

Marketing for Hippies 101

How to Grow Your Green, Local and Holistic Business



Workbook & Bonus Reading

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Collapsing, Posturing and Composure

Here's a little thought that I got from my friends at Authentic World in San Francisco and that I melded with some ideas from my colleague Ari Galper of Unlock the Game (and a bit of Stuart Wilde).

I normally steer clear of talking personal growth at my workshops and on my blog but this is a pattern that is so core and pervasive in business and I've found it to be very valuable to share with others.

In the end, so much of success in business comes down to this ephemeral thing called 'vibe'. How people feel around us.

And that has so much to do with how we're being (and very little to do with what we're doing).

"Who you are shouts so loudly in my ears that I can not hear what you say."

Emerson

"We have each had the experience of others reacting to us; often there seems to be no logic to it. But in fact, people do pick up on our subtle energy, and even if they can't see it or put it into words, they feel it and, subliminally, they know.

They vote yes, no or maybe according to the qualities and strength of the energy we project."

- Stuart Wilde

I find that in life – and certainly in business – people vacillate between two poles – two ends of a line – on one side there's collapse and on the other side there's posturing.

Collapse:

Collapsing often shows up around money. Someone asks you what you charge and you say (though nervous to say it), "I charge \$100 per hour." And then they wince. And you immediately say, "But you know, if that's a problem we could do \$75 . . . or \$50!!! \$25!! . . . I'll pay you! Why don't I pay you since it's your first treatment?"

It's almost that bad with some people.

They might have winced because they thought you were undercharging. You'll never know.

Collapsing is a caving in of the shoulders and a slump forward.

And it's driven by an agenda. The hidden agenda of collapsing is "Love me". We want people to love us and so we sell out our self respect and integrity. What we don't know when we're stuck in it is that this is profoundly unattractive. At its extremes it's repulsive.

Fundamentally, collapsing is a lose/win gesture. We say to our clients, "I'll lose, so you can win."

It's easy, when we're stuck in it, to think that we're being generous and giving. But we're actually being sneaky in trying to get their love. How do know it's not genuine giving? Because, when the giving isn't reciprocated we burn out and get resentful . . . of our clients, of potential clients, of other practitioners, of the Universe – anybody. We give so much! Why aren't we getting back? We're such a nice person!

Collapse is the breeding ground of martyrdom, neediness and self pity. Not attractive.

Sometimes this fools people.

Initially, they might think, 'wow. what a generous person!' But, the perceptive see through this ruse right away. And, eventually, it makes most people very uneasy around us because they begin to quickly feel like they owe us. Mark Silver wrote a brilliant blog about this called, 'Avoiding the Horrors of the Sliding Scale'. He points out that most people are so collapsed around money . . . and so they offer their workshops on a sliding scale. The challenge is, they're using the sliding scale not as a gift but as a way of avoiding talking about money. Avoiding admitting that they are human and that they have needs.

When we're collapsed, people can feel us energetically leaning in on them and looking for love – even as we lean way back from them around money issues.

Collapsing can look like not preparing for events or figuring out follow up for them. It can look like getting to the end of an intro workshop and spending the last ten minutes giving more content rather than talking about your upcoming program because you just want to keep giving.

Collapsing says, 'their needs matter. mine don't'.

In fact, it's worse than that. There's a deep shame about even having needs in the first place.

Consequently, collapsing is a lack of self care because every ounce of our energy is being spent on doing whatever we think is most likely to get us the love of others. Collapse is based on a core feeling of not being enough and trying to do enough so that we'll feel loved. It can be a protective mechanism too. Secretly, we might feel like we're a bad person so . . . if we just do enough good things then we can't be attacked by others because, 'hey! look at all the good I've done.'

Collapsing is the toxic mimic of genuine appreciation. Appreciations looks at things as they are and says, 'yes'. Appreciation sees the beauty in things as they are. And what we appreciate, appreciates – what we focus on expands. Both appreciation and collapse look outwards to the world to notice other people and the world one takes whatever is happening very personally.

And so it's incredibly hard for a collapse to say 'no' to helping someone out. They're often pushovers, patsies and doormats. They'll say yes to you, even if it means they might have to give up something important to them they wanted to do. When people are stuck in collapse – they can't be trusted. They will give and give and give and then one day they will snap. And it's not pretty when they do.

Posturing:

Posturing is the other side of the coin.

Posturing is when we puff ourselves up and try to seem more successful and confident than we actually are.

Posturing is where we lean waaaay back emotionally but lean in hard on the money.

Posturing says, 'Please believe in me. See me as powerful and amazing.'

And, deep down, posturing is scared shitless that it's a fraud. Which is a reasonable fear to have. It is, after all, a fraud.

When you meet someone and they feel plastic, a bit too polished and slick, it's likely posturing. When you're around someone and they seem happy and confident, but you feel scared – it's likely posturing.

Posturing is, I think, also a reactive place to having been collapsed for a long time. Posturing makes a lot of demands. It says, 'I will be paid what I deserve!' but with an edge to it. If collapsing is a place of victimhood, then posturing is a place of, "I won't be a victim (anymore)." energy here (often from having been a victim before).

Posturers talk a good game. They talk a lot about their big goals and visions for the future. It can be incredibly enticing. But usually nothing happens. Because to make big things happen, they need to play with the big boys. And the big boys have tended to be a bit more discerning. They know posturing when they see it.

And posturing in business has a hidden agenda too – 'get the sale'. It's a win/lose orientation. I win and . . . I don't really care what happens to you. I think this has to do with the obsession with how we're perceived. So, if I can fill a seminar room with two hundred people then that makes me look successful. If I can 'close' half the room and get them to sign up for my advanced workshop then I'm successful. I'm powerful.

But, inside of posturing, there's really not much room for noticing the participants and whether or not they should even be in the room in the first place. When someone's in posturing it's all about them. People who are posturing are also often emulating someone (or some constellation of someones). There's someone whose approval they desperately want to have.

A young minister might come across as overzealous because they are trying to gain the approval of some higher up minister or bishop (or Jesus). A young soldier might be overly aggressive because they want to be just like some older general or war hero. A motivational speaker might be a bit too positive and upbeat because they want to be just like Tony Robbins.

Posturing can be republicans talking about family values and then it's discovered that they were cheating – or ranting about the evils of homosexuality only to be outed a few years later. It can be someone like Rush Limbaugh who blusters and rants in his radio studio and then as he leaves, according to many, becomes incredibly less confident.

Posturing often shows up as a big difference between onstage and offstage personalities. It shows up as hidden obsessions and habits. Posturing calls for some deep shadow work.

It's all posturing

Posturers can often lure people in. They speak with such earnest passion (but a little too earnest). They ooze confidence (but to a sensitive observer it's a 'put on' over-confidence).

People who posture are often convinced they can help you. They feel certain that their solution is for everyone. And this means that, when you speak to them about working with them, you are likely to feel a great deal of sales pressure because the whole sales conversation is phony. It's not even a conversation, it's a pitch. It's not an exploration. They're just trying to manoeuvre you to saying, 'yes'.

Posturing is the toxic mimic of genuine integrity. Integrity says, 'this is what i want. this is who i am' and makes no apologies about it. integrity is forthright, direct and clear. it's solid. Posturing is still focused on what we want – but it's sneaky. It's hidden.

I, sadly, did this for years. I studied Brian Tracy, Tom Hopkins, Zig Ziglar, NLP etc. And they were all predicated on that – getting people to say 'yes'. Closing the sale. Most of this sales training is deeply dehumanizing. I pushed people, tried (almost always unsuccessfully) to manipulate them into signing up for the courses of the seminar company I worked with.

*"Do not make yourself so big.
You are not so small."
~ Jewish Proverb*

Which one are you?

Consider both of these patterns and notice where they show up in your life.

When I was 18, I wanted to be Tony Robbins. Super badly. I wanted his approval so badly. And I ended up leading workshops for people two or three times my age. I had no business leading those kinds of workshops. I was posturing. Pretending to be more together than I was. I recall talking about health and exercise with such passion and certainty even though I totally didn't do those things consistently. Other times, I can be a pretty big collapse.

Which one feels dominant for you?

The muddy middle ground . . .

Neither or these work very well or feel very satisfying.

And either of them can have you develop four very unappealing, business killing qualities.

And so we often vacillate from one to the other. A common pattern I see in the conscious crowd is collapse going to marketing workshops and learning a bunch of posturing tactics. They are nervous but excited to try them. They try them and then people are like, 'WTF!!!' and they're so mortified that they rush straight back to collapse.

A dear friend of mine who had such a sweet and shy energy once went to one of the more 'postury' workshops I've hear of. She learned how to do 'accelerated learning', high fives, call and response and offer big packages from the front of the room and 'close the room'. So, she invited her friends to an intro and tried to close her friends. And they were appalled and sad, "What happened to our sweet friend??" they asked. She never did that again.

Much of the mainstream business world is full of posturing. Most of the holistic and conscious world is full of collapsing.

So many people though, seem to try to find a middle ground between collapsing and posturing. I want to suggest that the answer isn't in the middle. It's above. If you can imagine collapsing and posturing as end points on a single line. And then we add a third point above and bam! a triangle . . . which we'll call this third element composure. It's the third alternative.

What collapsing and posturing both have in common are . . .

- they're both trying to 'get' something from the other person whether it's love or money.
- their agendas are secret and hidden.
- they're both a cover for feelings of deep inadequacy and the feeling of always trying to be enough.
- they both feel stressful to live in
- both are based in the feeling that this world is not a safe place to be

The Third Alternative – Composure:

Composure is an entirely different realm.

It's a much more relaxed place.

"Stress is who you think you should be. Relaxation is who you are."

- Chinese Proverb

"We're not here to earn God's love. We're here to spend it."

- Swami Beyondananda

Donald Trump is posturing. Woody Allen is collapse. The Dalai Lama is composure. Oprah Winfrey, Obama, Eckhart Tolle are composure. Cool as a cucumber. Non reactive.

Composure isn't confidence as much as comfort in our own skin. We're not leaning forward or back, we're sitting up straight and comfortably inside of ourselves. This is the ground of win/win. We are committed to everybody's needs being met – including our own.

Composure has an agenda – but it's not secret.

The agenda is to know the truth of the situation. And in business this translates as, 'is this a fit?' People who are composed rarely trigger sales pressure and if they do they're able to diffuse it because they're really not

attached. Consciously or not, they've become well verses in the Ten Levels of Diffusing Sales Pressure. Composed people walk in with no agenda and a deep honour and respect for both themselves and the other person. They would never dream of pushing anyone to do anything that didn't feel right.

Composed people are profoundly present.

People who are composed tend to feel whole inside (whether through upbringing or extraordinary amount of healing work).

When we're composed we say 'yes' when we want to and 'no' when we want to. We're much more able to build our business based on resonance than on trying to convince people of anything.

I think part of what feels so wonderful about being around composed people is that they're wonderfully human. They're humble enough to admit that they have needs and they're okay with that. There's a deep embracing of our humanity here.

We are naturally drawn to composed people because there's an old truth that where we speak from we speak to. If you speak from a collapsed place in yourself – you speak to that place in others. If you speak from a place of posturing in you – you will hit that place in others. Neither of those places feel at ease in people and so folks will feel uneasy around you. When you speak from your center – people feel that and relax.

When we're composed, we actually listen to people. We have real conversations to see if what we're offering is a fit for people. And if it's not a fit, that's okay.

"The best chief is not the one who persuades people to his point of view. It is instead the one in whose presence most people find it easiest to arrive at the truth".

Mohawk Wisdom

Three Foundations of a Thriving Business

At some point last year, it became clear to me that there are three main things most entrepreneurs need to have handled in order to thrive. They overlap each other like circles in a Venn Diagram.

And I realize now that I'd never written about them explicitly. So, here we are.

First, there's a seven minute video of me sharing the overview and then I've written a recap and bit more about my thoughts on this.

First of all, I want you to imagine that a successful business is like a stylish bucket full of water. And then we need to ask ourselves, 'why don't most people have a full bucket of water?'

Element #1: Your Platform

Your platform is what you're known for.

It's your brand, your identity, your reputation.

It's also the basis of every, single marketing decision you'll ever make. It's the core of what makes a business either authentic or not, original or a copy cat.

I want to submit that there are six things you can be known for. And that most entrepreneurs only focus on ONE of those things (which is also the one that makes them seem the most generic, boring and 'just like everyone else.' You can be known for what you do, but also why you do it, your point of view on it, you can be known for you and your style, you can be known for the particular journey you take people on and you can be known for the unimagined possibility you introduce into people's lives.

Most businesses try to get known for what they do or make (e.g. I'm a massage therapist, I make widgets, I sell groceries). The challenge is that, unless you're the only one in your area or community doing that then how are they supposed to make a decision about who to work with? How should they know if you're a perfect fit for them?

When people don't have a platform their marketing will always come across as generic and lack lustre.

Element #2: The Container

There's no point in pouring more and more water into a leaky bucket. The first step is to stop the leak. It seems obvious. But most entrepreneurs don't so much have a leaky bucket as a sieve or strainer. It holds onto almost nothing.

And some entrepreneurs have a bucket that's so ugly (to them) that they don't even bring it with them to the river side. They're afraid people might see them with it and laugh at what an old bucket they have.

It's important not just that our bucket 'works' but that we're so proud of it and so charmed with it that we want to take it everywhere. That we'd be so happy for people to see us with it.

I've known so many people who've gotten covered in the media for their work and have gotten no clients from it. Or they're super well known and loved, but don't have a lot of clients. So much water that pours in and then almost immediately out.

Your container is the embodiment of your platform. It's what people see or experience about your business that immediately gives them a sense of whether or not what you're offering is a fit for them. The clearer your platform, the stronger your container.

If you were hosting a party, the platform would be the theme of the party and the container would be all the decorations, the cleaning, the hot cup of cider offered to guests as they arrived. Your website is a container. Your landing page. The story of your business. The free workshop you do is a container. The blog is a container. The community that you cultivate and create is held in the container of your online forums, live events, your email list etc. Your container is comprised of all the structures you create that warmly hold your community.

Your container are all the things they can see, hear and explore that give them a sense of you.

Your container are all the processes and systems you create that make it safe for people to check you out at a safe distance and slowly get closer to you and opt in to being in touch with you.

Imagine Oprah Winfrey tells everyone to check you out. Vaguely mentions what you do but not enough to give anyone a real sense of it. So, what do they do? They check you out online. But, what if you don't have a website? Or what if your website doesn't really clarify what you're about? So many people would see your site, maaaaybe bookmark it . . . and then be gone forever.

But what if they found your website and the homepage immediately helped them figure out if what you were doing was a fit or not, the 'about me' page gave them a really good sense of who you were and what you were about. And then there was a way they could sign up for things to be in touch with you (e.g. 'join my email list and get this free gift' or 'follow me on twitter or facebook' or 'come to my monthly free workshop' etc). Imagine the following you'd build over time.

For a container to be effective, it needs to be clear (which means the platform should be clear). It's good if it's safe and welcoming, but at the bottom line it needs to be resonant.

If they're on Island A and trying to get to Island B, your container is, basically, your boat. And of course, a boat might have many rooms in it or different types of tours you could take people on (the different offers you could make).

Your container is the home made ready for the party. When they show up that they want to stay. They get to the door and they're nervous, but then they smell the food, they see how beautifully decorated it is, they see the wonderful people inside, they're greeted with a cup of hot apple cider and they hear the beautiful music etc.

One of my colleagues Bill Baren recently shared a thought about this. He had a client who was promoting a teleseminar and there was a webpage people would go to to register for the teleseminar. They were obsessed with reaching more people. But Bill asked them to pause and check out what percentage of people who were actually going to the landing page were signing up. It turned out that 10% of people who hit the page actually entered in their name and email to register for the free teleseminar. That means 90% hit the page and just left.

“Doesn’t it make more sense,” he offered. “To see if we can tweak the page to boost the percent of people that say yes? Isn’t that a better use of energy? Instead of investing so much time and effort in getting more people, let’s see if we first can’t get more results from the people who are already coming. Right now we’ve got a tub with a huge leak. Instead of pouring in more and more water, let’s plug the leak first.”

When there’s no container it can be so confusing, ‘I’m doing everything right and I’m not getting any clients!’

Think of online dating. You create a profile. And then, you get a message from someone. But do you open the message right away? Often not. Most often, people will check out, ‘who is it that sent this message?’. So you go to their profile and, within seconds, you’ve determined whether or not it’s a fit. Your profile is a container. The message is just a path that gets them to it. Make sure the container is good.

Having a strong and clear container is the basis for creating ongoing , long term relationships with your clients.

And that’s vital.

Most entrepreneurs are obsessed with getting new clients. But it’s often much, much, easier to get an existing client to come back than to find someone entirely new. A massage therapist might make \$100 on their first hour long massage (to keep number simple). But if that client comes back even three times a year for three years – that’s \$900. The front end (\$100) always pales in comparison to the back end (\$900). And with some work (less than you’d fear, but more than you’d hope) you can increase the backend. What if they came in 4 times a year for three years? Suddenly, it’s \$1200. With no new clients. And what if each of those clients referred even one new client? What if you offered workshops, products or other packages to them? Without a single new client you could be making much more money. And having your clients feel so much more supported.

Your container is your sales funnel. It’s the levels of offerings you have. It goes from the free samples to the bronze, silver and then gold levels.

I was in a Gaelic short film in the summer of 2011. You’d think that I would be spreading the word to everyone I know about it. But I haven’t. Why? There’s no website. No DVD’s are available. There’s no email list people can sign up for. Where would I send them?

One of my dearest colleagues has yet to create a website that’s really worthy of his work yet. I adore him. I want to spread the word for him. But he has no email sign up form yet. His homepage feels a bit vague. And I’m only going to have one chance to launch him to my list. I want that to count. I want it to matter. If I send people now, they’ll go and leave and he’ll get very little from it. I don’t want to waste my time.

A good container creates instant and ever deepening clarity.

A bad container creates confusion.

And I hate confusion. If you ask me to spread the word about you and you've got a bad container, it puts the burden on me to explain it all and make it clear to the people I'm spreading the word to. It makes it hard. Don't make my life hard. If you have a bad container you're not ready to approach hubs yet.

I want to be able to take one look at your boat and say 'I get it'. Just from the kinds of boat, types of sails, the paint job, clothing of the staff on board . . . I want to know what the platform is. I want to know: aha! this is an adventure boat or a luxury boat or a fun times boat or a new agey boat.

If you offer some kind of therapy, I want to know, 'is it in person or over the phone? Am I sitting or lying down? Am I hooked up to some fancy machine? Are you touching me? Am I naked? Are all these things happening at once? (awesome).'

Remember: the confused mind says 'no'.

Before someone even thinks about stepping onto your boat they need to know what kind of trip they're in for. And people hate it when their expectations are broken. They got on what seemed like the 'classy' boat but it turns out it was the 'raunchy' boat. Then people are pissed.

Amway has a bad reputation for this. You meet someone. They seem nice. They invite you for 'coffee'. You end up getting a 45 minute presentation. It's sneaky. The beauty of a good container is that it's immensely upfront.

Real life example: you go out and tell someone about what i do (path). they say cool and check out my website (container) and like it because of all the unique content that expresses what i'm about (platform). I run a free teleseminar (container). It's hosted by a colleague who tells all of their friends via their email list (path). While they're on the teleseminar I tell them about a next thing i have (path). So a container can also be a path. Once they're in relationship with us there's just an ongoing deepening. I tend to think of the path as 'how do they find out about things?'

In my Six Week course I'm running right now, one of my clients shared this, "don't forget the path to your website, it doesn't matter how awesome your website looks, if there is no path to it, it's as though it doesn't exist. the main paths that a paying client would take to your website are search engine searches. so you have to know what your clients would be searching for (keywords) and you have to tell them something on your website that would show them that you have the answers."

The platform is the gift you want to give. The container is the making of it. The platform is what you want to offer to the world. But not offering it in a foisting it upon others and being pushy kind of way. I think of the container as more like a space you create that you carefully invite people to. And you design the space so clearly that it would inherently attract people who are a perfect fit for you.

There's a chain of hotels I heard about the models it's boutique hotels after magazines. So, one hotel is a Rolling Stone magazine style hotel. Another is a Chatelaine style hotel. That kind of thing. You can imagine what the Rolling Stone style hotel would look like and how, even in the colours, construction, design of the rooms, food served might be different. They are not generic hotels. They're particular. The hotel (container) perfectly expresses the platform (the magazine).

When we first start out, our container is like an old one room house. There's really not much to it. We offer one thing. Maybe that's individual sessions, workshops, a particular product etc. And it's a lot to even get that together. But, as we grow our business, we have a chance to add rooms to our house. With each room, extension, addition and beautification we can hold more people and make our home more resonant with the right folks. Of course, each addition to the house is a project. And these projects often take longer than we'd think and go over budget and we're left thinking, 'is this worth it?'. Because while we're working on that we're not making money. But eventually, it's all done and we step back and get chills. Our house is a little more beautiful and exciting to us. And we want to show everyone. And, eventually, our home is perfect. Not too big and not too small. It's got just the right number of rooms all painted just the right colours. There are minor fixes to be made but, basically, we're there.

And, at that point, our attentions moves mostly to creating more paths to our place. So, much of this process is about our time and attention. At first, most of it goes to the platform. Then it moves into creating the container. And then the paths.

Here's an odd way of looking at your container. Have you ever dated someone and realized it wasn't going anywhere? It had gone as far as it was going to go? So what did you do? Likely you left them. There was no more potential. Nothing else to get or give. Clients are like that too. If they show up and check out your website and there's lots of free stuff but there's no products to buy, no workshops to attend, no next steps . . . they will just drift away and find someone else who can better help them on their journey. A container is not simply a static thing. It's a series of invitations into something more deep and wonderful.

The container has a lot to do with being ready. Preparing our home to receive guests. Making sure we're ready for when they show up. Being craftsmen of our arts. Attention to details. Small things matter. Wrapping our gifts as beautifully as we can. This gives us a sense of pride. We're excited (not embarrassed) to send people to our website. We can't wait to show off our cafe. We know that the details are handled so we don't fuss about them. We can relax. The container, we find, not only holds the potential client - it holds us too.

Element #3: The Path

If the platform is the bucket design, and the container is the bucket, then the path is a faucet that water comes out of (and I suppose your clients and income would be the water). Not much point in having a beautiful bucket if it's going to sit there empty all the time.

Another analogy: So many people set up their businesses in the middle of a forest with no paths leading to it. They are hoping that somehow, lost in the woods, the right people will stumble upon them and want to buy what they're offering.

The more paths you have leading to your doorstep the more easily you can be found. This is the heart of marketing, making it easy for the right people who are a perfect fit to find you and say 'yes' to working with you.

But there are so very many ways to market what we do.

And that can feel overwhelming. Where do we start? Especially when everyone has an opinion about what the 'best' form of marketing is. There's public speaking, writing, hosting events, social media, PR, advertising, online events, free samples of our work . . . So much.

Weight watchers has an interesting and very down to earth take on this. When doing their workshops, they'll ask their audiences, 'what do you think is the best form of exercise for weight loss?' and people will throw out their opinions: running, walking, swimming etc. And then they'll say, 'Here's the truth. There is one form of exercise that is the best. It's proven beyond a shadow of a doubt to be the most effective form of exercise for weight loss. Do you want to know what it is? The best exercise is . . . the one you'll do.'

And there it is.

The one you'll do.

I think the analogy of paths is good for another reason: they're already looking for us. People are already struggling with certain problems and symptoms and looking for relief. Let's make it as easy as possible for them to find us by making as many clear paths through the woods as we can. The easier you are the find, the more easily you will be found.

Many people think that marketing is about searching people in the forest. But we need to remember, the people we think we need to search for are already searching for us. And they're highly motivated. So, let's put our energy not into chasing anyone but into getting very clear about who the perfect someone's are that we want to work with, creating wonderful and inspiring containers to receive them into and then making it almost impossible for them not to find out about us and check us out in low risk ways.

We can't always afford to lay down a highway to our doorstep. Start with trails of breadcrumbs. Start where you can with the types of paths that resonate most with you.

When there are no paths it's like you've got this amazing thing that nobody knows about.

My suggestion to you: pick three paths. Pick three marketing tactics and strategies that feel really good for you and invest deeply into them. Do you like writing? Speaking? Hosting? Think about the ways of expressing yourself that you are naturally drawn to and delve deep into those.

When a business has all three of these, a clear platform, a strong container and easy paths they tend to have all the business they can handle.

Pink Spoon Marketing

A few questions for you:

When people hit your website, do they stick around?

Do they sign up to your email list?

When you meet someone at a networking party who is curious about your work, do you have a way to give them a taste of what you do that doesn't involve giving away your time for free?

When you host a teleseminar or are interviewed, do you have an incentive to offer people to go and check out your website?

Does your business card get you any business? I mean really?

Do you have things your clients can pass onto their friends to get them interested in what you do?

If you don't, then this might be the most important blog post you've read in a while.

A lot of people make the mistake of seeing marketing as about trying to change minds rather than seeing who naturally resonates with what they offer.

Or they expect people to jump into the deep end of their incredibly profound work without any shallow end of the pool to explore. They expect people to sign up for their full weekend intensive workshop without knowing anything about them or their work. They have a booth at a craft show with everything flat on the table and wonder why no one approaches them.

Or they just give out a tonne of business cards and brochures and expect people to sign up and buy.

Everything above is all about the same thing – the same blunder committed by countless entrepreneurs.

What we eventually find is that safety is incredibly important in marketing.

The first thing marketing needs to do is get the attention of your ideal client.

But then we need to lower the risk of them taking a first step in working with us. We need to make it so easy for them to check us out to see if it feels like a fit.

So, the main idea in this here is about the importance of creating a free gift you can offer to people to help them figure out if your work is a fit for them.

I first really got this from reading PinkSpoonMarketing.com. It is a colleague of mine, Andrea Lee, who is a lovely, lovely lady.

She is the one who introduced me to the idea of a sales funnel and the ‘pink spoon’ in marketing.

do you have a pink spoon in your marketing?

You will notice the image here is like an ice cream store.

You have the pink spoon (the literal little pink spoon that gives you a sample taste of ice cream), an ice cream cone, a little bucket of ice cream, ice cream cake, and the calendar which is like for some ice cream stores, believe it or not, have a club you can join where every month you get mailed a coupon for a new delicious flavor of ice cream. It costs a bunch of money because it is really rare, but that’s what you get.

There are different levels of the funnel. You will notice that it is wider at the top and narrower at the bottom. Wider at the top is of course more people are going to try the free thing; less people will try the cone, less people will get a gallon, and very few people will go for the club.



Figure 3: Multiple Streams Ice Cream Journey

Think of it as a yoga studio. The pink spoon would be a free class. The ice cream cone might be a drop in class. The bucket of ice cream might be a ten pass or a monthly pass. The cake might be a weekend workshop. The club would be the teacher training. Interesting fact, if you take out the teacher training at the sales funnel of most yoga studios, they will collapse within six months to a year. They will just totally not last. It is that important.

There is the bronze, silver, and gold sort of levels. You have seen this all sorts of places. You will see the image below and it gives you a sense of what the price points might be. The pink spoon is free. The next level is anywhere from \$5 to \$50, then \$50 to \$200 for the level after that, and then \$200 to \$500, and then the bottom level of \$500 plus, as an example. It may vary.



The important thing is having levels.

There are a few reasons this matters so much.

First of all, consider the impact of trying to remove levels from the sales funnel. Think of it as just pink spoons. Cover with your hand the whole sales funnel and all you have is the pink spoons. You are kind of popular for awhile, but you are broke at the end and you have no ice cream.

And it is actually really frustrating for people who then discover a flavour they like and they want more. You tell them they can have another little sample, but that is all they can have. Eventually, that gets very frustrating for people.

But, on the other side of it, a yoga studio would collapse without the teacher training because that is where most of their money comes from. The yoga studio actually doesn't make that much money from the regular classes because the teacher needs to be paid, there is overhead etc. Teacher trainings are thousands of dollars so that is where they make most of their money.

Imagine covering the sales funnel, except the calendar at the bottom of the funnel. That would be like walking into a yoga studio and saying, "Hey, I was wondering if I could do a drop-in class?"

They would say, "We don't do that, but if you would like to sign up for our \$3,000 teacher training you can." You get what a huge leap that is. You walk in to a studio where you don't know the teachers, you don't know their philosophy, you don't know anything about their platform or who they are, and they are immediately expecting you to make that kind of a leap.

Here is the really compelling piece that will just nail some of you. Take out everything, cover up the pink spoon, cover up everything below the ice cream cone. I would suggest that the situation most holistic practitioners are in, most holistic practitioners are in is a position of just selling ice cream cones.

That sounds like this: "Hey, thanks for coming in for the session. Would you like to book another session?" and then when they come back, "Would you like to book another session?" And figuratively, it is just selling ice cream cones.

I want to submit that that isn't as safe for people as you would think. You don't know if they want to try a whole cone. They just want to try a sample first. So it is not safe for them and it is not that sustainable for you.

Now you are stuck just trying to get new people in all the time, trying to rebook people, having that uncomfortable conversation. Having a sales funnel makes it much safer for people to engage at the level that feels comfortable for them. It also makes your work much more sustainable for you.

I will tell you a bit about my personal experience with this. When I first started off I was just doing workshops. I had no pink spoons. It was kind of hard to get people in my workshops. I had one workshop, this one weekend workshop called the Radical Business Intensive. Then I started developing some pink spoons.

I came up with my Niche Workbook. I came up with The Horrible Hundred, the Radical Business 180, these early diagnostics that are a part of the eBook that you can download on my Web site. I had those and those were great.

Then I had this intro workshop that I was doing. One day, I thought, I just need to record this, get it transcribed, so I can offer it as a pink spoon as a free thing on my Web site. I had that. People immediately loved having that. It didn't make me any money but it helped me grow my list.

I combined the quizzes plus the transcript of that plus a few other things into this 200-page eBook (which is overkill). You don't need that much content for a pink spoon. It might be too much, but a lot of people say they love it.

My blog has become a huge pink spoon. The great thing with the blog is that I am getting to a point where I can take some of those posts from my blog and move them into products. I take them off my blog, turn them into a product that I can charge for, but I got to share it and it got to be useful for people in the meantime, which I feel really wonderful about.

Then I noticed that I was getting a lot of people who were holistic practitioners. I created this workshop, Marketing 101 for Holistic Practitioners. That was another revenue stream. I had this other sort of more green business thing and the holistic practitioner workshop.

Then I created the “How to Create a Free Gift on Your Website”, basically, how to create the pink spoon on your Web site. That was a little bit additional revenue.

Then I was seeing that I had so many of my favourite clients who were just never going to come back to the same old workshop – so I designed a workshop called The HotBox which was invite only for my favourite clients. Five clients per workshop. 100% based in hotseats. Each person gets an hour of the groups time. I’ve done three of them so far and the results have been really powerful. I charge a sliding scale of \$250 – \$500 for it.

Then I got this crazy idea to turn my weekend workshop, the Marketing 101 for Holistic Practitioners, into this six-week online course, which I have been enjoying so much, and that you are a part of. That has been really good financially, sustainably, etc. I charged \$200 for a basic level and then offered the group course plus an hour of coaching for \$300 and six coaching sessions for \$700. I made \$8400 or so. That’s more profitable than most weekends I’ve ever done (no costs for venue, travel, accommodations etc.).

Then I led a Niching for Hippies virtual course. The first time I led it, I charged \$300 per person and got about 45 people. So, that was about \$13,000 when it was all said and done. I did it again six months later and charged \$600 for it and got 45 people. In the end, that was about \$23,000 of profit.

My situation used to be, “I’m broke. I need to hit the road and do some more workshops.” But now I am actually hitting the road with money in my bank instead of the tank being dry.

As my sales funnel has become more robust, I can’t tell you the relief it is. It feels like the boat is getting so much more solid. It is not leaking as much. Again, not just being safer for people to check me out, but to uphold me. Also, I created a bunch of these case studies that are on my Web site for free.

But, it all starts with the pink spoons. It all starts with the free gift you can offer people. This is not a new idea. Ice cream stores do it. Bakeries do it. Grocery stores do it. Authors do it with ‘free chapters’ of their books and blogs. You should do it too.

It starts with giving people a way to sample what you have to offer with no risk, at no cost and that take zero time from you.

There’s nothing I know of that will help you build your list, deepen trust, connect with people and develop a following that having a thoughtful, well put together pink spoon.

Pink Spoon Exercise:

Your business might have seven levels. It might only have three. But use these questions to start mapping out what your sales funnel might look like.

Pink Spoon: What are all of the things you could offer for free to give people a taste of what you do?

Ice Cream Cone: Once they've tried that, what might be the best next steps for them (in the \$5-50 range)?

Bucket: Once they've enjoyed that what might be the best next step (in the \$50-200 range)?

Ice Cream Cake: If they really loved that, what else might you be able to offer (in the \$200-\$500 range)?

Ice Cream Club: What might the highest level be (in the \$500+ range)?

Pink Spoon Exercise:

Try drawing it all out in a picture so you can map out how it all connects and what leads to what.

The Three Roles of Marketing

This is one of those things that is actually very important to get about marketing that I talk about really seldomly but should probably talk about more.

When people are working on their marketing, I think that, often, they don't really understand the role that their marketing needs to play. Or I should say 'roles' because there's more than one.

To give credit where it's due, I learned this first from the incredibly useful marketing book *Monopolize Your Marketplace* by Richard Harshaw.

Most ads fail to meet these criteria. They talk all about the business. Which no one cares about. People care about their problems and the results they want. That's it.

The First Role of Marketing: Get their attention.

This one is, of course, primary. If we don't have people's attention, there's no conversation to be had. Marketing must, first and foremost, get their attention.

This is much harder than it looks because of the sheer number of marketing messages people get every day. And the number of stimuli people receive even outside of that (e.g. social media, texts, friends, emails etc.). People are already overwhelmed and in a bit of a haze. To break through that haze is difficult. Certainly you can use the shock factor to do it. But that doesn't last. You can use pictures of naked people. You can use expletives. But those lose their effect over time. You can write a shocking (but ultimately misleading) headline, but it will result in people feeling tricked and then you become the little boy who cried wolf. You say in your email subject line, "A vulnerable secret I've never shared with anyone before . . ." and then the secret you share is clearly not that. People feel duped. It's why we hate and distrust marketing so much. We are feeling constantly lied to and played with.

But here are some thoughts that are vital.

- **do a good job and get word of mouth:** this is the bottom line. If you help a lot of people solve a problem they have or get a result they're craving, they will tell everyone they know about you. That's how word of mouth works and, ultimately, how the most sustainable businesses grow.
- **have a niche:** nothing gets attention better than good old fashioned relevance. If your headline speaks directly to their life, they will want to read the rest. If they can see, right away (from your business name, the headline of your ads or the images you use) that you specialize in people just like them . . . you will have their attention.
- **figure out where their attention is already going:** the core of everything I know about marketing is all about identifying and working with hubs effectively. Meaning . . . getting attention is hard when you take the cold approach of cold calling, direct mail etc. They already see you as marketing. But, if you can figure out where their attention is already going, you've got a much better chance. If you can figure out

where they're already looking for solutions to the problems you solves, they're more likely to notice you. If, instead of sending a direct mail piece out to a list you bought, you got someone who your ideal clients deeply respected to send out a letter endorsing you . . . You'll likely be flooded with business. There are seven general types of hubs.

The Second Role of Marketing: Help them figure out if it's a fit.

Once you have their attention, you don't have it for long. Now they're noticing you but . . . are you actually relevant to them?

In direct response marketing they talk about the AIDA formula. Attention, Interest, Desire, Action. Once you've got their attention you need to move on to interest.

But, here's where I disagree with many of my colleagues. I don't think that the role of marketing is to get them interested. After all, who is 'them'? Them could be anyone. Them is everyone. And you don't want everyone as a client (you really, really don't).

Why not?

Not everyone is going to be a fit for you. And, if they're not a fit, they will be clients from hell. They'll have bad experiences and tell their friends about it. Too many clients who aren't a bad fit will kill your business.

You want clients who are a perfect fit for your business.

So, the purpose of marketing should not be about convincing everyone to buy from you. It should be about helping everyone decide if you're a good fit for them or not. In the book *Monopolize Your Marketplace*, they word it as 'facilitating the decision making process' meaning that your marketing should help make it easier for potential customers to decide whether hiring you is the right thing or not.

But to do that, we need to understand who would be a perfect fit for us. And to do that we need to really understand what it is we are offering and how we want to offer it because, ultimately, your ideal client (and this is so incredibly obvious that we often miss it) will have to be (absolutely, truly has to be) someone who needs what you're offering and loves how you offer it.

And that level of clarity can take time to come to.

But, once that clarity is there, then marketing becomes less about seducing and more about filtering.

I wrote an epic blog post you can use to ask yourself some key questions about who your ideal client might be here.

The Third Role of Marketing: Lower the risk of taking the next step.

This is something that used to be the core of what I teach and that I haven't written about much but intend to in the coming year.

It's vital.

I first came across this concept from Jay Abraham. But it shows up everywhere in marketing.

Here's why this role matters.

Someone could come across what you offer (you have their attention) and totally fall in love with it (it's a fit) and still not buy.

Sometimes that has to do with timing. Sometimes it just takes awhile for it to be the right time. I imagine there's a workshop or two you'd love to attend but the timing hasn't worked out yet. Normal.

But very often it's a matter of risk. Meaning: they're scared that if they buy from you they're going to either lose out on something they have or they won't get something they want.

Those risks can be everything from: the fear of looking stupid, having to explain such a big purchase to a spouse, losing money on it, it not working and being a huge waste of time, the fear of getting ones hopes up only to be disappointed (again). So many risks.

And most entrepreneurs are totally blind to this. They're never put themselves in the shoes of their clients and asked themselves, 'what might be scary about making this purchase?'.

It's why bakeries, grocery stores and perfume shops give out free samples. It's why you see so many 'enter your email to get this ebook/video/free gift' on people's websites (I wrote a guide on how to build your email list by doing this for your website here). It's why ice cream shops let you try a pink spoon of ice cream before you buy. 'Try before you buy' is not a new idea. It helps people move beyond just an intellectual relevance into action. It's why you see so many websites with lots of videos. It's why blogs work. They build the know like and trust factor. It's why it's important to not only offer big expensive things, but to also offer less expensive ones – so people can get to know you and take a step towards working with you.

So, that's it. Those are the three steps.

Look at every piece of marketing you ever do through the lense of these three roles.

Look at every part of your marketing strategy through the lense of these three roles. Every tactic.

Polarizing: The Only Three Types of Potential Clients You'll Ever Meet

I want to share something that might forever change the way you relate to marketing.

It's a notion I got from Mark Manson in the context of dating but I think it maps over perfectly into marketing.

There are only three types of potential clients you will ever experience: responsive, neutral and unresponsive.

Responsive people will come across your work and light up. They'll get excited and want to sign up and hire you after learning a little bit about you. They'll be curious, want to know more and ask you a lot of questions. These people are a 'yes' to what you're up to in your business.

Neutral people will listen to what you have to say but they won't react much. They'll sit there in your workshop politely and take it in. But they won't sign up for much. They may be cordial and listen respectfully but they for sure won't seem 'into it' like the responsive people do. These people are a 'maybe' to what you're up to in your business.

Unresponsive people will actively pull away, show disinterest, might even be rude. These people are a 'no' to what you're up to in your business.

And how you deal with each of these three people is different.

With responsive people, you just need to enjoy them and make it really safe and easy for them to buy from you. You want to have your sales funnel worked out so they can engage at the level that feels best for them. If you try and push or 'sell' to these people, things get weird. They're already sold on you. Just relax, enjoy them, engage them and look for what is the best fit.

With unresponsive people, just bless and release them. Really. Just let them go. It's not a fit (at least not in that moment). Trying to convince these people to hire you or buy from you is the road to burn out.

With neutral people it's a different story. The neutral people aren't sure. They're on the fence. And your job is to get them off the fence (with no bias towards which direction they fall – towards you or away from you).

To be clear, I'm not talking about pushing them or making them do anything. I'm talking about revealing yourself and being vulnerable enough.

Let's back this up a bit.

If they're on the fence, why are they on the fence?

They're up there because they're not sure enough about who you are, your point of view, your overall purpose of your business, the results you offer or problems you solve etc. There's something about your platform that is fuzzy and that results in them not knowing if it's a fit. There's likely something they see that they like (which is why they haven't left your presence) but also somethings they see that they don't quite get (which is why they haven't bought).

But why is there fuzziness in the first place? Often because we're scared to share the full truth of how we see things.

A typical approach with neutral people is to try to keep them around by being really 'nice' and not offending them in any way. People will build their email list by sharing useful but not that exciting or honest content. It's kind of 'meh'. It's nice. It's fine.

But, if you do this, they will consistently fall off of the fence away from you.

It's like the dreaded 'friend zone' in dating.

They'll tell you how great they think your business is but they won't ever hire you.

But there's another approach. And that approach is to be really honest about your platform and your intentions so that they are able to make up their mind and you can either go deeper with them or, quite frankly, stop wasting your time in 'building a relationship' with them that was never going to go anywhere anyways.

But, this requires us to let go of our people pleasing behaviours and to start being really honest about who we are and what we think. It might also mean directly asking someone if they'd like to be a client or be open to a conversation about working together. You might find that people who were dancing around with a 'maybe' they'd like to work with you suddenly become a 'no' when you directly ask them. Which is wonderful to know. Your asking them (depending on how you did it) didn't cause them to not want to work with you, it created the space to reveal what they may have already been feeling for a while but were too nervous to tell you.

And here's the challenge with those things: they all make you vulnerable. You are putting yourself out there and risking rejection.

If you're honest about your quirks, people might not like them.

If you're honest about your point of view, people might strongly disagree and attack or belittle you for it.

If you're really real about the specific kinds of people you're best at helping, you might lose folks who aren't that.

If you're honest about the larger cause you're most passionate about that drives your business, you might lose people who are more passionate about other causes.

But on the flip side, if you're honest about these things: some people will love them.

I think that our fear of being vulnerable is what keeps others from knowing us and therefore being able to decide if we're a fit. We often feel shame about really revealing ourselves and yet it's the very thing that will inspire others to get off the fence. Will you repel some folks? Sure. But you will also far more strongly attract others.

I can tell you that the blog posts I've written that have gotten the most positive reactions and cemented people as fans also got some of the most negative ones and the most comments overall – were the ones where I was most vulnerable and honest.

Just the other day I wrote a post called, 'I'm Broke (And I Don't Care)' and was flooded with over 100 comments. Or the post, 'Why Charging What You're Worth Is Bullshit.' Or the post 'Slow Marketing'. Or the time I encouraged people to do what they could to get the Conservatives out of office in Canada and wrote about it in my post Elections, Polarizing & Having an Opinion.

If they are neutral towards you, the answer isn't to be neutral back. If you find you're attracting a lot of neutral clients and you want to change that, the answer is this: be even more vulnerable and honest.

The goal of marketing isn't to convince everyone to work with you.

To state that even more strongly: the goal of marketing isn't to convince anyone to work with you.

The goal of marketing is to attract the people who would be a perfect fit for you and to actively dissuade people who are not a good fit for you (with a bit of wiggle room there). Marketing is more a filtering process than anything.

Consider this logic: If you attract someone who is not a fit for what you offer, they will have a bad experience. They will then tell their friends about their bad experience and now you've got bad word of mouth. It's not actually that what you were offering was bad – it just wasn't a fit for them. But I promise you the rest of the world will not make that distinction.

On the other hand, if you attract the perfect kind of client who's in exactly the right moment in their life to work with you they will almost certainly have a good experience. And they will tell everyone they know about that. And now you have good word of mouth.

It's simple.

But it's so easy to waste your time on trying to keep the neutral people around. Or to attract them.

But in the end it doesn't work. Here's the common dynamic. You get a speaking gig for thousands of people. Amazing. What an opportunity. Then you get a chance to write an article on a well known blog. So you do those things and, cleverly, offer them a free gift to sign up for your email newsletter. And, to get the free gift, a number of them do. Your pipeline of new clients is now so full, you tell yourself. Any day now you're about to break through. Fast forward three months and nothing has changed.

Here's what was really happening, people saw you. Thought you were interesting. Were intrigued to know a bit more but were mostly neutral. They saw a 'free' offer, got excited and signed up for your email newsletter which is also very neutral and not opinionated at all and they got bored, stopped reading it and really never intended to buy in the first place. You were hooked on hopium that your pipeline was full. But it never really was. So, we keep trying to get in front of more and more people, hoping that might change it.

But here's what will really change it: being willing to be a lot more vulnerable with those crowds.

I don't mean standing up there and weeping about your childhood and asking them to hold you.

I don't mean standing up there and telling them how nervous you are to be there (though that can be endearing).

I mean being willing to be very honest about whatever parts of your journey you've gone through that make you qualified that you care to share. I mean being willing to share where you're not perfect, your quirks and kinks. Being willing to let them know who you are and how you see the world and the nature of their issue. Being honest vulnerable will polarize your audience. The more vulnerable you are, the more polarizing you will be.

Your ability to attract perfect clients is in direct proportion to your willingness to be vulnerable and deal with the reality that most people are simply not a fit. Luckily, you don't need most people as clients to have a thriving business. You only need some.

Here's another way to look at it: I'd look at your neutral clients as the white blood cells of your business. If you have a lot it's indicating that you are sick. And the disease may be from your own lack of honesty and vulnerability because of your fears. But most businesses see the white blood cells as a sign of health and seem to want more of them. You want less neutral people and more highly responsive people. You want less maybe's and more yes' or no's right off the bat.

When you really start stepping out with your full truth, you will repel so many more people (who were not a fit) and you will attract raving fans who love what you are about (who are a fit). Withholding the truth in the beginning doesn't really help. Sure you might get more clients to begin with, but eventually the truth will come out and those people will leave.

The only question is, how vulnerable are you willing to be?

Here are some ways you can explore being vulnerable. I'd love to hear what additional ideas you might have:

- **Ask Their Intentions:** If you've got someone who's been hovering around, neutral, asking for free advice for a while, consider just asking them directly, 'Hey, I notice you've been around and come to a number of the free things I've been offering and I was just wondering if you were thinking of coming to the the upcoming full weekend. I'd love to have you there.' Either way, now you know the truth and energy gets released which is a relief. It doesn't have to be heavy, but if you're wondering, you can always ask. They might just say 'yes'. I was hosting a party in London, England and I got three people to come to my weekend workshop by simply saying, 'Are you coming to my weekend? You should come! I'd love to have you there!' Simple. Asking is vulnerable but powerful.

- **Go on a Rant:** This is one of my favourites. Look at your industry and ask yourself honestly what you see is missing. And then let yourself rant about that. Sleep on it and if it still feels true, even if it feels edgy, put it up and share it with the world in a video or your blog.
- **Set Boundaries:** Are clients always asking you for ‘just a quick opinion’ or a ‘five minute favour’? Tell them the truth (which is that you’d like to be paid for your time). I usually say something like, ‘Thanks so much for writing. That’s a great question and I totally get how frustrating that can be. My rates and such are here. Let me know if you’d like to book some time. I hope you’re well otherwise :-).’ And tell your clients what you expect from them before they hire you. Be real with people about your needs.
- **Lay Out Your Map:** You likely have a very strong opinion about the best way to help people on their Journey from their problem to the solution. Consider being even more explicit and honest about it. Lay the philosophy and steps out as clearly as you possibly can. Let them take a look at it for themselves and see if they like it or not. It can be tempting to be vague and try and trick people into signing up for a program based on vague promises. It’s not worth it. Laying out your map is more effective anyway.
- **Share Your Story:** Did you go through the same struggle as your ideal clients? Do you still struggle with the same issue in ways (but have learned more mature ways to deal with it when it comes up)? Consider sharing that.
- **Fire Clients:** Do you have clients that are a constant drain on your time and energy? Fire them. For real. Let them go. If you’re not, why not? Because you need the money? Because you’re scared they’ll be upset, hate you and tell the world what a fraud you are? Letting go of bad clients frees up so much energy for a good client to show up and for you to be strong and attractive when they do.

Exercise: Your Platform in a Single Page

Clarity is everything in marketing.

A while ago I wrote a blog post about the importance of developing a clear platform. Your platform is what you're known for. It's another way of talking about 'brand'. It's the heart of slow marketing (but also the basis of fast marketing). The challenge that I lay out in that post is that most people choose to be known for only ONE thing – which is the thing they do. But I would submit that there are six things you can be known for.

And if you can clearly articulate them in a single page then you are ready to grow. If you can do it in a single page then everything else will be simple (even if it takes effort).

Always remember: the confused mind says 'no'.

There are two watchwords for your platform. The first is 'clarity'. But the second is 'authenticity'. It's the clarity and authenticity of your platform that ultimately makes your business safe to approach and easy to get to know.

And while there's endless depth you can go into in defining your platform – here's my down and dirty version. Each of the six elements of the platform has three or four laser focused questions to help you hone in on them. They're the best questions I know of to get right to the heart of the matter.

If you can answer them and distill it into a single page – you'll have the clarity you need to grow easily, organically and beautifully.

The Boat:

What is it that you do? If I were to look you up in the Yellow Pages or on google what terms would I use? (e.g. plumber, hardware store, massage therapist etc.)

What is your boat built out of? How many hours and how much money has gone into building your business? How much education?

What is most important to your clients when buying what you sell? (either to have or not to have) And how do you deliver that?

If your business were to shut down tomorrow – who would miss you and why?

The Journey:

What is the journey that you take people on? Fill in the blanks for the ideal kinds of clients you want to have: 'we work with _____ (kinds of people) struggling with _____ (kinds of problems) and who feel _____ (way about their problem). And what we do it to help them get _____ (result).

Who is a perfect fit for you as a client? Why?

When is the perfect moment for you to enter their life? When is the perfect moment to leave it?

Who do your clients secretly envy and why? (this can tell you a lot about Island B).

You - The Captain:

What gives you the credibility to do what you do so well? In what ways have you gone on the journey you're taking your clients on? What have you had to overcome in order to be offering what you're offering here and sailing that particular boat?

What qualities do you bring to the table that are different from other people offering similar things?

What are your nerdy interests, hobbies, strange lives you've led in the past, interesting social information about you?

The Map: Your Point of View

Why do most people fail to make this journey? What are they missing?

What's your map/system for getting people from Island A to Island B as quickly, easily and painlessly as possible? How many steps?

What's your core take on this issue? What's your perspective, philosophy, understanding of this journey?

Why: The Bigger Cause

Why did you start doing what you do?

Beyond money, status etc. what is this business really about for you? What's the bigger cause it's a part of?

What is it that you see missing in the world that would help make it more whole?

Island C: The New Possibility

What is it that you see is possible for your clients that they don't see is possible yet?

When you went through your journey did anything delightful happen as a result of being on the journey that you didn't expect that you couldn't have anticipated when you began?

What do you crave for your clients to have in their life? What's your fondest wish for them?

What do you see is the future of your industry? What's coming up next that's so exciting that most people don't even know about?

PLATFORM CASE STUDY: Paolo Donati – Italian Nutritionist

<http://discoveritalianfood.com>

BOAT: as a qualified natural nutritionist and health coach I help people overcome a variety of health issues and improve their shape using natural foods, supplements and powerful but simple cleansing techniques. I offer live or online consultations and cleansing retreats in my native country, Italy.

ME: With a background in environmental engineering and remediation of contaminated land, at my core I'm a nerd with a true passion for bringing nature back into its pure, uncontaminated state.

I was raised on the Standard Italian Diet (still better than the SAD hey) which made me lethargic, lacking energy, mentally confused and a totally unsociable kid. Somehow I felt that food affected my behaviour and emotional state.

From a very young age I studied what gifts from Nature could make me more healthy and in tune with who I am.

I experimented with different detoxes and type of diets: from macrobiotic, vegan, mediterranean to paleo and weston price type of diets. After giving up the frustrating quest for the perfect diet, I can honestly say I had benefits from all of them. Eventually I started listening to the messages in my body and found an equilibrium that works really well for me. Today my approach to health and nutrition with my clients is absolutely dogma-free.

As a native Italian, I still have a passion for local, traditional Italian food. I love revisiting stunning Italian dishes using alternative ingredients to make them more healthy for us. After all, I believe we can occasionally indulge and feed our spirit more than our body, provided it comes from a clear message within to enjoy and live life more fully, rather than a need for suppression.

JOURNEY: My main journey type is on health. But I also help reach a state of inner peace and greater clarity by working in cleansing and nourishing the body.

Who: I am attracted to people who believe in good old fashioned common sense and trusting their intuition who find themselves experiencing some chronic health issues. They are looking for a holistic body-nurturing approach rather than reductionist conventional treatments. They are also interested in keeping fit and adopting a diet to support their levels of training. Ideally they consider adding at least some animal products into their diet, if not I am more comfortable referring them to a vegan nutritionist.

Problem: chronic fatigue syndromes, digestive problems, depression and so called gut and psychology syndromes, i.e. mental disorders such as autism, schizophrenia, ADHD and others connected to a leaky gut condition.

Result: Renewed physical energy and health, mental balance, clarity. Significant improvements of mental conditions. Toxicity is removed from bowels, liver and other tissues. Feeling more in tune with ourselves and our higher purpose.

POINT OF VIEW: Dieting is for losers... if we don't first love ourselves, accept our current situation and that we need to take baby steps. Without this fundamental frame most of us will sabotage any attempt to move towards a diet, or anything new in life.

The 'perfect' diet is a quest for the holy grail. It really depends on your location on the planet, the season, your current state of health, your history of health and what you want to achieve. For most of us, the quest for the perfect diet is just an excuse for not taking consistent action.

Elimination is as important as nutrition. The cleanest diet may lead to autointoxication if we don't support the routes of elimination in the body.

Humans are part of nature and we should be inspired by nature's rhythms when deciding how to live, what to eat and how to eat it.

Your body never works against itself. It always does the best it can to restore its original conditions.

WHY: To continually celebrate and be inspired by the transformation in health and energy of people around me. To support as I can local farmers and food producers so their products not only will improve people's health but also contribute to restore damaged ecosystems through sustainable farming. When in my home country, I love travelling the Italian countryside to meet local food producers that don't even know what the Internet is.

ISLAND C: I didn't expect that by releasing my toxic load I also got rid of old negative emotions I was still holding to. I feel lighter, full of energy and mentally clear. Now that I got past my health issues I'm ready to move on to something new in my life. I feel this food is wholesome and nutritious and I'm naturally drawn to eat it. I'm not influenced by dietary 'dogmas' or the latest diet in the media.

Hub Marketing: The Three Levels of Your Marketing Strategy

From all my traveling and learning I have learned that there are a lot of approaches to marketing. But only one that really works in the long term.

Hub Marketing.

What does that mean?

Let me break it down into three levels of marketing: cold, warm and hot. I think you'll see why the 'hot' level is the one you want to be at.

Three Approaches to Marketing:

The Cold Level: Approaching as a Stranger

This level is a 10:1 ratio.

10 units of effort for 1 unit of reward. You put in a lot of time and money and get very, very little out.

At this level, you start with all the people you know (family and friends) and then . . . you quickly run out.

And then we're left with approaching people 'cold'. Meaning, they totally don't know us. No relationship. We're talking to strangers about our business. At this level we're just getting our name out there. We're talking to everyone we can. We're attending random mixers, business luncheons and networking events. We're asking our clients to 'tell their friends' about us (when we remember to do it). We might even be cold calling (ugh).

But the challenge with this level is that it's incredibly time consuming and not that effective. And that leaves us feeling desperate and in a constant level of crisis. This is most marketing out there. Most marketing fails because it's 'cold'.

The Warm Level: Partnering With Hubs

This level is a 1:1 ratio.

1 unit of effort for 1 unit of reward. You put in a lot of time and money and get a fair return.

At this level, you start to realize the power of using 'hubs'. We realize that our ideal clients are already spending their time, money and attention in other places. There are certain events and locations we're most likely to find them at. There are certain magazines, blogs and websites they check out. There are certain people that are already well connected to and respected by our target markets. So we start attending targeted events and connecting with the right people. We strategically build relationships with key hubs.

This is a huge leap for most businesses.

At this level, when you approach people they are 'warm' to you because they've already heard about you from someone they trust.

The Hot Level: Becoming a Hub

This level is a 1:10 ratio.

1 unit of effort for 10 units of reward. You put in a little bit of time and money and get a huge return. Ahhh.

At this level, we not only 'work' with hubs – but we become one.

Now, an important distinction. Simply by working the 'warm' level long enough – you will become a hub. But there's a difference between being a passive hub (which the warm level will ultimately make you) and an active hub. Being an active hub requires a bit more effort and ingenuity. It requires a constant curiosity of 'how can I help my community more? What do they need?'

And not just for your clients.

You become a hub for the scene and for the 'hubs' in the scene. You end up adding value to people's lives long before they become your client. You're a generosity based business.

At this level, people are seeking YOU out. People are adding YOU on facebook. You're no longer trying to receive awards – you're giving them. Your reputation precedes you. You've shifted from being the spotlight – trying to chase people around – to being the lighthouse – drawing everyone in to safety. Instead of being a guest in the community – desperately trying to fit in and be accepted – you are now a host of the community. Instead of being at the periphery trying to get in – you sit calmly at the center.

You become a hub.

Exercise: The Seven Kinds of Hubs

Hubs can help you spread the word.

Why? They're well connected and well respected.

They're like the one's and two's in the photo to the right. Their circles overlap a lot of other people's circles. An endorsement from a '1' can mean more to you than an endorsement from ten '4's. Placement in the 'right' media can save you a lot of time and money.

When you start thinking about your niche market, and how to reach them with effective word of mouth marketing – you immediately need to start thinking about the 'hubs' in their networks. You need to ask yourself, “who do they already trust?”

Luckily, it's not that hard.

These seven questions will take you most of the way there.

1. EVENTS & LOCATIONS: Where does your niche gather, congregate, celebrate and hangout?

2. BUSINESSES: Where do they already spend their money?

3. GROUPS: What formal groups are they a part of?

4. SUPPORT: What resources or groups exist to support them?

5. WEBSEARCH: if your niche were to search for a solution to their problems on google, what would they type in?

6. PUBLICATIONS (on and offline): Where do they go for news and information that is relevant, credible and valuable for them?

7. INDIVIDUALS: Which individuals do they most trust (whether globally or locally)?

Paths Exercise: How to Make It Easy for Your Ideal Clients to Find You and Get Their Attention

Pick Three of The Following Paths You Feel Most Excited About:

- Writing Blog Posts
- Writing Articles
- Writing Ebooks, Special Reports & White Papers
- Networking
- Public Speaking
- Leading Intro Workshops
- Pr
- Social Media
- Online Videos
- Advertising
- Booths At Trade Shows, Expos, Farmer's Markets Or Craft Shows
- Posters
- Flyers
- Creating A Referral Program
- Posters
- Seo
- Doing Live Demos Of Your Work
- Offering Free Sample Sessions
- Being Interviewed On Podcasts, Radio
- Hosting A Podcast
- Leading Webinars
- Leading Teleseminars
- Host An Advice Column
- Exchange Skills With Others Professionals So That They Could RecomMEnd You
- Writing GuEst PostS For Other's Blogs
- Google Ads
- Facebook Ads
- Hosting A Party Or Gathering
- Running A Meetup Group
- Run A Contest Aligned With Your Platform
- Sandwich Boards

Top Three Paths Exercise:

Now take some time to strategize a little bit on how you could use each of the three paths you picked. How could they work with your top hubs? How would they fit with your sales funnel?

Path #1:

Path #2:

Path #3:

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 is 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

