



Niching Fears

Fourteen Legitimate Reasons Niching Is Feared
(And Why It Might Be Okay After All)

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#1: Niching Lifts Up Big Questions About Our Life	5
#2: A Fear That Niching is Contrived	6
#3: Fear of Turning People Away	8
#4: Fear Of Lack Of Variety	10
#5: Fear of Losing or Not Getting Enough Business	11
#6: Fear Of Being Pigeon Holed	13
#7: Fear of Not Knowing How To Niche	14
#8: Not Wanting To Get Into Competition With Others	15
#9: Fear of Picking the Wrong Niche	16
#10: Fear That I'm Not Ready For My Niche	17
#11: What If I Don't Like My Niche?	19
#12: What If My Niche Doesn't Exist, Or No One Wants What I Have to Offer?	20
#13: What If I Have Multiple Niches?	22
#14: I Feel Like Niching Is Asking Me To Cut Off Parts Of Myself!	23
Final Thought: Don't Ignore Your Niching Fears	24

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Niching can be scary.

For so many reasons, this can be such an anxiety ridden journey for people.

In order for a niche to be authentic, it often ends up having a deep connection to our own deepest wounds and struggles. Which aren't always easy to face (even if it's ultimately healing to do so).

And even if we know what the niche is then there are all the questions of 'who am I to say something about this? does the world need one more blog writing about this?'. Stepping into a niche asks you to be visible in a whole new way that you might never have done before.

All scary stuff.

If you feel a bit freaked out about niching, you're not alone.

And you're not crazy. There are a lot of legitimate reasons to be scared of it.

I want you to check in with yourself right now and notice where it is that you're scared about niching. You tell yourself that you might want to focus more, but the only reason you haven't is because.... whatever that is. What is it that holds you back from really investing in niching? My guess? There's something you're scared you won't get if you do (or that you might lose).

Let's go through the fears around niching one by one, and see where they're true and where they're not.

In my experience, the fears are oftentimes the opposite of reality, but they're the kind of things that, if they were true, would be very good things to consider. In fact, I would be more worried if people didn't get concerned about these things. If we're going to be smart about how we run our businesses, we *should* be considering this stuff.

And here's something important to consider.

Your fears about niching could actually be a powerful doorway into better understanding and empathizing with your own niche - the people you hope to serve. It's very likely that *your* niche has a similar set of fears around dealing with their own issues (remember, you very well could be your own niche). So, as you go through the journey of addressing those concerns here, you are actually becoming more ready to work with them as their guide.

A few examples from the list to show you what I mean:

“Reason #1: Niching Lifts Up Big Questions About Our Life.” This is true about niching, but let's replace the word niching with . . . losing weight. **“Reason #1: Losing Weight Lifts Up Big Questions About Our Life.”** Likely pretty true, isn't it? As you connect with the way that your

niching journey confronts you with the larger questions of your life, you become more ready to receive someone who is struggling with this around their weight.

“Reason #2: Fearing Niching is Contrived.” Could be changed to, **“Reason #2: Fearing Doing a Wardrobe Makeover is Contrived.”** You see?

“Reason #3: Fear of Saying No.” In the work you do with people, doesn’t it bring up their need to say ‘no’ to certain things or people in their life? To set healthy boundaries? There’s a good chance that, no matter what it is, that fear comes up whether it’s around money, relationships, health or spirituality.

Really consider that *your* biggest fears around niching might just be connected to *their* biggest fears around working with you. We’ll get back to this in the final thought of this ebook.

Now let’s get to it and explore these reasons to be concerned about niching one at a time.

Reason #1: Niching Lifts Up Big Questions About Our Life

I've long noticed how much stuff [niching](#) seems to bring up for people. They freeze, they resist, they ignore, they freak out. On the surface, it would seem like an overreaction.

But is it really?

Considering the word niche comes from the old French verb 'nichier,' to make a nest, our niche in the world is our home, our place in the world. And surely that's a significant question. What's my place in the world?

So, while many coaches can't understand why their clients are so worked up about figuring out a simple target market, their clients are melting down because they can't seem to find their place in the world. It's a bigger issue than it seems. Or at least it has the potential to be, if you take it seriously.

It's hard to admit we don't know our place in the world. It's hard to look at our wounds. It's hard to admit those wounds may not be totally healed. That's a big reason why niching can be a struggle.

My Thoughts on This:

This can be a really hard question to face, because remember, the direction of our niche is often determined by our [wounds](#). The things [we've struggled hard to overcome](#) are often the very things we're best qualified to help others with.

So, in setting the direction of our niche out in the world we are asked to look back inside . . . deep, deep, deep at our sorest spots. The places we were hurt the deepest. And as one of my clients in the six week [Niching for Hippies](#) coaching program pointed out, "Seems the fears are aroused when the wounds are picked at. The scabs may have formed but taking your course and the work involved made me see they had not healed over completely. Your [article](#) suggests that paying attention to this new rawness or exposure can not only help us connect to *ourselves* in new ways, but to those we hope to serve."

We're going to address this later in more detail, but know that niching can actually be a profoundly healing thing for you. Just be aware that the fear and resulting resistance can be strong.



Reason #2: A Fear That Niching is Contrived

You don't want to feel contrived and packaged. You don't want feel slick like some salesperson, and you don't want to feel fake. There is a fear that if you pick a certain niche to market to, you will look overly polished and slick, and you don't want that.

One client told me, "I'm afraid I'll have to pretend to be someone I'm not. At the core, there's a voice inside me that thinks that I will have to hide who I am as a whole person and be someone my potential clients want me to be, and I'll feel resentful at my clients."

My Thoughts On This:

No one wants to seem fake and slick. We would love to have a more organic, honest, down-to-earth feel about our businesses. It's an important thing to consider because if you were to make a business decision that had you seeming contrived, you might repel a lot of the clients you would ideally love to work with. This is actually a really good fear to have.

Here's what I've noticed, and see if this feels true for you too: The businesses that seem the most contrived and ungrounded and slick and hyped-up to me are the ones that say, 'We can help everybody. Come to this workshop. It will help you with every issue you have in your life.' The ones that over-promise in that way (because they are promising everything to everybody), are actually doing the thing that makes them seem the most untrustworthy.

What I found is that the businesses that really focus on a particular area and say, 'We specialize in this,' are the ones that come across as very grounded and down-to-earth. The relevance is immediately established.

When somebody hears that your boat can take them on the exact journey that they want to go on and that you specialize in that journey, they will trust you so much more. You will seem so much more down to earth than the person that's like "Hey, I've got this multi-level product and it helps everyone with every health issue." That doesn't sound very grounded to people. And it feels terrifying to do, because it's a lie. We secretly know we can't help everyone or do everything equally well and so we're often scared of being found out for being a fraud.

Not to mention the resentment that secretly builds when we work with clients who aren't really a fit for us. When people engage in niching authentically, they often become more authentically themselves. They become even more true to themselves. They let go of clients who aren't a fit and start telling the truth about what they're good and not good at, who they love to serve and who they don't, how they see the world and what matters to them.

I see this consistently.

Niching, done well, doesn't ask a circle to become a square or a triangle. It invites the circle to become a sphere. It invites honesty and depth. It doesn't ask you to be an expert in anything but your own experience.

Reason #3: Fear of Turning People Away

You don't want to say no to people; you love the thought of helping everyone you can. People are often scared that if they pick a niche they will have to turn people away and that would feel awful. There's the fear that we will have to start saying no to people we don't *want* to say no to.

As one client put it about her healing practice, "I don't want to limit something so unlimited."

My Thoughts On This:

The fear is that if you pick a niche you have to say no to everybody who's not *exactly* in that niche. That's a terrifying feeling and you would be smart to be concerned about it.

But here's another perspective on it: you can be explicit without being exclusive. I'll say it again: **you can be explicit without being exclusive**. Think about it like a target. In the centre, there's the bull's eye, and that's worth the most points. Let's just say the number of points represents how good the fit is between you and your client. As long as you get the dart somewhere on the board, you're still getting points. The closer you get it to the centre, the more points it's worth, and the better a fit it is.



Here's another way to explore it: You might decide to focus your efforts on single dads going through a divorce. That's who you want to work with. You can be very explicit about that. All of your marketing materials, your business cards could say that. That's what you could say when you do talks and introduce yourself at parties. Your website and all your promo materials say this, and yet if you choose that, twenty-five to thirty percent of your clients will likely have nothing to do with that or just be loosely related.

How is that possible?

You can be explicit without being exclusive.

Just because you explicitly name a group as someone you want to work with doesn't mean you have to turn everyone else away. It doesn't mean you have to say no to people. What will happen is this: You're working with this single dad who is going through a divorce, and because you focus on helping them you get very good at it. They then say, *'This was so useful to me. Could you help my friend? They're struggling with something too and I think what you do could really help them.'*

You don't have to say no. You can tell them *'Yeah, sure.'* You actually don't have to say no to anyone ever. The fact that you focus on a particular group makes you much more attractive to that group, and they will be the ones who spread the word for you, rather than you having to try to get everybody. Even if you're not getting people who are directly in the bull's eye, you'll be getting

people who are close and you can decide how far you are willing to go before it is not a fit. You can say no, you can say yes, it's up to you.

Back to the target idea: It's not a black or white situation. The question is not just are they on the dart board or not. It's a matter of how many points can you get? How good a fit can they be? And with practice you'll be better at attracting more and more clients who are a fit. But . . . if your only goal is to get a lot of darts on the dartboard, that's really different than the goal of getting as many close to the centre as possible.

When you have a clear goal of who your ideal client is, it makes more bull's eyes possible.

And this matters. Because clients on the margins of the board are also the ones who complain the most, and drain the most energy. But, until you've built up a community of ideal clients, it's absolutely okay to say yes to clients who aren't 100% perfect. It is up to you if you *ever* say no to a client.

But you might find that as you get more and more 'perfect fit' clients, you're less and less excited to settle for some of the clients you used to.

Reason #4: Fear Of Lack Of Variety

You don't want to miss out on all the variety of the clients you enjoy. It's like having all these colours of crayons and having to pick one forever. That would feel terrible. Many people are so scared of getting bored.

My Thoughts On This:

You'd be surprised how much **variety** you can have. You don't have to have just one niche. You might have more than one. With the number of projects you can do for each niche, you'd be surprised how much variety you can still have.

Niching for Hippies alumna Joy Caffrey had this to say,

"I had some insights, about releasing any tension around niching. Really what I was needing is variety in my work style, not in my niche. I have a great idea well suited for niching. I can create a packaged workshop, let's say with a theme for those dealing with family mental illness, and that includes promoting community with participants. Then after the first initial workshop, I can offer individual sessions and a private yoga to each participant, and in the mean time they can get together as a community to do homework and then we have a follow-up workshop or two to bring it all together."

Here's another thought: **don't make your business responsible to meet all your emotional needs.** That's too much for any relationship including your relationship with your business. You can get your need for variety met outside your business through friendships, hobbies, and travel. Your business can be meaningful without being *everything*. And you can partner with others and collaborate to create variety too. While our lives thrive on diversity, a business thrives on focus.

Also, if you start with a solid niche and you establish a strong foundation, you can expand your niche a bit broader without suffering too much. Mark Silver of HeartofBusiness.com began his business focusing only on reiki practitioners and then began to slowly expand it to holistic practitioners and conscious businesses in general.

Reason #5: Fear of Losing or Not Getting Enough Business

People are scared that if they narrow their focus, they'll lose out on business opportunities and go broke. What if you've picked your 'single dads going through a divorce' niche, and then the next day someone asks you, "Can you get involved with this business opportunity that's not about that niche?" You might be feeling like you'll have to walk away from a sweet deal because you've already got a niche.

My clients have said this in a number of ways,

"I am worried about not finding people who truly understand and desire what I have to offer."

"Only people who already know me and get me will get what I'm about. What if I can't articulate my niche."

"If I get specific, there's a greater chance of failure. I don't want all my eggs in one basket."

"I have trouble saying 'no' to people outside of my niche."

"I am afraid I won't find a niche or a niche that pays."

"My niche is psychographic and have many different ways or doorways through which they reach me. I don't want to close those doors and might do that unintentionally by niching."

"I'm afraid that I'll lose the work that I have already."

"My niche may have no money! There's not enough people who fit with what I do and how I want to work. I will be too narrow and not find clients. That I can't find people who are in my niche."

My Thoughts on This:

Losing out on business is the most crazy or wild reason for fearing niching because it is just so completely the opposite of my experience.

It's often the un-niched businesses that tend to go broke. It's the businesses that are trying to be everything to everybody that struggle the most and have the hardest time. They can't figure out how to get word of mouth. It's hard to articulate their point of view on what makes them different. The ones that really focus on a particular niche, however, those projects tend to be the most successful.

And when people find a niche that really suits them, what I usually hear isn't "oh, I've lost variety." It's "oh my God, this is so fulfilling! I feel freed up. I feel liberated because now I get to use everything I've learned in my life."

Also, consider this: When you say, “I refuse to niche and want to help everybody,” what you're saying is that it's all about the boat. And then you're just exactly like everyone else who doesn't want to niche. And now you will compete on price. Ouch.

Deborah Epstein, Naturopath and Niching for Hippies alumnus, said this:

*“I had this same resistance when I started practicing 3 years ago, but several people in a short period of time advised me to claim a specialty. I kept saying, but I'm a naturopath! We're holistic! I can't do that! But they made me see that it's not about narrowing how I *practice* - it's only about getting (some) people's attention. So my web site focuses pretty heavily on digestive dysfunction, IBS, etc. The way I look at it, instead of 100 people going to my site and seeing a giant list of 50 conditions that I treat (which I've seen elsewhere, and I never believed either) and all leaving, maybe now only 20 find me, but 3 call. When you put things on your marketing materials that allow people to go, "Hey, she's talking about me, she must get what I'm going through," then they take the next step and call. Ironically sometimes people come and their case has very little to do with digestion, and I always wonder what made them think to call! So it's not leaving people out the way that I thought it would. I think of it more that I'm bringing some people in, instead of leaving everybody out because I'm being too general. And then one more thing: of course I TREAT them holistically, even though I marketed to them in a way that was focused on digestive dysfunction. The IBS or whatever got them in the door, but I'm still treating them as a whole person, and not just a GI tract. My condition isn't your condition. What's one thing you're really good at (even though you're good at many), and how do you talk about it in a way that some people out there go, "Yes, that's me!" (and we have to let go of worrying that 90 people out of 100 will say "That isn't me." Just focus on the 10 who say, I get you, and you're the one I want to work with, and go do your thing.”*

Seth Godin puts it well when he says, “Is your niche too small? There's no such thing as a niche that's too small if the people care enough. If you think you need a bigger market, you're actually saying that the market you already have doesn't need you/depend on you/talk about you enough. You might not need a bigger niche. You might only need to produce more value for those you already serve.”

Reason #6: Fear Of Being Pigeon Holed

People say to themselves, “What if I change in a few years? I’m an acorn right now, but maybe I’ll be an oak then. Will this niche still be relevant? Five years ago, I was a different person living in a different place in a different relationship with a different job, so if I pick this niche, is that just going to be a lot of work for nothing?”

That’s a great thing to consider.

Here’s how clients have expressed this to me in the past,

“I’m feeling the most resistance to the idea that I may have to rework my biz/site/offerings AGAIN - so resistant around the idea of this being 2 steps backwards + using up more precious resources.”

“I don’t want to be nailed down to something that cannot be changed or forces you to have to start all over again.”

“Committing to something touches on my commitment issues, which I’ve worked on very much over the years, but it’s popping up.”

“Another fear I have is that because I keep learning and evolving I’m afraid that if I pick a niche that I will soon outgrow it. I launched my new website with new offerings and a new focus in September. It’s already old news to me. The focus and purpose of my blog writing seems to change week to week.”

“Also, a feeling that you don’t know when something will take off; or who you might meet along the way that will influence 1 aspect of your business to take off. I don’t want to be pigeon-holed into something.”

My Thoughts on This:

Well, you *will* change. You can count on that. In five years, you will be a different person. But when people really do some experimentation, they often come up with niches that are really deeply authentic. The more authentic the niche is, the less dramatic the shift will be down the road.

Here’s another thought: Let’s say you spent ten years creating this very niched business and after ten years you realized, “*I can’t stand this niche any more. I want out.*” A niched business like that is going to be a lot easier to sell. It’s going to be way more attractive for a buyer.

The truth is that niches sometimes evolve. They’re not a frozen reality. The key isn’t about picking a niche, but knowing how to clarify your niche. It’s not about arriving at the product of a static niche, but understanding the process.

Reason #7: Fear of Not Knowing How To Niche

Where do you even start? Even if you have all these great ideas, where will you even begin with them? Which of these reasons is your biggest fear? Where are you stuck?

My Thoughts on This:

These fears are all unfounded if you do it right.

If you go about niching the right way and really pick an authentic niche, these fears are unfounded. When people try to do this on their own, by themselves, with no learning like you're doing right now, they often struggle a lot and the fears become real.

But it's just because the way they are niching has created this fear.

Then they say their niching doesn't work right. There are a lot of true blind spots people have, or real blunders that can be made that will stand in the way of effective niching. Here, you're going to learn how to work through those clearly.

Reason #8: Not Wanting To Get Into Competition With Others

This is an issue that can hold so many people back in business. They don't want to steal business from others or step on toes. And they don't know how to differentiate themselves in a way that doesn't minimize or denigrate their competition.

My Thoughts On This:

This is a potentially large topic to lift up.

But here's the heart of it for me: I genuinely don't see anyone as competition to me. Truly. I don't feel threatened by anyone else. I assume there are more than enough people out there for all of us and I assume that what we're each offering is different enough.

And, if I come across someone who's doing something eerily similar to me, it's a relief because it means that I get to niche even more narrowly. When I discovered Nancy Juetten had written her brilliant workbook 'Bye Bye Boring Bio,' I felt immense relief that I didn't have to write anything about bios anymore. I could just refer them over to her. Phew!

Instead of seeing others operating in your niche as competition, you might consider seeing them as what my colleague George Kao calls 'Niche Mates.' They're people you can collaborate with and learn from. What a valuable resource!

Plus, I'm in this line of work to see more and more people engage in right livelihood. I think that if more of the green, local and holistic businesses succeeded, the world would be a better place. So, if others want to contribute to that vision as marketing coaches and consultants then I say, 'Welcome!' to them. I'm not trying to get a bigger slice of pie and steal from others. I just want more pie in the world. *Mmmm, pie.*

Each new Niche Mate I come across is another part of the eco-system making it more resilient and diverse.

And each Niche Mate is also someone I could endorse to my list (for a profit or not), and who could be a source of referrals for me.

Reason #9: Fear of Picking the Wrong Niche

This is a big one. What if you put in so much effort to pick a niche and then it still doesn't work?

My clients have articulated it like this.

"I am afraid to invest in the 'wrong one' again, to get excited about finally having a successful business and then end up feeling like a failure and waste time, money and energy."

"I have more than one business, more than one group I serve and love. What if I am wrong and put all my eggs in one basket and focus on the wrong group?"

"I have so many choices of who I can work with. This Libra is bad about making decisions."

"Some of my resistance when it comes to niching is defining my ideal client - I'm starting my practice therefore I have not yet met my ideal client, also ideal client worksheets always ask things like "what is their favourite music, where do they hang out, what keeps them up at night" AHHHH I don't freaking know???- it's just a bunch of assumptions and guessing and feels unauthentic."

"I've got a fear of limiting myself, missing out on clients if I get too specific. I have so many projects, so I have this confusion over picking one . . . so I do none."

My Thoughts On This:

What about picking the wrong niche entirely?

This is a good concern to have. Who wants to work for the wrong niche? Boo! This is one of the fears that I think is really, totally legitimate.

But, this also spells out why it's so important to not just try to wing it alone. Finding a niche is the single most important decision you will ever make as a business owner. And if you try to figure it out without support, there's a higher likelihood it will be wrong. Whether it's with myself, another marketing coach, or just colleagues who support you, get support on this. But truly, at the end of the day, there's no wrong niche. Because, every choice you make will only take you closer to the right one. You'll either immediately land on a niche that feels wonderful, or you'll land on one that feels off and, as you really sit with why it doesn't feel right, you'll immediately become much clearer about what your perfect niche is. Either way, you win.

Reason #10: Fear That I'm Not Ready For My Niche

What if you find your perfect niche and then you realize you're totally not prepared to step up to the plate to help them? They're absolutely your perfect people but they take one look at you and know you're not ready. Or you pretend to be ready and then get busted for being a fraud. Or what if working with them might call on you to be more vulnerable than you think you can be?

Here's how some of my clients have articulated it:

"I'm scared that working with my true niche will demand too much from me. Make me too vulnerable. Have me being too naked and seen."

"The introvert in me panics that I won't be able to manage my time if I draw more clients to me. Or if I go for larger groups that I don't know how to go about that technology wise. In general fear of being seen in a bigger way and ready for it at the same time."

"I'm scared that I haven't healed my wounds enough to bring value to helping others in that area."

"I'm afraid that I don't have proper training/certification."

"I have a fear of lack of support from family and friends in the niche I am being called to - my mom will freak!"

"My ideal client (me 5 years ago) will force me to do a lot more healing and bring up lots of my own shiiiyat."

"Speaking and living in my authentic voice Out Loud...scares me."

"Now I am panicking for what I put out to the public."

"If i define my niche around my most painful experience in the past, am i even qualified enough to offer help to people in such situation? am i really over yet?"

"I feel fears regarding declaring myself an 'expert'. I'm struggle with confidence re: what I have to offer being something that I can put myself out there as someone who is better than all the other thousands of therapists in my area."

"I have this idea that I need to be an expert in an area to call it my niche and not sure I will have the expertise to be legit. Fear of not being able to be what I need to for the "niche" ~ the not enough-ness."

My Thoughts On This:

Right. What if you find a niche that's incredibly exciting for you, but then you freak out because you see what it might ask of you?

There's no easy answer here.

Finding a niche that feels really right for you might just push you to your edge. It might ask you to step outside of what is normally comfortable for you. It might require you to be more vulnerable and open about your life story and worldview than you've ever been before. But remember, you're in charge. You can go as fast or as slow as you want to go here. There are no 'shoulds.'

What it might be showing you is that, to grow to the next level, you're going to need more support than you've ever had before. You might need to be calling on your friends more than you ever have. You might need to bring in some external expertise to raise your game. And remember: your niche probably doesn't feel ready to confront their own issues either.

Reason #11: What If I Don't Like My Niche?

Here's a terrible one. What if you don't like your niche after selecting it? You invest all this energy and time, find the perfect niche and then step back and think, "oh no . . ."

Here's how some of my clients articulated it,

"I want to discover my niche but I'm afraid I won't like it. LOL! Perhaps the work I'm most qualified to do I won't want to do."

"I have great experience and success in dealing with sexual trauma and cancer, but I don't want to be mired in these concepts/environments/niches day after day. Too much dense, heavy, energy."

"I have an intuitive feeling that I am to work with agoraphobes with panic attacks. I have my own experience to offer in this arena, however it scares the crap out of me. I have a fear that if I'm constantly working with agoraphobes I'll be picking up on this energy and relapse."

"Not sure what journey I want to take people on. Will I get bored???? Oh no, not boredom!"

My Thoughts On This:

This is similar to the fear of getting the wrong niche. What if you find out that your niche is a group of people you don't like? Again, if you follow my advice, that won't happen. Period. If you don't like them, they're not your niche. Simple.

Reason #12: What If My Niche Doesn't Exist, Or No One Wants What I Have to Offer?

What if you do all the work to find a niche and realize that there's actually nothing there for you? You have this thing you want to offer, but there's no one who wants it?

My clients have described it like this:

"That I won't be able to describe or find the group or type of people that I want to work with, or if they even exist!"

"That there is a scarcity or lack of the right kind of people for me out there. People do not commit and the ones I want to commit won't."

"Fear no one will want what I really would like to do..... Google Analytics will slay you on this one.....nothing worse than doing an Analytics on something you love and finding no one is looking for that!"

"I am feeling a fear of rejection - doing the work to identify my "perfect niched clients" and then they reject my services."

"That there will not be an intersection between what i love, what people want, and what others will pay for. afraid that what I have to offer doesn't fit here."

"I'm afraid that there really isn't a market for what I do."

"It sometimes feels easier to hide behind 'I help everyone' than own niche. I fear that my offers won't be accepted into the right demographics and fail. Once you pick a Niche you become very vulnerable, so it's a fear of rejection."

"Only just got clear on this - my fear is that once I choose, I'll discover my niche is the only one on the planet that nobody wants. Ouch!"

My Thoughts On This:

This is a very important thing to consider. It might be true. There might not be anyone out there in the world who loves what you create besides you. That is possible. But it's unlikely.

But this is where market research and smaller experiments come in. It's where you want to think hard and ask around before you invest too much into the niche. This is an important thing to know the truth about.

I know people who make T-shirts and sell them at markets. They come up with a design they love, but no one else does. Sometimes if they go to a different market, they find their crowd. Sometimes they don't.

But Threadless.com had a different model. They invited designers and artists to submit designs and then had the public vote on which ones they liked the best. The winning submissions actually got printed. Before they invested a dime in the shirts and printing, they asked the market, 'Do you want this?' They only moved forward if people said yes in big enough numbers. This is just common sense. Sometimes people might not initially be interested in what you're offering. But if you make a few changes to it, all of a sudden they are.

Niching is not just about the art of creating things, it's also about the business side of whether or not there's a need or demand for it. It's a dance of going inside to create and then offering your creation to the outside world, and noticing the response you get.

To go further: The more you're willing to engage in this process authentically, and the deeper and more personally you're willing to take it, the more likely that what you come up with will be relevant for many people. If you have struggled with something, there's a very high chance that many others have struggled with the same thing and, if you can help them to get relief from that problem or achieve some result they want, there's a very good chance they'll be willing to pay you for the help.

Reason #13: What If I Have Multiple Niches?

What if you have many different ideas and you can't think of a way to combine them into one thing, but you also don't want to leave anything out?

One of my clients put it like this,

“I have another niche that has absolutely nothing to do with mental health, but women wanting to learn to make their own home remedies, know what herbs/spices to use for minor ailments etc... I'm finding it difficult to combine both since they aren't in the same big circle [a term we'll get to later].”

My Thoughts On This:

There's no problem with this. The only thing you want to be careful of is not to combine businesses. If they're different enough to be separate businesses (e.g. you make dress shoes and you also do shoulder massage), then give them separate names and websites. If the multiple target markets are really pretty similar (e.g. life coaches and holistic practitioners are both service providers working with a similar crowd), then you can lump them all together into one thing.

My colleague Christina Morassi bases her work in helping women to weave all of their gifts and experiences into new careers that have never existed before. This is a never-ending process.

Reason #14: I Feel Like Niching Is Asking Me To Cut Off Parts Of Myself!

This one comes up a lot. We have so many gifts, interests and passions, and we love working with a variety of people. If we have to choose, then we are going to be forced to basically choose some parts of ourselves over others and it can be like you're being asked, "Would you rather lose your arms or your legs?" You don't want to lose either!

My Thoughts On This:

This is a very common response to being asked to niche. Like we have to choose between parts of ourselves. It's a terrible feeling.

But, ultimately, niching is about wholeness. It's about finding our place in the world, and bringing all of ourselves to that.

Don't Ignore Your Niching Fears

As I discovered during my Niching Spiral coaching program, people have a lot of fears around [niching](#). And then coaches encourage them to push through those fears because 'niching is so important.' I've done this myself. I've had it done to me. It never helps. You can't push someone into discovering their calling. You can't shame them into rushing faster to find their niche. Things will happen when they happen.

I've been learning that those fears are actually important to listen to. Sometimes the very thing that seems like it's *in* the way of your progress actually *is* the way to progress. If you feel stuck in your niching efforts, don't just push through it. Don't discount it. Consider how your experience of resistance to the niching process could also be connected to the challenges your clients face.

One client told me she felt so stuck in her niching, and I invited her to consider how that particular stuck feeling might relate to how her clients felt about their own problems. Her eyes widened. 'Oh.'

In the example below, my client (in an actual chat transcript) realizes that her fear of being seen as a fraud might actually be connected to her clients' burn-out. In fact, her fear of being a fraud might be her flavour of how she goes about burning out: 'I don't want to be seen as a fraud, so I will over compensate by working so hard to prove myself . . . and then burn out.'

It doesn't mean this will be true of all her clients.

But it does mean that she now has a much more personal connection to and understanding of burn-out and how it can happen. There's more compassion and understanding. There's more [empathy](#). She'll be able to see their situation much more clearly because she sees herself more clearly. The thing which seemed like the wall, became a doorway.

I am finding, more and more, that this is very often the case.

When a fear comes up you can dismiss it and say that fear is bad. Or . . . you can really listen to it and hear the wisdom that it has for you. Your fears and resistances might surprise you. They're often some part of us that wants to be acknowledged for it's gifts. They might be trying to tell you it's not the right niche. Or that your approach isn't quite right. Or that there's something you're not seeing.

Instead of trying to 'get over it,' try really sitting with it. Get still and quiet. Pour yourself a cup of tea. Bust out your journal. Get curious.

Here's our conversation:

Client: Ok, I have a quick niche question. if you have a sec

me: sure

Client: ok, so I've been working on my website free resource, I think it's really awesome and it actually really naturally rolled to a place where offering a free intro session felt good and valuable (yay!) anyway, I know generally who the market is and the result, but I haven't crystallized it into a clear statement yet, I'm working on that now

me: cool

Client: So my niche is burned out entrepreneurs - but I love working with experts - you know authors, speakers, etc burned out experts

me: right

Client: but I think I'm having the "it's too specific" fear

me: sure!

Client: but I love them...

me: tell me more about the fear?

Client: there won't be enough.. which I know is irrational because I've been working with a bunch already

me: is there anything underneath that? or anything else coming up around that? these things are good to pay attention to

Client: yeah I think part of me is scared, I finally found something that I love and I want it to work... and for some reason get specific leads the brain to think I'd cutting people out . . . just typing this stuff to you is helping :D

me: and what would it mean to you to be cutting people out?

Client: it's really weird, because I know that the original thought was I wouldn't get clients because there probably isn't enough people who are experts that are burned out... but then when you asked me the question, the first thing that popped into my head was I'd get to work with exactly the people I wanted to - the people that excite me most. and since I'm not financially dependent on my business, that's really the only way I want it

me: got it. so . . . what else might stop you from really focusing on these people?

Client: my fear of being seen as a fraud...like by getting specific, those people are all somehow connected to each other and if one person thinks I'm a fraud they all will. that's a simplistic way of thinking about it, but the essence of the emotion is that

me: that's so real and honest. i totally get that. so that if you narrow in and focus on this community it's like a much faster track to implosion. like if you don't do anything or just help friends in general ways then no worries

Client: yeah

me: but if you really focus on something then shit – it accelerates you being exposed

Client: right it's the exposure thing...I've been really trying to focus on what I need to feel safe

me: so then it's inevitable that you'll be shown as a fake and everyone will be talking about you. i totally get it! being exposed as a fraud does not feel safe. I imagine that might be one of the least safe things that you could feel in your life

Client: although I'm not sure why I feel like a fraud.. because the work I've done has completely changed my life and now it's working on others who were feeling burned out and lost hope for their business and most of all I figured it out on my own and I've tested it.. that's the least fraud-like behaviour ever

me: i invite you to keep sitting with it. you might look at where else in your life you've felt like a fraud. or when you first felt that.

Client: yeah ok

me: but also – i'm curious if you can see any connection between the FEAR of being seen as a fraud and burning out

Client: oh GREAT question

me: like does the fear of being seen as a fraud cause you to overwork which then causes burn out?

Client: totally... I think I've made this connection before... at least the over-compensating and burn.. not the fraud part

me: i think that this fear isn't in the way to you finding your niche – i think it might actually be a doorway into going much deeper into this niche and finding our perfect authentic relationship to it

Client: you are so right... when I read that my whole body relaxed..

me: that is a good sign

Client: that was awesome



About the Author: Tad Hargrave

Tad is a hippy who developed a knack for marketing (and then learned how to be a hippy again). Since 2001, he has been touring his marketing workshops around Canada, the USA and Europe, bringing refreshing and unorthodox ideas to conscious entrepreneurs and green businesses, helping them grow their businesses (without selling their souls). In short, he teaches ‘marketing for hippies’ centred on the notion that marketing can feel good *and* work.

Tad did improv comedy semi-professionally for 25 years, co-ran Edmonton’s progressive community building network TheLocalGood.ca, founded streetcarshows.com and the Jams program of yesworld.org. He speaks Scottish Gaelic and helped to launch and co-facilitate www.novascotiagaelsjam.com.

He currently lives in Edmonton, Alberta (traditionally known, in the language of the Cree, as Amiskwaciy [Beaver Hill] and later Amiskwaciwaskihegan [Beaver Hill House]). His ancestors come primarily from Scotland with some from Ukraine as well. He is drawn to conversations around culture-making, politics, history, ancestry, healing, and how those all intersect.

Get Your Free Marketing For Hippies ‘Starter Kit’:

Go to Tad’s website, and you’ll find a tonne of free articles and videos. And then, for merely the price of your email, you’ll get your very own ‘**Starter Kit**’ which includes the full video, audio and transcript of his famous, ‘Marketing for Hippies 101’ Masterclass that he has toured since 2001 + more a heaping portion of other free bonuses besides. You can find it at...

www.marketingforhippies.com

Join The Marketing for Hippies Membership:

Want to explore working with Tad more in depth (and for a fraction of the rates you’d normally pay?) Check out his **Marketing for Hippies Membership Program**. You’ll get access to regular Zoom calls and steep discounts on courses, eBooks and one on one help from Tad for as long as you care to stick around.

www.marketingforhippies.com/membership

More Niching Resources

Want to delve more deeply into real life case studies, examples and perspectives on niching? Go to my YouTube where you'll find a number of playlists dedicated to this topic:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/TadHargrave/playlists>

Want to get my personal reflections on your niche? Consider booking yourself a Puttering Session:

www.marketingforhippies.com/puttering