems they're dealing with." The point is to open up a conversation, not go into a monologue. I've seen some people craft 30-60 elevator pitches and . . . i think it's better to just have a human conversation instead. If you open with your niche you end up finding out if there's any basis for a conversation anyway. I think it's okay to ramble on a bit - as long as you're rambling on about the experiences your clients go through and not about your business and how wonderful you are. Your presentation doesn't need to be slick, polished and scripted - it just needs to be human, clear and compelling.

Five Ingredients of clearly communicated 'hard-to-explain' things:

1. **Who it's for:** who are you trying to reach? Everyone? The lack of a clearly defined target market is the death knell of more businesses than I care to say. When the target market is clear, everything you do in marketing becomes far easier. A target market is, ideally, something like: backpackers, doctors, single moms, Christians, vegans etc. Something people can hear and understand immediately. They can hear it and get a clear picture in their mind.
2. **What problems it solves:** what is the present moment experience of your target market? Where are they in pain? Where are they wanting relief? What symptoms are even having them think of buying what you sell.
3. **What results it produces:** What's the solution you're offering? What are they buying it? What's the result they're trying to achieve? The results are often simple (and always self serving to them as the client). They will be things like: more clients, be more popular, better sleep, a chance to contribute, living more in alignment with their values, overnight delivery, making more money etc.
4. **Some stories about it:** These are critical to people understanding what you do. You should always have three 'back-pocket' stories you can share with people that illustrate the power and uniqueness of what you do. Stories and 'case studies' help people to understand what you do so much better than any amount of explaining will do.

There are really three kinds of stories you can share, depending on the situation.

- **STORY TYPE #1: Your story.** Ideally, can share your story of how you came to this work. But you can also share stories that clarify and shed light on what and how you do your work.
 - **STORY TYPE #2: The impact of your work.** This second type of story is the story of the impact of your work on the life of a single person. The basic format of the story is this: “*person X came to me with _____ problem, and I noticed _____ and we did _____ and _____ happened.*” Simple. I’ll show you some more examples soon of what this looks like in real life.
 - **STORY TYPE #3: The impact of the kind of work you do.** You may not have been doing your work long enough – or may not be skilled enough – to have created a real impact or any stories worth sharing. Not to worry! You can always use stories of other practitioners who do what you do. The basic format of the story is this: “*person X came to a colleague of mine with _____ problem, and they noticed _____ and they did _____ and _____ happened.*”
5. **How you do it:** Last, but not least, we need to give them a sense of how we are able to help them get these results. We need to talk about the method behind the madness. We need to talk about the modality we use. The particular techniques we employ. We need to lay out the overall process we take them through. The point – and it’s important – is that we aren’t just saying, “I do reiki” but that we’re making the case for how we get them to where they want to be. We’re sort of drawing them a map of how we’re going to take them from where they are to where they want to go.

How it looks:

1. Who it's for: "*You know how a lot of _____*"
2. What problems it solves: "*Struggle with _____*"
3. What results it produces: "*Well, what we do is help them to get _____*"
4. Some stories about it: "*For example, _____*"
5. How you do it: "*And the way that we do that is _____.*"

Or, in one block:

"You know how a lot of _____ struggle with _____? Well, what we do is help them to get _____. For example, _____. And the way that we do that is _____."

Identify the stories you can use

STORY TYPE #1: Your story. How did you come to this work? What brought you here?

STORY TYPE #2: The impact of your work. What are some examples of clients you've worked with and how you've helped them. Come up with at least three.

1)

2)

3)

STORY TYPE #3: Stories from colleagues. What's are some examples of how a colleague or teacher of yours helped someone? Come up with at least three.

1)

2)

3)

14 real-life, articulate examples of people describing what they do



Example #1: Ari Galper, Pressure Free Selling Mentor
unlockthegame.com

"**You know how** a lot of salespeople are in tremendous pain when it comes to selling? They actually hate doing it. They are secretly scared to pick up the phone. They hate being rejected but also hate using the manipulative sales techniques they were taught. They feel trapped because they need to make a living but they can't find a way to sell that doesn't feel like they're also selling out their integrity.

Well, what we do is we help them drop the old 'pushy' tactics and pitching techniques and learn how to have honest, natural, non-pressuring, authentic conversations with people that often results in a dramatic increase in their own comfort, the vanishing of their fears and an increase in their income.

For example (a case study would go here).

And the way we do that is through live trainings and educational products from our company Unlock The Game."



Example #2: Tanya Pillay, HypnoTherapist hypnosage.com

HOW DID YOU EXPLAIN WHAT YOU DID BEFORE? *“I am a motivational hypnotist - I use guided meditation and gentle coaching to help clients release obstacles to achieve goals or change patterns. Private sessions include a thorough intake and collaborative scripting process. I also facilitate self-hypnosis workshops and theme-based group sessions.”*

WHAT WAS THE IMPACT OF REDOING THIS? *“People seem to connect with stories better than information. I have to get better at telling the stories succinctly and naturally, but it's definitely more enticing and less intimidating.”*

TANYA'S NEW VERSION: What's great about what Tanya has done here is give a lot of little stories and mini case-studies of her work with clients. Notice how compelling they are as you read them. Now, if she was talking with someone at a party – she would likely only share one – maybe two of these depending on with whom she was speaking.

*“I work mostly with adults in downtown Toronto who . . . well **do you know how** people often struggle with old habits like overeating, smoking, and procrastinating. They really want to change but . . . don't know where to start.*

What I do is help them to uncover the hidden things that have been stopping them from making changes. They're often totally unaware of these inner obstacles so it often comes as a bit of a surprise. I guide them to gain awareness, regain control, and move toward their goals in comfortable, manageable steps so it sticks.

Story #1: The Worry Wart - For example, I had a client who worried a lot about whether a guy was going to call her but during our session together, her subconscious mind came to understand that she had more important things to think about. This realization showed her that the worry was a choice and she could choose to care more about her own actions and thoughts.

Story #2: Writer's Block - Another client knew he had the skills and talent to perform and write plays but was feeling stuck in a “rut”. During our two sessions using guided visualization and relaxation, he was able to shift his awareness away from his perceived inadequacies and toward his capabilities and the resources available to him. This shift in his awareness gave him the necessary momentum to implement and carry out a simple action plan to sit down and write. And write he did!

Story #3: Smoking - You know how a lot of smokers want to quit but they've failed in the past? Well, what I do is help them to implement a realistic plan for quitting. For example, one

smoker really wanted to quit but didn't know how to stop himself from smoking. During our intake interview, we discovered that he didn't have a suitable list of alternatives to smoking.

So we identified some he'd be willing try. And then, during the relaxation part of the session, he visualized himself enjoying all the healthy alternatives. This worked like a rehearsal so that his body and mind would truly understand how easy and pleasant the alternative activities could be. This helped his body and mind to respond to the next craving in the pre-rehearsed, way of his choice.

Story #4: Food Cravings - You know how a lot of dieters struggle with cravings? Well, what we do is help them to communicate with the cravings. For example, we can find out what the craving is trying to achieve and find alternative ways to satisfy these needs. And the way that we do that is by using a meditative state to communicate as deeply as possible with the body and mind.

For example, one client was craving deep fried foods all the time even though they upset her stomach. With my thorough intake process, we were able to pinpoint her need to eat more frequently so her body wouldn't get so desperate for food that anything would do.

Then during the guided relaxation portion of the session, I guided her to explore how she could best set herself up for success in her new approach to staying properly fuelled. An added bonus during her session was her response to my question "is there anything standing in your way of following the plan you've set out for yourself?" Turns out her subconscious mind was convinced that healthy food cannot taste as good as fast food! Which she knew consciously to be false, so she could respond to this subconscious fear by checking a recipe or buying healthy sauces she likes.

Story #5: Guilt and Sadness - I had a client who was a very hard worker who wanted very much to be happy and productive. However, she was carrying guilt and sadness about a past relationship, and she was in the habit of putting herself down when others were cranky with her. She often cried because she felt stuck in her life and didn't know how or why she ought to invest in herself.

We talked about the emotions she lived with daily and how they manifested in her body. I asked about when these emotions and what believes they are based on. We then talked about her goals, the obstacles that stood in her way, and how they could be overcome. Finally, we talked about what she found easy and difficult about relaxing.

I put all of this information together to make a customized script to help her shift her emotional trends and get motivated to take the next steps in creating her life. After only one session, her coworkers commented that she seemed lighter and stronger. After 6 sessions, I told her that she really didn't need to see me anymore, but she kept coming because she enjoyed the

process and the results so much.

So, the way I do this is over a few really gentle, hour-long, one on one sessions where we first talk about their same-old-ways to make sure I understand the pattern clearly. I then guide the client through a process of introspection about what thoughts and behaviours will get them to where they want to be.

We collaborate on a plan of action, and I help them to implement the plan with guided relaxation, visualization, positive suggestions, and other unique meditative techniques for focusing on the new ways and releasing the old.”



Example #3: Ramona Ng, Cranio Sacral Therapist maitrihealing.com

HOW DID YOU EXPLAIN WHAT YOU DID BEFORE? *“Well there were many different flavours of it but all involved me trying to explain what CranioSacral was in a variety of fashions depending on how or when their eyes glazed over.”*

WHAT WAS THE IMPACT OF REDOING THIS? *“I think the biggest revelation for everyone (myself included) with the new version I came up with on the spot was that I never mentioned the words CranioSacral Therapy and people ‘got it’ and were engaged.*

In fact, Melanie came up to me afterwards to thank me because she’d had no experience with holistic bodywork therapies and felt like she finally had a sense of what it could provide.

Plus for me it helped me get one of the most valuable thing of the weekend which is how I am different. Most practitioners do a detailed health history (even the osteopath makeover you sent me said this) and they decide on a course of treatment from there.”

RAMONA’S NEW VERSION:

“Do you know how a lot of adults in the Toronto area have chronic pain, which is often unexplained. **Well, what I help them to do is** regain mobility, range of motion, and lessen or eliminate the pain altogether.

For example, I have a friend who participated in a charity bike ride from Toronto to Montreal a few years ago. Partway through she fell off her bike and landed with most of her body weight onto her elbow.

She managed to carry on but noticed over the next few weeks that she could not lift her arm higher than shoulder level and was having difficulty performing some everyday tasks. During a casual conversation with another friend she told me about falling on her elbow.

I put my hands on her and was immediately drawn to her shoulder. I started some gentle hands-on work which carried on our socializing and about 5 minutes later we both felt 2 distinct “clicks” in her shoulder joint. She immediately sat up and lifted her arm, demonstrating full range of motion in a wide circle and declared she was pain free.

And the way that I do this is I use a variety of different natural bodywork modalities, which you may or may not be familiar with, but what I’m really doing is connecting to their tissues and listening with my hands to get to the source of their problem. Their body is a much more

reliable source of information than their mouth in that regard so I go with what my hands feel, like I did with my friend's shoulder as opposed to working on her elbow. From that point, the work is quite gentle and facilitates their body releasing the restrictions and correcting imbalances, which usually leads to longer lasting results.”



Example #4: Tracey Tief, Aromatherapist anarreshealth.ca

"You know how a lot of women under 40 struggle with hormonal problems like PMS, cysts in the breasts, and heavy or irregular periods?

Well, what we do is help them have a regular, symptom-free cycle AND feel more energy, alertness and happiness.

For example, one client had experienced painful lymphatic cysts in her breasts for more than 5 years with no relief from anything she tried. When she had her period, the cysts grew hot and so painful that she didn't want to move her arms. She was terrified of breast cancer. Her doctor suggested that she go on The Pill to balance her hormones. Two weeks into her Detoxification Program with me, all but one cyst had completely disappeared. After her program, she looked like a completely different person, rosy cheeked and 10 years younger! Two years later, that last cyst only returns during her period when she is stressed and run down. It acts as her canary in a coal mine to let her know that she needs to take better care of herself.

And the way that we do that is by a three step process of first measuring your hormone levels, secondly, using essential oils and other botanicals to balance your hormonal system and third, treating you to a enjoyable hormone detoxifying techniques like a sauna, reflexology and massage."



Example #5: Michelle Dubyk, Colon Hydrotherapist puraholistictherapies.com

"Do you know how those of us living high stress lifestyles often suffer from gas, bloating, infrequent bowel movements and poor digestion? It leaves a lot of us feeling heavy, sluggish, exhausted and drained.

What I do is help people feel healthier by cleansing and detoxifying their bodies of the accumulated toxins and waste that can cause these symptoms.

For example, one client I worked with did a very intensive cleanse and eliminated several pounds of waste material from her body. Following the cleanse, her 10 year history of constipation, irritable bowel syndrome, chronic fatigue syndrome and fibromyalgia had completely disappeared.

How I do this is with colon hydrotherapy, a gentle method of cleansing the colon by irrigating it with purified water."



Example #6: Andrew McMartin, Primitive & Wilderness Skills Teacher pineproject.org

“You know how many schools do expensive, high travel, high-risk outdoor education experiences?”

Or, how most schools send kids away from where they live to learn about the environment? Many of these experiences, though active and adventurous, teach little about the environment in which people spend their daily lives.

Well, The P.I.N.E. Project helps teachers and schools to provide schoolyard and community outdoor and environmental education experiences that increase students ability to apply learned material on a daily basis, are less expensive and risky than things like ropes courses, reduce carbon footprint, and make learning fun.

P.I.N.E. integrates Ontario curriculum into programs that take place on school property and in local community green spaces, usually no further away than a walk from School. Programs focus on the immediate environment, how students can connect with it, and help make it healthier. Stewardship and environmental literacy are built in to programs.

We do this by working in partnership with teachers, classes and schools, creating programs for students in their home environment, applying curriculum while also learning new skills and knowledge (wild edible plants and wildlife tracking for Biology, and Science courses for example).

For example: If we are studying plants, biology or botany, a wild edible plant theme can be used to develop interest, and make the learning useful and experiential. Many of the plants that we would harvest include invasive and introduced species like Garlic Mustard or Dandelions, which disrupt the native ecosystem, harming native plants and wildlife. This introduces the idea of human impact, ecosystem interactions, and how we can find solutions that everyone can take part in on a daily basis. We can learn, eat, and leave the area healthier all at once!”

The P.I.N.E. Project provides dynamic environmental education to students in their local home environment, encouraging them to participate in connecting with and improving the health of the places where they live. Indigenous skills and active leadership programming engage students, while motivating them to steward the land where programs are run, leaving it healthier for us having been there.”



Example #8: Lisa Letwin, Body Talk Practitioner bodytalksystem.com

“Do you know how a lot of women struggle with chronic pain?

Well, what I do is help them to return to a pain-free state without using any drugs or pharmaceuticals.

For example, I saw a young woman who was experiencing three migraine headaches a week. Between her second and third sessions, about a three week time period, she reported only having had three migraines.

The way that I do this is by using a system of healthcare called BodyTalk. One of the things they’re finding is that the food we eat, the quality of our sleep, our relationship with money and others can cause these sort of 'short circuits' in our brain. So, I am like an electrician in that together we troubleshoot the root cause of the pain and then reset the circuit breaker in the brain that allows the brain to turn on the healing process in that area of their body or life again so they can move on with the rest of their life.”



Example #9: Lucy and Ed, The English Osteopaths

theenglishosteopaths.com

"**You know how** a lot of people like golfers or the tennis players (or other folks) get the same injury season after season? They just never seem to find the root cause of their problems?

Well, what we do is just help them to work out the (sometimes hidden) reasons why they get the same injuries. **For example** a person who gets back pain once a year . . . that can be because their hips are stiff but the hips can be made stiff from something as insignificant as an ankle strain way back in high school. And once we've figured that out it tells us where we need to start our treatment.

And the way that we do the treatment is to use our hands to release muscle or nerve problems, some times even organ tension. The way we've been trained is unique because we are taught to put our hands onto someone's body and figure out what type of treatment they really need. And it may be quite different from what they think they need. So, to give you an example, some people respond really well to joint manipulations, like the kind you get at a chiropractor, and some people really hate that and their body doesn't seem to like it either - so we don't follow a routine, each treatment is unique. "



Example #10: Lindsay Ross, Products for Conscious Parents of Infants babesinarms.ca

“You know how a lot of parents struggle with baby carriers (e.g. cloth slings, or the ‘backpack’ ones where the babies are carried on the back)? We find that a lot of parents who use them are dealing

with three main challenges: first, they get shoulder or neck pain from them. Secondly, they don’t know how to use them. Third, their baby hates the carrier. And some parents don't even have a carrier and struggle with how to soothe their baby or get things done while caring for their baby.

Well, what we do is help them to get a carrier that feels really comfortable for them and their baby and that is really easy and intuitive to use.

For example, this mom had first come in when her daughter was a couple months old. She had already spent \$2000 on two strollers! The problem was, besides the fact that strollers are hard to navigate through the snow and her daughter was born in the winter, her baby *hated* being put down, especially into the stroller.

This mom knew she needed a carrier.

We spent at least an hour with her, helping her to try on carriers with her baby and find the one that felt right. We didn't hear from her again until about four months later, when she came into the store to pick up a teething necklace for her daughter. She related to us that the carrier (the Beco) had saved her life, that she was thinking of buying another one (much better value than those expensive strollers she'd purchased, she said) and that she tells everyone she knows about her carrier and our store.

Her daughter had suffered from colic for her first few months, and being held upright in the Beco had been the best thing for her and had kept her calm and happy. The mom, a very stylish woman, also loved that the carrier came in hip patterns and had a sleek design. Not only that, but its design placed her baby's hips and back in proper alignment and will allow the parents to carry her on their fronts and later their backs until she is up to four years old!

We’ve found that there are three main problems with most baby accessory stores. First, they don't really know their baby carriers because they haven't actually ever used them (or gotten any training in them). Secondly, they don't accept any returns, even if the item was a gift. And third, there’s no support for the parents after the purchase.

So, what we do is make sure our staff have extensive knowledge on the full range of carriers and the proper way to wear them for the parent's comfort (and baby's safe and comfortable positioning). We spend extra time teach each parent how to use it, and then offer them continual support as needed after the purchase. We offer classes that teach parents about the different options and how to use them.

We even offer sling rentals so parents can try a carrier for a week or two before buying to make sure they love it. And, we have a 30 day return policy so if they still don't get the right carrier, they're not stuck with something they can't use.”



Example #11: Laurie Varga, New Survivalist seedandstone.com

“**You know how** there are an increasing number of people who are worried about the impact of events like climate change, peak-oil and economic collapse. They just want to slow down and live in a way that's more connected to the earth but often don't know where to start in this fast paced culture.

What we do is help them to create a more simple, slow, environmentally connected and self-sufficient lifestyle and to find peace of mind about their future (even when the future can seem scary and uncertain).

For example, some people are really worried about food security. We help them provide for their own needs by offering online and hands-on workshops to educate them on urban gardening and food preservation.

And many of the people we work with are outdoor enthusiasts who spend a lot of time in the wilderness. We help them learn how that same wilderness can provide for all their basic needs like shelter, food and water either in an emergency or long term.

You know how most survivalist groups are focused on grabbing their guns, ammo and cans of beans, and escaping to their bunker in the wilderness somewhere? Well, we look at survivalism very differently. All the things we do are deeply rooted in the natural world. Our intention is to help build local communities for support and to reconnect people with the environment to provide for long-term sustainability.

And the way we're doing this right now is through monthly meetings of our group Seed +Stone.”



Example #12: Alex Baisley, 'WTF Am I Doing With my Life?' Coach

www.impactmeditation.com

“You know how a lot of really creative and gifted people struggle with 'What the %\$# they are doing with their lives?' They know they have a lot of gifts and potential, an independent streak, they know they have it in them to make a contribution to the world, but time keeps passing and they just can't figure out what to do! Although it feels like a big issue for them, the trouble is that they are usually trying to squeeze themselves into a much too small way of thinking that just doesn't fit them.

Well, we help them get clear about how they can zoom out and see the bigger picture of themselves, and package all the aspects of their lives into one bold plan, a master vision so that they can start filling in the blanks and get moving forward right away.

For example, a woman came to us because she had a million great ideas of things she wanted to do, and couldn't figure out 'which one' to pursue. She worked a stressful job that she had long since grown out of, but felt she had to keep for the income and pension. Within one week, we were able to collect ALL the raw ingredients together, from skills to dreams, from income to her need for personal spiritual time - all into one master plan. She was so relieved and amazed, she came back afterwards to pay a hundred dollar tip!

Another woman emailed me the day after her workshop to report that not only did she finally understand her life and where to take it, a chronic health issue had also disappeared overnight as a result. She couldn't believe it.

A man emailed me recently to say that within 2 days of his first introductory workshop, he had figured out how to get himself a month off to spend time with his kids - and after years of wishing for it, he couldn't believe it came so easy.

These are the types of stories I hear every day, and look forward to chatting with anyone who would like to have a go at re-imagining their own life.

The way we do this for people is to broaden their minds to see the five absolutely critical areas of their life's ecosystem that blend together to form something much bigger than it's individual parts. These five areas, when brought together become a vehicle that can take them where they have been craving to go. Through workshops, private consultations, and a home-study course, clients learn what to look for in their lives, how others have packaged these things together successfully, and exactly what questions they need to answer to create their own plan.”



Example #13: Nancy Christie, Psychotherapist mindfulnesspsychotherapytoronto.com

“**You know how** a lot of people feel anxious, depressed or chronically unhappy and no amount of talking about it seems to make any difference? It’s like their condition is permanent and invincible. Well, what we’ve found is that, often, some sort of trauma is the root cause of stubborn symptoms and you just can’t talk or think your way out of trauma. Trauma

lives in the body – not in the intellect.

So, what I do is . . . help them to finally get to the bottom of the trauma so that they can move on in their lives in a happier, more peaceful and grounded way.

For example, one client felt he had no control of his temper and was saddened to realize how many relationships he had lost due to his sudden outbursts. He became able to notice without judgment all the ‘precursors’ to losing his temper: his thoughts, his overwork, his reluctance to set boundaries and his rising tension in his body. Now he catches the body cues first and takes them as a wake up to be aware of the other factors. For the first time in his life, Bob gets the support he needs from himself those close to him. And it’s actually rare that he ever loses his temper.

Another example, Mary was anxious all day at work. When she learned to notice and accept how her anxiety happened in physical experience alone, her body automatically calmed and she felt better. The method was so easy that she could hardly believe it.

The secret is to create a warm and caring environment where people can really study and pay attention to how their bodies are feeling in the moment. By resting the mind and letting the body take the lead, peoples’ unconscious minds leads them to shifting things around inside and towards healing. People are able to become more mindful of how things are running on automatic, below their awareness and real choices become available. My clients learn that they are not to blame for the biological results of trauma shown in their suffering. They get new skills that allow their biology to work in their favor. And they feel better.

Every one of us has a unique way that our internal experience is organized. I collaborate with my clients to discover the pattern of the symptoms that is theirs alone. We’re often both surprised how just one little change can cascade a change in the entire pattern.

Very often my clients are pleasantly surprised at how a simple new skill can have such a dramatic impact on what they thought were invincible symptoms.”



Example #14: Katie Curtin, Life Coach for Modern Day Renaissance People

katiecurtin.com

"**You know how** a lot of creative renaissance people love to do lots of different kinds of things at the same time, including making a difference in the world and how they end up getting overwhelmed and frustrated, and either struggle with completing projects or feel chained down by the details and organizational aspects of what they are doing, and feel like they are losing the freedom, balance, creativity and adventure they most crave?"

Well, what I do is help them to get clear on what projects to focus on, and how to do them in ways that allow them to delegate, streamline or automate the work that they don't enjoy, as well as helping them clear limiting beliefs that get in their way and designing ways to find the time, money and resources to get their dream projects done and to live a fulfilled and sustainable lifestyle, while contributing to planetary wellness.

For example, one of my clients, Alexandra Leikermoser, Founder of Yogagurl, who was a successful eco clothing designer and yoga instructor, came to me feeling overwhelmed and close to burnout around the details of managing and running her business, and itching to have more freedom and time to pursue her other spiritual, and creative projects and her interest in travel.

I worked with her to radically redesign her biz, so that she was no longer tied to its daily operations, creating products which would generate passive income, and creating a team of people who could do the tasks she didn't enjoy, allowing her the time to devote to her other spiritual and creative pursuits, including creating and publishing a book she had dreamed of doing for years.

You know how most coaches may assume that you should just focus on one passion, and don't really understand the renaissance soul, and their need to pursue many passions, or the type of creative challenges and blocks that they face, nor the very unique ways each of them need to get past these blocks and to keep motivated and on track.

Well I have lived and surmounted these challenges in my own life, and am able through my creative and life experience, my intuition and my knowledge and use of a wide variety of coaching and personal growth tools to help clients to get where they want, and I have a track record to prove it.

This mostly happens through 45 minute conversations once or more each month over the phone."

Formula #1: Worksheet:

"You know how a lot of ...

do ...?

Well, we do it _____ way instead."

Formula #2: Worksheet:

You know how a lot of ...

struggle with?

Well, what we do is help them to get ...

For example, ...

And the way that we do that is ...

Three Bonus Options: The Hollywood Pitch, Starting with Why & The Power of Metaphor

Bonus Option #1: The Hollywood Pitch

Sometimes the best way to articulate what you do is to show how it's a combination of a few things they already understand. This is how most movies get pitched in Hollywood.

Avatar might easily be pitched as Pochahontas meets Star Trek. The TV show Firefly could have been pitched as Sci-fi meets Western. I often describe Doctor Who as MacGyver meets time travel.

Perhaps your work is a unique combination of modalities that the market you're targeting would understand. Or maybe it's a synthesis of a few people's work, "It's Joseph Campbell meets outdoor education." or something like this. There's something very compelling about contrasting elements coming together that normally wouldn't. Marketing for Hippies is an example - my business is marketing meets hippies. Or the book The Radical Homemaker which is feminism meets homesteading.

Think about your own business and what different ideas, communities or concepts it is a mash up of. Sometimes that can give people enough of a flavour to be curious about what we do, to get the sense of it, that they're interested to hear more.

'The Hollywood Pitch' Clarifying Questions:

What are the different modalities, skill sets and tools that your work is a combination of?

Who are some famous people who's work your work is a synthesis of?

What are the different points of view, perspectives, philosophies and schools of thought that your work is a combination of?

How could you distill this all down into one sentence?

Bonus Option #2: Start With Why

Here's another idea with which I've been playing since 2013 or so. When someone asks what you do, what if, instead of starting with the typical things people do, including those described in this book, you started with talking about what it is that your business is really about that makes you so passionate.

If someone asks, 'what do you do?' what if you paused, took a deep breath and said something like,

- *"I'm really passionate about the idea of right livelihood and helping people find a way to sustain themselves doing what they love to do."*
- *"I'm really passionate about women feeling more powerful in their lives."*
- *"I am passionate about men getting in touch with the deeper, authentic masculine presence inside of them."*
- *"I am passionate about the idea that plants aren't just biochemical factories, but actually spiritual teachers for us."*
- *"I'm passionate about the idea that our deepest wounds in life can be a doorway to our truest role in the community."*

I bet you'd have their interest and then you could go into one of the two cookie cutter formulas laid out earlier.

One of my colleagues, Jaime Almond, recently emailed me a couple versions of this approach for her work helping experts build more sustainable businesses:

Version #1: 'You know, lately i've been so passionate about this idea that we can thrive in our lives in a way that's joyful and sustainable. there's so much burn out out there. Like the other day i was talking with a client of mine who was working on a project he loved but was completely depleted and it made me so sad because it doesn't need to be that way.

Version #2: "So I'm super passionate about this idea that entrepreneurship doesn't have to be such a struggle and we can do what we love AND make money. It makes me sad to see so many hardworking experts struggling in their businesses. Like the other day, I was talking to a client who is super talented, but his business is struggling to survive and he sometimes just thinks about giving it all up and getting a job. It makes me sad because that's what so many entrepreneurs do when they can't get the money piece sorted out."

'Start With Why' Clarifying Questions:

Why do you do what you do? What is it really about for you at a deeper level?

If your work with someone is really successful, what is the impact of that on their lives?

If everyone on the planet got the full benefit of the work you offer, what would that mean for the world?

If you had to sum up the deeper purpose of your work in three words, what would they be?

Option #3: Metaphors in Marketing - The Power of Uncovering Your Core Metaphor

What is the core metaphor of your business?

I've consistently seen that the thoughtful use of metaphors in your marketing can make a huge difference in terms of clarity and impact.

In this, likely lengthy, post you're going to learn about a number of ways you can use metaphor and symbolism in your business. And you're going to be encouraged to figure out what might be the core metaphor for your business as a whole.

Ground level: a metaphor is when you say that something is something else. And, for the sake of this post I'm just going to lump similes into this. You're just going to have to deal. A metaphor is of a real, physical thing in the outer world that people can relate to. A metaphor is NOT a feeling, sensation or concept.

Why would we even want to pay attention to this?

clarity: our brains aren't made to understand jargon, widgets and technical things. Our brains are designed to understand story, symbolism and imagery. When we communicate what we do in these more abstract ways, ironically, the heart of it is often more clear for people. Our metaphors provide a container for the technical side of what we do later. If marketing were like baseball (a metaphor) then clarity is first base. And the right symbolism can help you get there.

metaphors and symbolism can allow you to talk about the most intense of human experiences without naming them. If you were abused as a child, you might not want to speak to details but you could say it felt like you were trapped in a dungeon ruled by an angry and violent ogre as a child, and we'll understand what you mean. We'll feel it.

having a metaphor for what you do and the journey you take people on (my metaphor) makes it a lot easier to hone in on the right moment for you to work with them

they can be expanded and explored as your work grows and shifts.

you can have a metaphor for what you do and call yourself

makes it easier to express your core point of view.

Examples of Metaphors:

Let's jump right into some examples of metaphors to really get the clarity and power they can bring to things:

I speak of marketing using a metaphor I owe to my colleague Bill Baren. The idea that our clients are

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on a journey from Island A (where they're struggling with their problems) to Island B (where they have the results they're craving). And our business is a boat that can take them from one island to another. Our point of view is the map and route we take. And the bright Sun in the sky is the deeper cause behind our work.

One of the things I love about identifying a core metaphor for our work is that it is so rich. There always seems to be more to explore. We could explore you as the captain of the boat. We could talk about their fears of an island even worse than Island A they're scared they'll end up on. We could talk about Island C – an island that's even better than the one they are craving.

There's just so much to explore.

And the power of metaphors is that, instead of clients feeling overwhelmed by more and more information, they actually feel clearer and clearer as you add more and more details to it.

I lead dozens of free intro workshops over the years where I tried so hard to share everything I knew about marketing. I tried to give the best overview. And it always felt fractured, jangled, and a bit all over the place.

But the second I started telling the story of the boat and the islands (such a simple story!) everyone 'got it'. It made so much sense of their experience, even (importantly) when the information wasn't new.

Peggy McIntosh wrote a seminal essay on racial privilege called *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack*. She built her entire thesis around this image of an invisible backpack full of invisible privileges. She pointed out all of the things that white people enjoy simply due to their skin colour that they assume are true for everyone. Their privileges are invisible to them. But rather use academic speak about how the current hegemony systemically takes agency from oppressed (say wha?) she had us imagine it like these privileges were things we might carry in a knapsack.

Speaking of invisibility – Tolkien's ring! Rather than lecture on and on about the perils of centralized power to corrupt, he told one of the most amazing stories ever told. In fact, his drive to write *Lord of the Rings* came from his seeing the lack of soul in Europe due to the war – the lack of an overriding, indigenous mythology that gave people a sense of place, pride and healthy connection to their land and people.

And speaking of that era of European history and dark things – Carl Jung's work on 'the shadow'. Carl Jung believed that we often repressed parts of ourselves due to shame. And that these parts of us become like a shadow self. We pretend to be happy only to cry ourselves to sleep. In public we eat healthy, only to binge at night. Politicians slam homosexuals as hurting family values only to be exposed as being gay later or having cheated on their spouse. You could write books of theory, or you could simply evoke the image of a shadow – always attached to us and following us no matter what we do. Powerful.

John Gray, seeking to share his understanding of why the differences between men and women were something to be understood and celebrated (and why things so often went wrong in relationships) came up with the metaphor that it was like, 'men are from mars and women are from venus'. He

wasn't saying we were actually from different planets, but rather that it was like we were. And people, instantly, got it.

And the Mars/Venus metaphor is actually a perfect illustration of a central question to ask yourself about your client's experience of their problem: "What does it feel like to them?" What is a metaphor they might use to describe their experience that would capture the essence of it?

A single mom might feel like she's sinking and that the harder she struggles the more it sucks her under

Someone else might feel like stuck in their career like they're hitting their head against a wall. It might feel like when they get to the office they have to put on this 100 lb back pack.

Their persistent problem might feel like a stone in their shoe and they can't get rid of it.

What does it really, honestly feel like for your client to be struggling with the problem they're struggling with?

If you can use the perfect metaphor that captures their exact experience so that they say, 'Oh my God. It feels just. like. that.' you will be amazed at the increase in response you get.

In my last Niching for Hippies program, I asked the participants to share what they imagined it was like for their clients. Here's what they came up with. As you read them, consider if any of these might be true for your clients.

Prison. Walking in the dark. in the shadows. Scraps eater. Hungry tummies for acceptance and love.

Falling through space, flailing.

Stranded and helpless.

It was like being a scared little girl and just wanting someone to hug me and tell me everything is okay, but everyone is too scared to come close to me.

The grass is really greener on the other side of the fence.

They feel they are in a barren dessert.

Trapped inside a tornado of activity taking them nowhere but into more chaos.

Living in Fog.

Falling apart, disappearing, free falling.

Being on an inner tube with constant leaks.

Being trapped in a haunted house with no exit.

Stuck at the bottom of an empty well. Lost at sea, with many maps but no shore in sight. They feel like they are in a dance which they know none of the steps, its all going wrong but they dont know how to stop, or how to get in sync. Stuck in a marsh pit, mucky, scary Being in a classroom when everyone else understands the teacher except you.

Like a fine mist being whisked around by the wind, uncontained.

Like they are moving through molasses (I have felt this in the past....thank God I'm past that..)

It's like chasing after a shiny object and always felt disappointed when you don't get it.

Lost at Sea.

Trapped in a small dark hole, feeling the diminishing oxygen.

A salmon that can't get upstream to spawn...a need to get higher, always swimming against the current, unable to connect to their life cycle.

Walking thru a city changing much for the better but they have a direction they want to go but their map is folded into a spiral and they can't use the tools available to get on there way.

Like being trapped in a nightmare I've had that I'm supposed to take a math test and I didn't even know I was enrolled in the course!

Feeling like a pearl drowning in poop.

Being stuck behind a plexi-glass wall where you can see and here but you can't reach the warmth of life.

Like scuba diving and having your gear ripped away from you.

Surrounded by insurmountable mountains, always seeking to see the big picture from the top but unable to get there.

Holding a puzzle and not knowing how to start solving it.

Life is moving by them and they feel stuck in slow motion.

Miscarriage of the soul

Standing in what was once heaven and suddenly it looks like hell and then thinking maybe I was deluded and I was never in heaven.

They feel like Voldemort looking in the mirror in the morning.

Like they don't know when to jump into the game of jump rope.

Like they're trapped in a labyrinth where each new way out leads to no way out.

They go for a target and the target keeps moving.

Freezing, lost in a fog with no name. Trapped by invisible walls. And no-one knows they are there.

Lost with too many maps and feeling overwhelmed like you're potentially bleeding out everywhere.

Lost in a maze of your own smoke and mirrors.

Stuck in the mud and needing a hand to be pulled out or standing on the edge of a cliff—can't go back have to cross the canyon to the other side but can't see how. Picture the Indiana Jones movie where he is going after the holy grail. There's a rock bridge there but he can't see it, but he steps out based on his father's journal and he is able to cross.

Like the scattered debris after a car accident.

Like a discarded teddy bear on the side of the road.

Like the rain that everyone wanted to go away.

They thought they were playing Hide and Seek, they are hiding, and they realize no one is looking for them.

It's like chasing after a shiny object and always felt disappointed when you don't get it, and I help people realize they're the shiny object they've been searching for.

Like they are lacking a gene that everyone else somehow got.

In the dark with a candle and a match, but don't know how to light it.

Getting swept off the ground where they want to stand.

Compass without magnetic north.

Like being an ignored crying baby.

They feel like a tornado is chasing them, yes them specifically.

Like they are being buried alive.

Now feeling compassion for my mother who said she felt like she had been "left bleeding in the street".

They feel trapped, uncared for, lonely and in need of support.

Like they are a leaky colander, energy being lost, no boundaries, no container.

Standing on the edge of the cliff and need me to guide them across the abyss.

Being a good girl is like being buried alive in a pit of vipers. You want to get out, breathe, move but the

minute you do the vipers will strike and you're dead. Being a good girl is like having a short karmic leash – one baby step off of perfection and I'll be strangled.

Feeling like Mikey mouse in Fantasia, where he disobeyed the Wizard and used the Wizard's wand before being given permission to and all hell broke loose.

Like trying to hold a lighted candle in a 100 mile an hour wind.

My client feels like she lost in the desert on an eternal day...there is nothing but her, the hot sun and the hot sand – no one to talk to, nothing to quench her thirst, but she keeps draggin her weary body throug, hoping.

Having taken the wrong turn on the highway and now having no exit for another 1000 miles.

BEING a puzzle and not knowing how to start putting it all together.

Driving in fifth with handbrake pulled up.

Being a treasure nobody is looking for.

Spent years washing gold only to find it was all just fool's gold.

Like falling in a never-ending rabbithole to nowhere land.

You are lined up at the starting line of a cross country car race. Your car is the top of the line, just like every car on the starting line. You've got all the goods. The race starts and you are right out there with everyone but slowly but surely your car, for no apparent reason, falls behind. You've got everything that everyone else has but you can't win!

An ant with legs stuck in honey.

You have the heart, inspiration, energy and brain to make things happen but you are stuck in the mud and a huge hand keeps pushing you deeper and deeper into the thickest, stickiest mud. The hand only let's you come up for short gasps of air. The worst part is that you know you have the potential but it is being squandered. A racehorse tethered to a pole.

You start our on what looks like a shiny yellow brick road but it turns to a brown, grey road of rubble and bristle. So you try another road. It too is shiny and yellow. . .for a while. Again you end up on a road of rubble.

You know for certain that you are on the road to THE fountain of youth and minutes away. Excited with anticipation, you turn the final corner. The clouds part, the heavenly music begins and you are presented with not one but two hundred fountains of youth. One as sparkly as the next. Which one are you supposed to choose. What if the one you choose is just a normal aquifer of water. Even worse what if the one you choose is poisonous and do harm.

Metaphors in Describing What You Do:

Once you've established the core metaphor for their experience, it's important to ask yourself – who are you in this metaphor?

In the Mars/Venus metaphor, John Gray is clearly a translator helping the two alien races better understand and communicate with each other.

In Carl Jung's shadow metaphor, he's clearly an illuminator helping to bring light to the darker places in his client's psyches.

But of course, you could reverse engineer it. You could start with how you see yourself and then move into what that means for the broader landscape.

I recently asked some clients (many of whom were holistic practitioners or life coaches) how they would describe what they do. What is it like?

Fire-poker: this might imply a larger metaphor of a fire going out that could blaze again with some prodding. It might imply a cold and dark experience for their clients.

Trail guide: such a rich metaphor. It tells me that it's like their clients are lost and needing help finding their way. It might mean there are wild animals to be aware of.

River guide: maybe the river of life scares them and they've fallen out of their boat one too many times and are now sitting on the shore scared to get back in.

And there are so many more: Midwife for the soul. Illuminator. Grandmother (in the Native American sense). Witch doctor. Best Supporting Actor. Angel with mud on my feet. Holder of sacred space. Mirror. Bridge builder. Soul Whisperer. Protector. "Back country" guide for extreme adventure. Plum Line. Eyeglasses. Emotional Midwife. Lifeguard. Wind shield Wiper. Coach. Alchemist. Cave Guide. Window opener (when the door has closed in your face). Taxi driver for lost souls. A health farmer in disguise. A "warrior in monk's robes".

Using Metaphors to Show the Journey You Take People On:

One client who worked with couples fighting about money issues said her work was about turning it from a battleground into a playground. Wow. What a powerful metaphor. You can viscerally get it and see what the difference would look like.

I also heard of <http://www.selfmarriageceremonies.com/> where the core point of view was this: If we really want to express our love for ourselves, it's like we need to marry ourselves. So she helps people create these ceremonies. Amazing.

My colleague Cat Zavis is running a teleseminar series called Parenting With Your Ex: Keep Your Kids Out of the Emotional Crossfire. Crossfire. Like you're in a warzone. You don't want your kids to get hit.

Metaphor Clarifying Questions:

Metaphorically, what is it like for your clients to be struggling with their problem? How do they experience it?

In that metaphor, who are you? What role are you playing in that metaphor? (e.g. If it feels like they're trapped in jail, are you someone who breaks them out?)

Metaphorically, from the outside, describe the situation of your ideal clients when they come to you.

In that metaphor, who are you? What role are you playing in that metaphor? (e.g. If it feels like they're trapped in jail, are you someone who breaks them out?)

When the Niche is Clear, Articulating is Easy

The bottom line in articulating is this: when your niche is clear, it's easy. When your niche is vague, it's impossible.

Some people have an intuitive understanding of their role in the community but have just struggled with the words to capture it. Then it's just a matter of finding the right tactic or approach. But when people are committed to being everything to everybody, there is no technique in the world that will help them.

For most people, they think that the issue is that they can't seem to find the right words, but really it's that there are no right words. They're trying to articulate a general, vague thing in a specific and clear way.

The beautiful part about going through a workbook like this is that it's a powerful way to force clarity on issues that might have remained fuzzy for years. Exercises like this force you to look directly at questions of who you serve, the problem you solve, the result you offer and what you offer them. It forces you to consider how what you're doing seems from the eyes of your potential clients. These exercises are a way to see where you're at in your internal clarity.

Forty Niching Micro Examples

Below are forty winning examples from my 'So You Think You Can Niche' Spring 2013 contest that can inspire and instruct you on what a really clear niche looks like.

Kathy Whitham - I help parents who are at the end of their rope successfully stop the power struggles, connect with their kids and restore peace at home.
www.parentingbeyondwords.com

Leslie Singer - Is midlife messing up your mojo? I coach women to reclaim their sense of self, declare their life purpose & flourish.

Lisa McLoughlin - "Coaching introverts: optimising your quiet strengths"
www.greenaldercoaching.co.uk

Monique Lallemand - I help people with neurological issues to find solutions for making their life smoother and enjoyable. I help people with peripheral neuropathy customize daily rituals, identify healing opportunities and achieve greater happiness.

Sven the Tantric Barbarian - I help female yoga teachers to experience full body orgasms.

Alison Downey - I re-ignite hope for people suffering from chronic pain or emotional distress, using acupuncture to provide long-awaited relief.
<http://bit.ly/YhyijK>

Paula Blundell – I work hands-on for, or alongside, busy eco-minded inner city Calgarians to get their home organized, achieve order and make room to breathe.

www.roomtobreathecalgary.com

Jennifer Fedd – I produce and publish audio books for contemporary romance writers.

audiolark.com

Claudia Neely – I help adults with Asperger's and/or ADHD build intimate relationships, from learning to date, to finding friends and peer groups, to exploring healthy sexuality.

Tanja Gardner – I help coaches, healers and other difference-makers communicate the AWESOMENESS of their services through clear copywriting

crystalclaritycopywriting.com

Dawn Trautman – I coach progressive Protestants to discover a calling that aligns with God, their community, and their own sense of joy.

www.LutheranLifeCoach.com

Elinor Predota – I help LGBT and poly couples to have the wedding and marriage they desire through ceremony creation and relationship coaching.

Joanne Diepenheim – I free heart-centered entrepreneurs from the technical administration work they don't have the know-how, time, or inclination for.

www.rippleeffectsva.com

Katherine Pike – I help women and men over 40 struggling with food and with diets to lose weight naturally without giving up all the things they love to eat.

www.Eat-to-Achieve.com

Peter – I help service-based woman entrepreneurs charge what they worth, get 4 more hours of fun per week without being sales-y and convincing to clients.

Sian Delaney – I help older people affected by frailty, illness or disability receive the care they need in the home that they love.

www.homehelpplus.co.uk/

Kim McNeil – I offer private in-home yoga therapy, workshops, and retreats for those living with arthritis whose needs are not met in conventional yoga classes.

www.kimmcneilyoga.ca

Dillena – I help LGBT folks with depression, anxiety and self-esteem issues feel happy and secure with themselves using a caring, drug-free approach.

<http://on.fb.me/UdwZyW>

Renee Stotz – As the Womb Wellness Coach, I help women who have had an abortion heal their mental, emotional and physical well-being.

www.reneestotz.co.uk

Rebecca Allen – I help broken hearts heal their wounds when relationships end. Shiatsu helps grief evolve naturally so you can laugh, love and be happy again.

<http://on.fb.me/Wh9OkH>

Joseph Coats – I help connect people to nature by creating edible and useful landscapes that provide for many of their basic needs (food, H2O, fiber, fuel.)

Camilla Freeman – I help women and couples maximize fertility with customized dietary, herbal medicine and movement plans.

www.camillefreeman.com

Jacque Robertson – I help bitchy, bloated & burnt-out female professionals have more energy, love their body and feel less stressed.

www.jacquierobertson.ca

Geneviève Côté – I help women struggling with anxiety disorders live anxiety-free with the help of practical herbal medicine and other drug free techniques.

Miki – I help soul-wounded fathers heal while raising boys who come of age with a deep sense of purpose and belonging.

Tamara – I'm a floral designer that works with brides who've been dreaming about their wedding since they were little girls.

www.purelyflower.com

KlaraBowPie – I hand make specially designed blankets to help people with Post Traumatic Stress feel safe.

www.plumestorytellers.co.uk

Lisa Reinhardt – Women love our organic vegan dark chocolate that's infused with herbs, spices and flower essences to balance body and mind.

www.weiofchocolate.com

Anonymous – I sell ethically produced wild life pendants in soapstone targeted at children to remind them of animal rights and environmental issues.

Caroline Van Kimmenade – I teach struggling empathic people who feel overwhelmed and fearful how to make their sensitivity a joyful gift so that they work working WITH their sensitivity instead of fighting it.

www.thehappysensitive.com

Janina Na – I make artisanal bath and body care luxuries for people with sensitive skin and/or multiple chemical sensitivities.

KC Schwarz – I use Thai yoga massage to help older guys ease the effects of aging on a physically demanding lifestyle.

Lucy Lambriex – I use photography and text to portray enterprising people who care about authenticity, so they will attract the people and clients that fit.

<http://lablambriex.nl>

Lori RN (a.k.a. Minky) – I mentor nurses who are fitness enthusiasts, combine their nursing skills and fitness training to improve the health of people ‘at-risk’ for disease.

Kat – I teach single moms how to release overwhelm and frustration, be confident parents, and be the change they want to see in their children.

Mark Zloch – I help “crazy,” creative and ambitious people in becoming more focused, organized and productive, so they can realize their potential most fully.

Sarah – I show sufferers of Fibromyalgia and CFS how to manage symptoms, relieve pain, and re-occupy their lives.

For more help in figuring out your niche, go to www.nichingspiral.com

About The Author

Tad Hargrave is a hippy who developed a knack for marketing (and then learned how to be a hippy again.) For almost a decade, he has been touring his marketing workshops around Canada, bringing refreshing and unorthodox ideas to conscious entrepreneurs and green businesses that help them grow their organizations and businesses (without selling their souls). He does improv comedy semi professionally, co-runs Edmonton's progressive community building network TheLocalGood.ca, founded www.streetcarshows.com and the Jams program of www.yesworld.org. He speaks Scottish Gaelic and is also a huge Doctor Who nerd. You can learn more about him at www.marketingforhippies.com

