

Resonance

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Skip the hype, build a business you're proud of, by creating resonance with the people you want to help.

INTRODUCTION

If you're in small business, or have an idea or project you want to build on, you know how important it is to reach the people you want to help, and create something they want to be a part of.

We've mostly been taught that this is a case of more marketing, more advertising spend and generally "more." When we can reach more people we can get more attention, and hopefully this helps our business...

This concept of seeking attention comes from the "attention economy." Whoever has the most attention wins.

But as our markets become more crowded and online spaces more cluttered, most people are left wondering "How do I stand out?"

How can I create a message and business that feels true to who I am, and that I can communicate clearly? We find out pretty quickly that seeking more attention doesn't work. When we try to compete, we're just drowned out in the noise.

Resonance is a re-thinking of this concept. It's looking at how we even "pay" attention in a culture that's slammed by information.

In this book, we look at how you can build a business that is not just in line with your own values and story, but can resonate more easily with the people you want to help.

In this book you'll learn how to:

Uncover key events that have shaped who you are and your own values as *lived through you*. You'll learn how to share these events, values (plus insights and beliefs) with your audience, to create a business where you feel like you actually belong.

You'll also learn to look at your audience in a new way, so you can meet them where they are at, and create services and marketing that truly resonates with them.

Rather than fighting for attention, here we work to create resonance, which leads everything else.

When you create resonance, you can consistently show up in your own unique way, create a business that rings true to you, and co-create a new, exciting future with the people you want to help.

HOW THIS BOOK WORKS

Yep, it's an eBook, I'm just calling it "book." Not because that's a business coach-ish thing to do, but because it's easier, and eBook sounds awful off the tongue.

So this book is a collection of short stories, observations, case studies and frameworks to help you understand how to create resonance with the people you want to work with.

After each section, there are some questions that are helpful. Some of these questions can be a little frustrating, because they are open ended. They're designed to help you develop your work, not have a fixed answer.

The book is about creating resonance with the people you want to help on a human level.

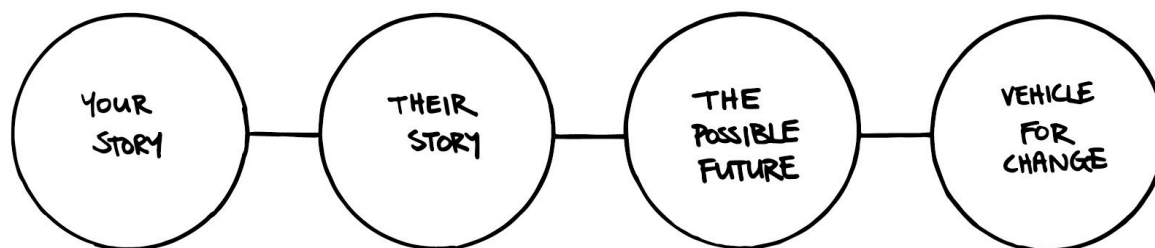
While people want to get more "reach" with their work, here we're focusing on creating a stronger relationship, connection (and action!) with the specific people you want to work with. In the world of social media and hyperconnectivity, we don't have a reach or exposure problem, we have a resonance problem.

When we work to create resonance, we build a business that reflects who we are, and a business we're proud of.

Your biggest opportunity for growth is not to find more people, but when your work truly resonates with us, and gives us something to talk about.

The concept of "Resonance" is carried over four parts - *your* frequency or story, *their* frequency or story, the possible future you want to create together, and the vehicle for change.

These last two are your business - the problem you're solving in the world and what it all looks like.



We'll move through each of these areas, and along the way there are questions or points to consider so you can reflect on your own work.

Small business isn't a "drag and drop" exercise. This won't give you a template to install. Having said that, I've included some simple questions that you can consider and apply to whatever project or business you're working on now.

If you're brand new to business, this will help you feel more confident, and get you thinking about it from a slightly different, more humanised angle. If you've been in business for a while, my hope is that you find some of the questions or comments helpful for growth.

HIDING WHAT MATTERS

If attention is the new currency, it makes sense to try and chase it!

Big loud headlines
High level education
Latest industry trends
Flashy moves and new filters.

There are a lot of go-to's like this we can use to try and grab attention. Sometimes they can work, but they don't often create resonance. And a lot of times they are just ways to hide from doing the harder work. When we hide behind filters and tactics, it can feel good, but it's harder to resonate. People find it hard to connect with something that doesn't show your true story or "frequency."

When we find it hard to connect with you, you'll find it hard to grow.

Trying to grab attention when it's not in line with your values or beliefs will burn you out.

In this book we'll go through how to share your message and business in a way that matters. We'll do this through unpacking:

Key events that influenced your unique life
Insights that you've found along the way
Values which have been lived *through* you.

And we'll look at some of these areas for the people you want to reach as well.

In business (and online in general) we tend to show a "best of" reel that helps us fit in well in a particular industry.

We do what appears to work, and hold back in areas that allow us to show up uniquely.

We hide things that allow us to stand out.

But if you're only focusing on fitting in better than everyone else, you're going to feel exhausted, and stay hidden in the masses.

RESONANCE FIRST

Growing up, we did a bit of spearfishing. You might be in ten metres of water, and from the surface, you can just see the bottom. It sounds like spearfishing is filled with action, but most of the time you're just observing, and swimming along slowly, waiting.

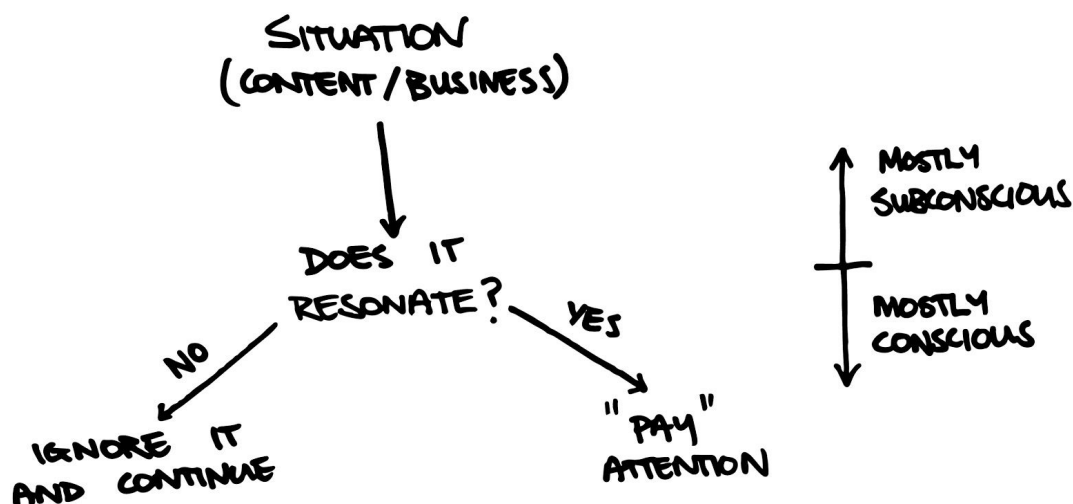
"Observing," is a different thing entirely to "noticing," and different again to "looking." You *observe* the whole scene as you go. Waiting for particular kinds of movement. When you *notice* a certain movement pattern, then you *look*. Only then do you "pay" attention, then you *see*.

The subconscious mind is looking for a pattern, or a "story." We're looking for some familiar movement that means fish are around. Once we notice a pattern, or, once we have "resonance" with a particular kind of movement, we then "look" closely for opportunities.

We need to resonate first, which happens almost subconsciously. Then, "paying" attention is a conscious movement, which is energetically expensive. And so today, we're guarding our attention like crazy.

The result is most businesses are putting out *more* "same same" content and advertising *faster* than before, and it's going unnoticed against our raised shields.

The digital advertisers get better and better at slamming us with more images. So, we're evolving in order to save our personal energy. We "guard" our attention, and don't actually allocate conscious awareness to most of the content that comes past.



WHAT IS RESONANCE?

Let's break down the term resonance - a little throwback to my engineering days here. I'll try not to get too dry.

Resonance is when a system starts to move at a higher amplitude because a force is applied to it rhythmically. The "frequency" of this applied force needs to be close to the *resonant* frequency that's stored in the system.

When the system resonates, big things can happen (one example of resonance was when the Tacoma Narrows bridge collapsed in the 1940's because the windspeed ~65km matched a resonant frequency of the bridge. We don't want to collapse bridges, but you can see how powerful it is in nature.)

Resonance has two components. The first is the "input" frequency. In your case, this is *your frequency as a creator*. Who you are, your insights, your values, your narrative. How you show up, what you create, what you do.

And secondly there's the natural frequency in the "system." This is the frequency of *who you want to serve* in the culture. Where they are in life, what's bothering them, their narrative, how they show up and where they want to go.

The "output" is the new situation in the culture, your program, product or service, and how it changes the world around us. The output is your journey together.

In order to resonate, both of the frequencies need to be known, and clear. If

you're a creator and not clear on your values, you can't resonate. If you're a creator and not clear on the values or story of your clients, it's hard to resonate. We are looking for clarity. We're looking for creators who are clear on their own frequency.

In business, resonance is both self-awareness and empathy. Together we get a combination that lets us create a new possible future, and a better outcome for our business and the culture.

YOUR CAPACITY FOR RESONANCE

At the basic level, resonance starts with your “transmission.”

If you and I sit opposite one another, I’m transmitting in a certain way for you, and it’s going to make you feel something. You could feel good about it, bad about it, or somewhere in between. (Hopefully not too bad!)

Just the fact that I’m sitting there will make you feel something.

The next step is I could *change* my transmission. In that case, how I sit, how I breathe and *where* I speak from. This new transmission will be felt in a different way at your end.

There’s a certain *capacity* and sensitivity that’s required for me to do this in front of you. A big part of this is my willingness and openness to letting you see or experience different aspects of *me*, and also my ability or sensitivity to know what I’m actually doing at the time.

In our business, we’re talking about this on a bigger level. Our ability to resonate with the people we want to serve comes from our ability to transmit, and be aware of our transmission, and how it might make people feel. This requires a certain level of exposure. You need to learn to put your work out there. To be seen, to be heard. To put our ideas, voice and our energy “out there” into the world.

Resonance isn’t permanent, because we change, our work changes and the audience or culture changes almost constantly. We need to stay nimble. When something doesn’t resonate (which is going to happen all the time), we gain the ability to be curious and ask why not? “What could I change for next time?” We innovate.

As we work through this stuff, remember that building this capacity will take time, as the nervous system needs to adapt. If it feels uncomfortable, or as if there is resistance, remember to give yourself permission to take it slow.

TAKING ACTION

Chances are, you’re trying to get people to take action somewhere. Buy something, join something, or come to an event.

In the typical model, “attention” is first. It’s on a pedestal. But now that we’ve become so inundated with content and interruptions, it’s flipping a little.

Attention is still key, but we now look for resonance before we allocate deeper attention (and any trust.)

We “guard” our attention, and look for resonance before we let ourselves allocate attention.

Think of it like driving - we get so comfortable, and there’s so much information, or “data” coming at us, that we go into autopilot. We can drive almost entirely subconsciously (“unconscious competence”) until we notice a pattern that snaps us to attention. This brings in the conscious mind.

We’re waiting for “resonance” - signaling us to look instead of observe. Then we pay attention, and potentially take action by slowing the car or turning.

RESONANCE. The first stage. There are so many demands on attention, that we regulate it, even without knowing. We've gotten really good at picking up if there's resonance. Within a couple of seconds, we've identified if we're into you.

Dr. Stephen Porges coined the term "neuroception," which is the subconscious, continual perception of the environment and people around us - it's how we assess threats, or start to establish trust. We learned this as a baby, and needed it to survive in the world.

As adults, we're doing this on a bigger level all the time. Looking for resonance. Looking for people, places and things that deserve our attention. We seek to surround ourselves with people that resonate with how we see the world, which helps us to become better versions of ourselves. Resonance reinforces our world view and identity. It feels good. We can resonate with emotion, music, a colour, a scene...

ATTENTION. We "pay" attention. Once we've picked up some resonance subconsciously, so now we actually "look."

Remember, attention is costly. To "snap" to attention raises cortisol in the brain - it's energetically expensive, so we're also looking for reasons to stop dishing it out. Resonance continues to be important, as we're looking to build a little more trust.

REALISATION. If we resonate, we decide it's worth more attention on an ongoing basis. We engage. We read. Next time this person or service pops up, we slow down and check it out.

Now we're in a position to start to send a little more trust your way. The thing is, often it's not until this point that we realise we have a need! We can resonate with a service provider, allocate attention, and then discover what they are selling and decide to buy. Our early experience with this person makes us feel so good, we figure the program they have must be great!

If there's strong resonance, we actually look for reasons to buy from them. We love what they're about, where they're heading, and we want to go as well.

It's kind of like when you go to a restaurant and sit down, the waitstaff comes up and asks if they can help you. You need a moment... "let me look at the menu." You're starting to resonate, but you're looking for a trigger. Something that sparks your interest.)

INVITATION. The invitation. In marketing they call this the call to action, or the "CTA." The CTA or "invite" is needed to go to the next stage. A call to action before there is resonance is usually at best, a waste of time. At worst, it destroys your brand. So the CTA is important, but we aren't going to focus too much on it here.

When there is strong resonance, a call to action becomes a bit more like an invitation.

If you've been trained to focus a huge amount on the perfect "sales page" then you might not like the work we're going to do here.

Yes the sales page is important, and, if there's resonance, we'll figure out how to get through your sales process as long as it's clear.

ACTION. The final stage. I buy. I transfer the cash. I take action. This is where the bright lights are focused, but it's really just the final piece of the puzzle (although certainly not the end of needing to create resonance.)

RESONANCE & REALISATION

I was driving to Sydney every Friday for work. I left Newcastle at 8am, and the 2 hour trip would drop me into North Sydney right around 10am, and miss rush hour.

When I do this trip, I always stop at Olivers, a “healthy” roadside café.

I remember the first time I saw Olivers. I noticed a big green “O” sign with a stylised apple on it next to McDonalds... Something different that seemed healthy. An alternative to the typical fast food maybe?

I walked in and looked around.

Stacked along the walls were health food books. How to grow your own vegetables. Why you want fluoride-free water. The background of biodynamic farming. The story of Olivers was also up on the wall to read.

The food matched as well – organic, made on site and reasonably priced. The waitstaff were happy. I could relate. It matched my view of the world.

This created resonance. I liked what they were looking to create.

Then, I looked at the menu, and *then*, I realised I actually was hungry. I realised I had a need, and it was brought on by the selection of healthy food that matched my beliefs.

It’s hard to get our attention without the first R – “Resonance.” We need to resonate with what you’re about. We need to have a strong enough overlap of values, narratives and belief systems, or else we can’t move to the next R...

“Realisation” – we then realise that we have a need. I knew I wanted a coffee, but didn’t know I was hungry for the yoghurt. I’m now looking to buy something here. When you resonate with a business, it will feel like they know your needs better than you do.

“Shouting” for the first wave of attention is great, but if you aren’t clear on your story, then seeking out more reach is often a waste of energy. The second (real) wave of attention – the attention that you earn and hold – can only come after we resonate with what you’re about.

RESONANCE LEADS ATTENTION

Up ahead were two small silhouettes bouncing up and down on the side of the road at an intersection.

I was driving toward the beach at the time, just before sunset.

I got closer, and saw it was two teenagers dressed up in uniforms, holding big discount signs for a takeaway restaurant.

They were shouting out a song, next to a speaker and waving the signs at the traffic. You know what I mean... they had this a lot back in the day.

Did I pull in for a meal at the hot discount price?

Of course not. I kept going to the beach.

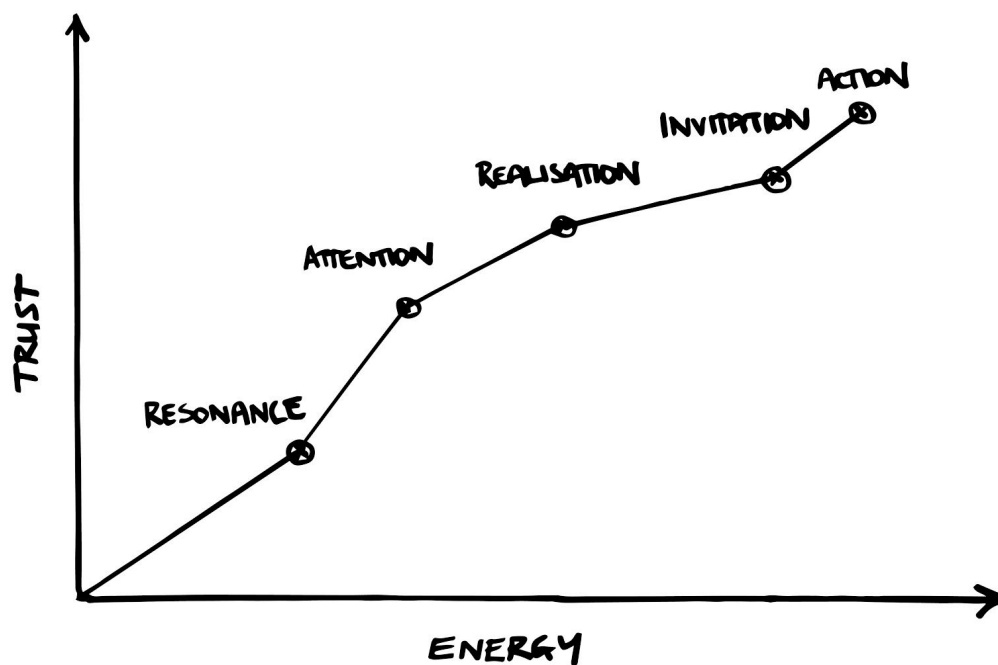
Do I even know what the restaurant was?

Nope. And I've seen these kids a few times on that corner now, and each time I have to make an effort to focus on the road.

We don't like to allocate attention to something. It's neurologically expensive. The only way you are going to hold attention in an over-communicated environment is if you create resonance.

Resonance leads attention.

Then you don't have to shout and wave, you can whisper. We'll gladly pay attention and check out what you've got, because we're interested in what you're about, and where we can go together.



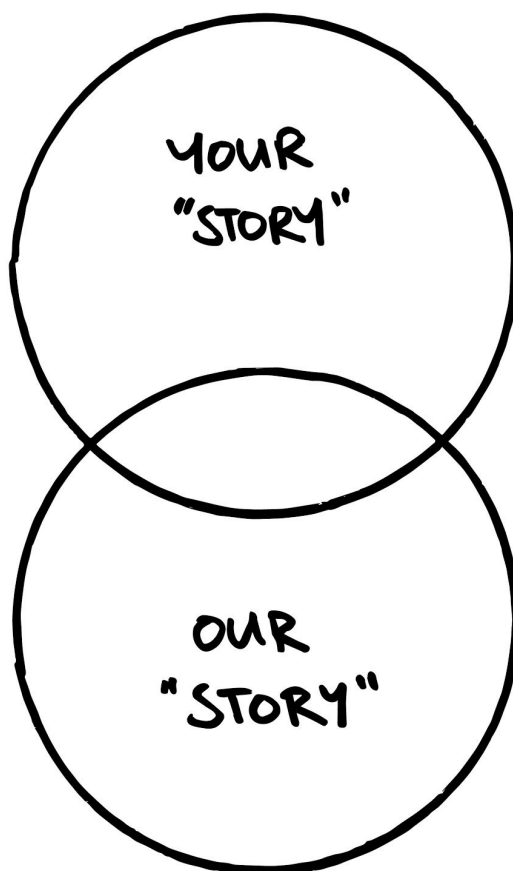
RESONANCE AND YOUR STORY

In this book you'll see there's a close relationship between resonance, and the relationship between your story as a creator, and the story of your audience.

But it's really asking you to think of "story" on a bigger level.

Not just your life up until this point, but how you show up. How you speak. How you sit. How you stand. What you're into - how you transmit.

Later, we'll go through some step by step ways to uncover your own story so you can share it in your work, and start to build resonance.



AUTHENTICITY

Authenticity is a trap - Seth Godin

Shouldn't we "just be ourselves?"

The "authenticity" crowd wants you to be yourself. Come as you are, how you feel. But if you map this out over a few mood swings, you can see that this may not work out, and probably won't help your business. After a while, it's hard for us to be bothered with your rollercoaster mood, when we potentially have our own to deal with.

On the other hand, if you can show up in a way that is *consistent with your values*, then you can (I believe) still be authentic. And this can create resonance. This is a consistent sharing of your insights, your values, and your narrative, in your own voice, in a way that can map to the people you want to serve.

Authenticity isn't about slurring your speech because you're lazy, or telling us you had a bad day, it's about understanding your values as lived "through" you, and consistently sharing your work that supports these values.

INGREDIENTS FOR RESONANCE

Resonance is dependent on frequency. There's the internal frequency of the system, and there's the frequency that's applied to the system.

This means that resonance can't happen if the frequencies aren't known (or at best, it's accidental).

So, knowing who you are and what you stand for and then communicating this to the audience matters, because we want to resonate with you on a deeper human level.

But this isn't a surface level thing. It can take a bit of time, and a bit of digging to unpack.

In fact, there's an inside joke that entrepreneurs and business owners love stock photos. Specifically ones where the photo shows peoples hands or the back of their head. They do this because it's easy, it "fits in" with everyone else, and they get to avoid doing the deeper work.

But the problem with this is when we use photos of other people, or imagery and content that's not in line with who we are, or our values, it doesn't match our individual frequency. This makes resonance difficult.

We're going the opposite way. This isn't about better stock photos, louder headlines and smoother sales tactics, it's about knowing yourself, knowing your customer, and communication.

FEEDBACK - “DOES THIS RESONATE?”

Over his whole career, Alfred Hitchcock’s wife Alma Reville was always by his side.

Apparently Hitchcock would take any story that he thought was worthwhile, and run it past his wife. If she didn’t give it the nod, it went nowhere. Apparently, in the test screening of “Psycho,” Hitchcock gathered together a few friends and colleagues.

They watched the film. His friends were raving fans, and called it a “suspense masterpiece.” But his wife, Alma, sat there quietly, until they all finished cheering.

Finally she says:

“You can’t send it out like that.”

Hitchcock asked why not.

“Because Janet Leigh “swallows” when she’s supposed to be dead.”

He fixed up the film.

At the end of the day, the market is going to be the judge of your idea or service, and how well it resonates. But before you throw it to the jury of fire, it’s usually worth getting feedback.

Test screening is big in film, and writers often have a group of “first readers.” Their role is to read or watch the first iteration, and give you their feedback.

It’s the same in your business.

While you don’t necessarily need to change your project based on what a few people say, having thoughtful, generous friends or colleagues who can put themselves in the shoes of the target audience and tell you what they really think, is a great asset.

“Hey, I think you have a pretty good feel for my work - does this resonate?”
Ultimately the market is the judge, but honest and empathetic feedback is a valuable step along the way.

Feedback is a gift, and can help you save valuable time.

This is big picture stuff, and is different to editing.

Focus Questions:

Do you have someone that understands your target audience that can help you with feedback?

If not, why not? Can you find someone? Today?

RESONANCE BEATS ACCOUNTABILITY

Nerida owns a leading gym here in Newcastle, with around 300 energised women who come in to train across two locations.

They also have online classes, community and social events and fundraisers.

Nerida has a goal to create a global shift in the way women think about health through community, connection and contribution.

And it's working.

Fitness trainers, coaches and gyms often run into the accountability question. For a lot of people, the whole "accountability" chestnut is at the centre of the health and fitness arena.

"How do we help hold our members "accountable" so that they keep coming in?"

Reminders, points systems, different rewards... all to get them back on the treadmill or into the class the next morning

Surface level tactics.

If you look at a Harley Davidson club, or a gym like Nerida's - you can see something deeper. The drive (and ability) to belong to something is greater than the feeling that we need to comply with an accountability system.

Nerida's women are a part of something bigger.

Creating a story that resonates, then providing ways for us to be an integral part of this, to belong to something, and then show it to our friends (got the T-shirt?) is more powerful than an external accountability driver.

"This is what we're about. This is where we are heading, and around here, this is part of how we show up. Part of that is we're consistent, and when we're in here, we support each other."

This is a lot more powerful than "Make sure you come to class if you want to get results."

Focus on creating something we want to be a part of, is easier, more fun, and more powerful than trying to convince others to force themselves to comply.

Resonance with a story that inspires consistency beats hammering the accountability drum.

Focus Questions:

What do your people belong to when they work with you?

Do you give them specific tools such as language, or merchandise for them to show others that they are part of something?

RESONANCE IS...

1. Website copy that makes sense - Forget fancy words (unless for some reason you already use them). When you write on your website, social media, or any other platform, you get to write as if you know who's reading. Because when you have resonance, you *do* know who's reading! You've done your research already. Keep it simple (we tend to over-complicate things.)

2. A smile at 7am in the café - It's early, the barista has been up since 5, and he gives you a smile anyway. He even knows your name. We all crave to be seen, heard and acknowledged - a smile at unlikely times (any time!) is welcome and a great way to build resonance.

3. Hearing a story about what you learned - We resonate with others who are also human, and who are also learning. Learning some context, or background behind something that you've learned or discovered can bring us closer together.

4. A card about where the coffee comes from with your espresso - Coffee lovers usually think they know a lot about coffee, and once in a while you'll be at a café that sees this. They'll talk to you about the coffee, or set a little card next to your cup that describes the flavour and origin of the bean. This is all a signal, and allows the coffee lover to resonate.

5. Good music in a retail store - So rare, and so important. We live in the world of playlists and world-view specific songs. Who are your people, and what are they into? Do you have your own playlist for them?

6. A clean gym - New and sparkly, or, raw but organised. Each type of client is going to resonate with a different vibe, but most of us appreciate when the owner and staff have a love for the craft and has a tidy space.

7. A birthday message or card in the mail - We all like to be seen. We all like to be acknowledged. Most businesses will miss this - you can nail it though.

8. A friendly profile picture on your accounts - Logos are great for some businesses, but often we love to see you or your people. In a sense, we're just little kids that have gotten bigger - we are looking for a person we can trust. We're looking for a smile and a welcoming face.

9. Showcasing and elevating your clients that have gotten great results - When we see people like us going through transformations that we want to make, it's a huge driver of resonance. *Seeing* the shift is more powerful than hearing you tell us about the shift.

10. Showing the "process" - Chances are if we're into your stuff, we have some level of awareness about what you do. If we're a die-hard fan, we may almost know as much about what you do as you do! Showing your process is a cool way to build resonance with your die-hard fans.

11. Enrolling your staff in your "why" and "values" - at all levels! - Resonance amongst staff creates resonance with the people you serve. We feel the synergy between everyone, and we like that. If you lack enrollment with your staff, or your values aren't clear amongst your team, we pick that up too and it destroys resonance.

12. Seeing that you love your work - Any signal that shows that you (and your people) are engaged in - and committed to - your work is a driver of resonance. We like when people are doing work they're proud of.

13. Hearing the origin story of your business - Stories create resonance (more on this later). How did you get to where you are? How did it all start? What were some challenges that you faced? Sharing this can help bring us along with your journey.

CASE STUDY - RACE READY OFFROAD COACH

In his mid 20's, Ben Greenwood was sitting on the couch in rural Victoria, watching TV, and eating chips.

He'd had a semi-successful career coming up as a moto-cross racer. In his own words, he was a "mid-level pro." A few sponsors, but nothing crazy.

So, while he still rode hard, on the side, he worked as a plumber in his small town to bring in some more cash and support his family.

Eventually, his health started to dive. He ended up at the doctor's, and while he was a lean "athlete," he had back pain, fatigue, and his blood sugar was all over the place. He was stressed to the eyeballs. He decided to get some help.

First, he started to balance his diet out. He started to learn about basic strength and mobility exercises.

His pain eased, his blood sugar stabilised... He started to feel better, and was able to keep working.

Then he noticed his riding started to improve, even though he was training less.

People noticed. Soon people started to come to Ben for help – basic mobility or flexibility work, basic strength work. Nothing major, but a few locals in the area, and a couple people online.

He cared for each person he served, from the beginning and listened to their story.

Ben continued to work as a plumber – even managing a team, as he continued to help other motocross and endurance riders overcome pain, get stronger and improve their riding. At this stage, he had a young family, and things were tight.

Even so, he started to share how his journey had unfolded, and he began to mentor other riders who were looking to improve their health. Typically the offroad and motocross community isn't known for outstanding health – yet Ben was making a change.

In 2020, Ben went all in. He didn't just open up more spaces to coach riders and athletes, but he started to share his personal values. Here is his value set:

Health, growth, family, consistency, hard work, adventure and integrity. If you hang with Ben for a day, you'll notice that these values have been lived "through" him. They weren't just picked off the shelf.

He used social media platforms to educate fellow riders around health. He hosted tutorials on how to do certain exercises specific to offroad riders. After working with more athletes, Ben started to get clear on the true transformation they wanted to make.

Ben noticed that people in his community were ready for a change. They believed what he believed, and wanted to join in with his story while they wrote their own towards better health, and better riding. Because Ben is working from his own story and value set, he has an abundance of energy for the work.

Often when we are doing work that isn't in line with our story, we feel inner conflict and fatigue. When we are in alignment with our story, we generate energy.

Ben looked within, found what was truly important, moved from here, and then created a story that fellow riders could be a part of.

Ben created resonance.

In 2020, he spent no money on advertising. Instead, he reached out to motocross clubs and hosted virtual information evenings to share his story, and educate them on health.

In March, he stopped all plumbing work. He doubled down on his content creation and built his podcast.

He currently works with a growing group of off-road and endurance riders Internationally. His story is being profiled in industry leading magazines. People seek him out, because his work and story resonates.

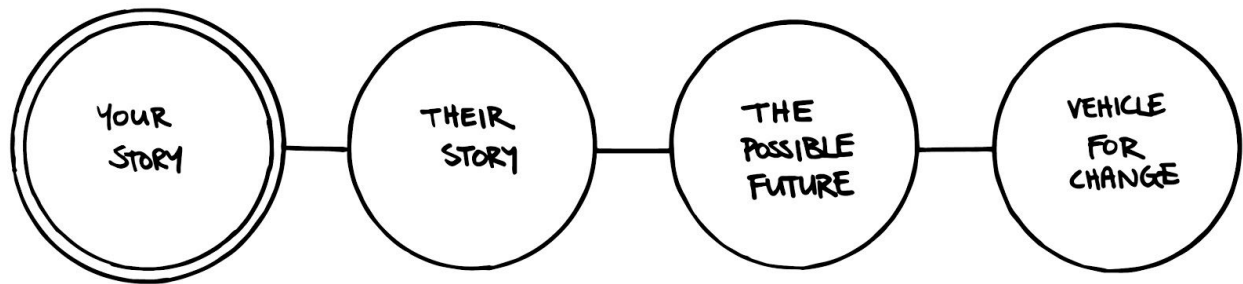
He has a steady flow of organic inquiries, and regularly runs offroad and motocross retreats.

Focus Questions:

Can you see how Ben is bringing his own story into his work?

How is Ben able to get consistent, organic leads without paid advertising? What's the driver of this?

YOUR STORY



WHAT'S YOUR STORY

*"In my language, my spirit name is Wind.
And my clan is the Crane Clan
Which is the leadership clan for the Ojibwe,
and I'm from the Place of the Rapids
As well as Missanabie Cree.*

In my language and my Anishinaabe way of knowing, it's important to announce ourselves to the universe, and to identify who we are and where we're from.

*"Boozhoo" means I'm going to learn from you, and you can learn from me.
I'm going to respect you. You can respect me.
Also acknowledging a spiritual being.
And a creation story."
- Eddy Robinson*

Eddy Robinson is an Indigenous Canadian Anishinaabe artist, musician, educator, facilitator, trainer and public speaker. Eddy teaches us that in his culture, our story - who we are, and where we come from - is important, and it's customary to introduce ourselves to our universe and surroundings.

In our work or business, this is also important. It creates resonance, understanding and trust. The first step to create resonance is uncovering and starting to share elements of your story.

Since the beginning of civilization, we've used storytelling as a powerful way of communicating. In many cultures, our own personal story - where we came from, our roots, is really important. They're part of our identity.

For some people, this comes more naturally. Maybe they grew up in a household of storytellers. For others, this involves some deeper work. It can be hard to unpack (let alone share!) parts of your story.

Here, we'll dive into key life events, and insights you've learned from some of these events, the values that have been lived *through* you, and some of your world views.

When you start to understand your unique story, you stumble into infinite ways to stand out, as well as ways to resonate with the people you serve.

Good marketing tells the story. Great marketing is the story.

- Bernadette Jiwa

TURNING POINTS

The mountains you climb, the chasms you cross.

Things happen in life. We're born, usually we go to some kind of school, we work.

Maybe we move, maybe we have a family. Along the way, we climb many mountains, and cross the inevitable chasms. Each of these has an impact on our lived experience, who we are, and how we see the world.

What we do shapes who we are.

Some events though, are going to really shift how we operate. Maybe you moved countries and experienced a different culture. Maybe you got half way through your university degree then walked out.

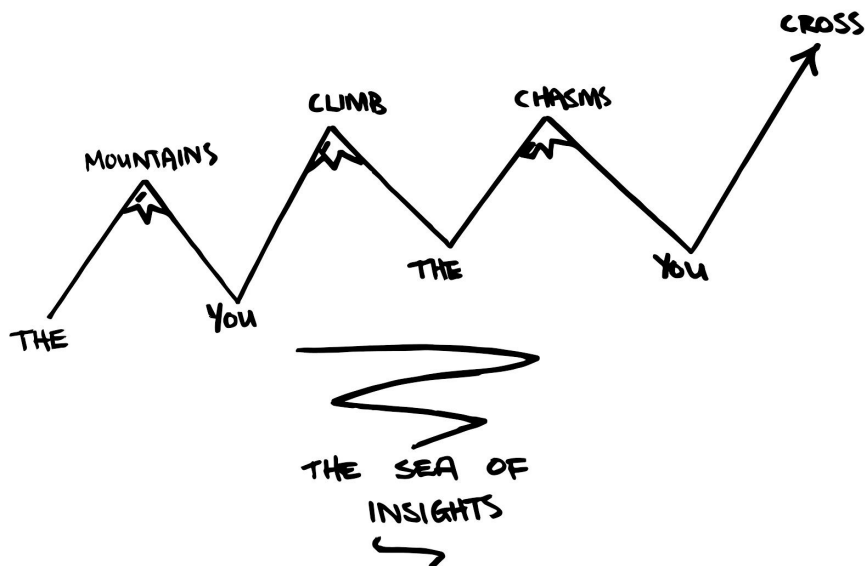
These bigger shifts are kind of turning points. There was a challenge involved, we overcame it, and it "shifted" our perspective, because the new experience was big enough to give us experiential insights, and even a new set of values.

The first step at uncovering some of our story is to figure out where some of these key turning points are. What were some of the mountains you climbed? What were some of the chasms you crossed?

What were the bigger events that helped us become the person we are today? Knowing these is a key step in creating resonance with the people you want to serve.

At the beginning, this can be hard to see because we've spent a whole lifetime living *through* our own lens. We can't see what we've been through. For a lot of people, it can feel like we haven't been through much at all...

But each of us has a story, and each of us has unique lived events and experiences.



YOUR EVENTS AND YOUR INSIGHTS

At some point, most of us screwed something up when we were younger. We did something, then we got ridiculed, left out, or dismissed.

Maybe it was a homework project, a show in drama class when we were ten, or in a relationship. After the event, we get an *insight*. Maybe it was conscious, but often it's unconscious.

Now the insight may, or may not be correct, but either way it's going to impact how we look at the world, and our personal values.

Let's look at some focus questions.

Focus Questions:

Go back to your main turning point events from the last section.

Under each event, write down a few insights that you got.

What were some specific takeaways from each?

ARE THOSE YOUR VALUES?

When you ask most small business owners about what they stand for, or their “values,” they pick a few lofty ones.

“Connection”

“Education”

“Integrity”

“Fairness...”

Maybe these are on their website. Sometimes they’re pulled out of thin air on the spot.

While these might be great values, the question is where did they come from?

In a hyperconnected culture, we often forget about our personal stories. There’s so much communication - tweets, posts, emails, comments and shares, that the cultural narrative often becomes our own narrative.

So, when we try to identify our values - and build a business that upholds them, we often end up grabbing aspirational cultural values that sound good.

This isn’t wrong, it’s just not necessarily true. At least not true for you.

If this happens, you’ll end up with a business that’s inconsistent, tires you out, and looks a lot like all of the other businesses or service providers in your niche.

The answer then, is to look back over our life, and let the life that we’ve lived up until this point tell us what our values are. We can see what is important to us based on how we have acted, and how we’ve shown up.

My life is my message - Gandhi

You owe it to yourself to be yourself - Yogi Bhanjan

YOUR EXPERIENCES SHAPE YOUR WORLD

(and you can leverage this)

When I was little we used to live on a boat. I remember when we got the date for our first trip away.

Dad had been working on the boat for a few years, and we finally were ready to leave New Zealand in June. I was twelve, had just moved schools, and was trying to make some new friends. And now we were going to leave on the boat and do homeschool for a few months. I was pretty against the idea to start.

We spent four months that trip travelling around Fiji, doing homeschool and correspondence school. It was hard leaving friends initially, but we got used to it as the months went along.

Soon I kind of forgot about school back home as we started to study the clouds and weather patterns, or draw fish in between French lessons...

Before you tell your life what truths and values you have decided to live up to, let your life tell you what truths you embody, what values you represent. - Parker Palmer

Twelve years later, I was sitting at my desk at the RAAF base in Williamstown, NSW. My job was doing structural repair analysis for Boeing, on their in-flight F/A-18's. Basically, I sat at spreadsheets for hours.

One hot day, I was facing a big window, looking over a street that came into the compound. I was half way through trying to figure out a problem, and I paused. I looked down the line of engineers and admin staff, spaced out along the low table.

Everyone was slouched forward, head down. There were a couple of people sitting at the table behind us, complaining about the project they were on or how slow things were moving.

People were whining. The energy in the space was heavy.

I looked out of the window, and right there in front of me was a koala slowly walking across the road. Middle of the street, making her way to the trees on the other side. No cars, just silence.

We weren't allowed outside in certain parts because of the security clearances. So I sat there, and realised that I knew this feeling. It was a feeling of being trapped. Of not working in an area that lit me up. Of not being able to go outside, or not being able to set my schedule. The opposite of our experience on the boat.

The contract for Boeing ended a couple of months later. I didn't renew. I moved down to Sydney to try a different job in engineering.

Looking back, I can see that all through my youth I grew up living outside of the normal boxes. I realised that while I had the capacity to do a lot of work, it needed to be in an area that I was excited about. When I was working on something that didn't light me up, I felt constrained. Then on top of that, when I felt locked inside, I got frustrated and my energy would dive.

The value wasn't just "freedom" - that's too broad. For me, the value was being able to walk outside at midday and sit in the sun for 15 minutes and look at the clouds if I wanted to during my work day. The value is to be excited about starting work early, because I'm excited by work that I'm proud of.

The value is to work with others who are fired up and excited by their own journey in life and in business. This has helped shape each business or project since then.

Values such as "integrity" and "freedom" are great. And, it's likely that we all have some variation of these within us that ring true. The question is *what is the more specific nature of that value for you?* What values do you represent based on how you have lived up until this point?

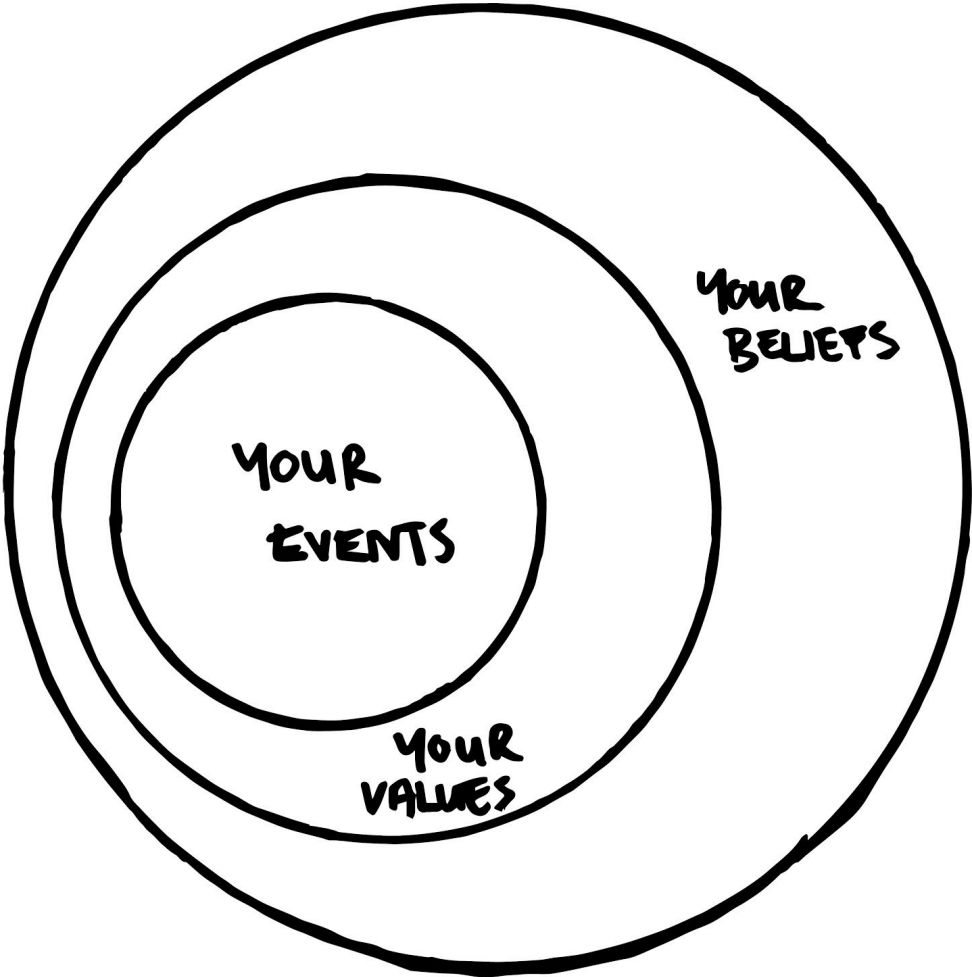
Your values have been influencing how you live your life. They're hard to see, but you've already been living according to your values. You're doing it right now - it has to be the case! Even as I do my final edits on this page, I've found a quiet spot where I can just see the ocean. We are living our values, almost constantly.

Focus Questions:

What do you notice when you go back through your life and see how you've lived?

Can you start to get clearer on the values that have been lived *through* you?

How evident is this in your business and marketing?



CASE STUDY - PATAGONIA

Patagonia's founder, Yvon Chouinard was in a falconry club way before he was a rock climber. At 14, he spent a lot of time outdoors in Southern California, training the falcons and hanging out with other kids.

Eventually, Don Prentice – one of the adult leaders in the club – taught everyone how to rappel down the local cliffs. While this was the beginning of a love for rock climbing for Chouinard, it was also a continuation of a big love for the outdoors that he already had.

Later, Chouinard hand-made pitons for climbers (selling them out of the boot of his car), and also re-invented how climbers “layered” clothing to stay warm in alpine regions. But this was just the start. Over the years, Yvon and the team at Patagonia revolutionised outdoor wear, and even moved into surfing wetsuits and other areas.

Patagonia isn't a profit driven company. They are product driven, and they are *change* driven. The company exists to continue to create and deliver excellent products for the people they serve. And, right now, they turn over around \$700 million.

Patagonia stands for something. They are showing up in all areas, particularly around sustainability and environmental issues. They regularly support anti-mining movements in Australia that would damage the extensive coastline.

Chouinard and his team have an insatiable drive to be a “responsible company” – socially, environmentally, politically and financially.

But it's not just the company.

When we look at the people who buy and support their products, we see people who believe what Chouinard believes. We see change makers, we see people who want to live responsible lives, we see people who want to take a stand against corporate giants who put profit before the health of the earth – not just people who need a new jacket.

While Chouinard's company has changed and evolved over time, he's been incredibly successful in bringing his own personal story and company back-story into the limelight. Who he is – his values, what he believes in, and how he sees the world – this largely shaped what the company has become.

And because Patagonia communicates their story so well – if it resonates with us, we can choose to be a part of it.

Chouinard started from within, was clear on what he believed in, then looked around. He saw the others, and he created resonance through showing up, and through products that work. He didn't compromise, and the result is a journey that he's co-created with the people who believe what he believes.

Patagonia *and* their raving fans are making change in the world.

IDENTIFYING YOUR VALUES

What are your values as lived through you?

When you let your previous actions, work and projects point to them, what do you see?

Now is a good time to go back through the key “turning points” in your life, and see if you can outline your specific set of values.

What did you learn from each key event?

How did it shape how you did things going forward?

What does this tell you about your values?

When we think about our values, it’s really easy to “come up” with a few that seem noble or admirable. The problem is, if we haven’t actually lived these, then there is no way they can be sustainable. We’ll feel exhausted trying to maintain them, and even if we can support them, they’ll start to conflict with who we really are.

Of course, it doesn’t mean that we can’t “change” as a person and grow through life, it just means that there is likely a clear set of values that has been important to how we live up until now, and if we can identify those, then we can create resonance more easily.

Focus Questions:

Write out a list of all of your values.

Why did you choose these?

How are these shaping how you do business? Are you showing these through your marketing?

LEVERAGING YOUR “SELF”

If you're teaching me something, and you crave a sandwich, I probably don't need to know.

A lot of times, we don't want to hear about what's going on inside your head. In fact, probably most of the stuff that flies around in your head doesn't need to come out.

That's the case for me anyway.

Other times, you want to leverage the voice in your head.

Your thoughts, views, opinions, or assertions. In particular around your area of business or values.

You have to get that stuff out there. So rather than try to “improve” your self, and always “quiet” the voice, you can leverage your self. You can publish the voice. “Self-publish”

When you publish yourself - your thoughts, ideas, or beliefs - and bring them into your work in your own voice, you stand alone. You give us insight into your entire story up until now. You show us that you are comfortable with who you are, where you're at, and what you believe.

This is leveraging the voice in your head, or your narrative. It allows us to know you, like you, and trust you.

So, should you “publish” the thought about the sandwich you crave? Nope, that's still irrelevant. You can however share your thoughts or assertions around areas that relate to the people you want to help (we'll get to that in the next section). Generally speaking,

You can educate or entertain us.

You can give us context around what's happening.

You can share your story.

At the beginning, this is totally new. We can get stuck. We don't know what to say - we don't know our voice, because we've spent so much time with it being only locked up in our head, or listening to everyone else's voice.

So, we need a kick-start. In the following exercise, we will use some prompts to uncover some of the narrative in your head.

NARRATIVE EXERCISE

Our narrative, our world view, our beliefs - how we see the world.

When something is running the show, it can be hard to find out what it is. We need to slow things down, and take a look at how we speak and how we live, so that we can understand our narrative.

This section is about looking at ourselves, then about writing some things out. There are three types of “belief statements” that we can fill out that can help us get clear on some of our worldviews.

There are two things to keep in mind here.

Not all belief statements or worldviews will be positive and enlightened! A lot of them might be holding us back, or limiting us in some way. And that’s OK. While they might not form part of our “content,” it’s important to find out what those are.

Secondly, we often can’t “see” our narratives or belief statements on a surface level. Often we need to look around at how we are living

What clothes are we wearing?

What foods do we actually buy?

What books are on our bookshelf?

Who do we follow on social media? What do we share with others?

What does this say about what we actually believe and think?

(Yes, there are also certain beliefs that are common to most of us, around death, being seen, love... and a few more)

Diving into our narrative or beliefs so that we can leverage them (and stand behind them) is important work. It can take some time and effort to get below the surface.

The goal is to understand some of the key narratives that drive our unique life, so that we can stand behind these in our business, copy, or content.

STATEMENTS

Based on the key life events, insights and values that you've been able to uncover, can you identify some of your world views?

Under each heading below, write out 3-5 belief statements, that are actually true to you.

"I believe that..."

Eg

"I believe in fairness..."

"I believe in consistency..."

"I believe in enjoying myself with an ice cream..."

"I want..."

Eg

"I want to succeed in my business..."

"I want to be a good partner..."

"I want to lie in the sun on a Sunday morning..."

"I think..."

Eg

"I think that understanding your values and assertions can help your business..."

"I think that reading is important..."

"I think that we can resonate more powerfully with people when we share our truths..."

Once you get the hang of this, it's pretty easy to accumulate a page or two that describes some of the ways that you see the world.

There are going to be a lot here, and at the same time, a few key beliefs that really influence how you live.

Focus Questions:

Under each heading ("I believe," "I want," "I think") write 3-5 statements.

Can you see some key belief statements that shape your daily life?

How are you bringing these into your work?

PRESSING PUBLISH

A little bit of difficult news now. Even after writing this stuff out, it can still be murky. The next step is to start publishing. It could be a blog post on your site, a newsletter, or something more, but you need to publish.

Before you commit to putting your ideas out there, there's no real *need* to see them. Once you start writing, speaking and publishing, you'll start to get clearer on your voice.

Identifying some of your beliefs in this exercise is a start, and then putting them out there to the world is how we really get clear.

The only way to find your voice is to use it. It's hardwired, built into you. Talk about the things you love. Your voice will follow.

- Austin Kleon

Focus Questions:

What is your favourite format to communicate? (Written, video, audio)

How can you practice using this format to publish your thoughts or assertions?

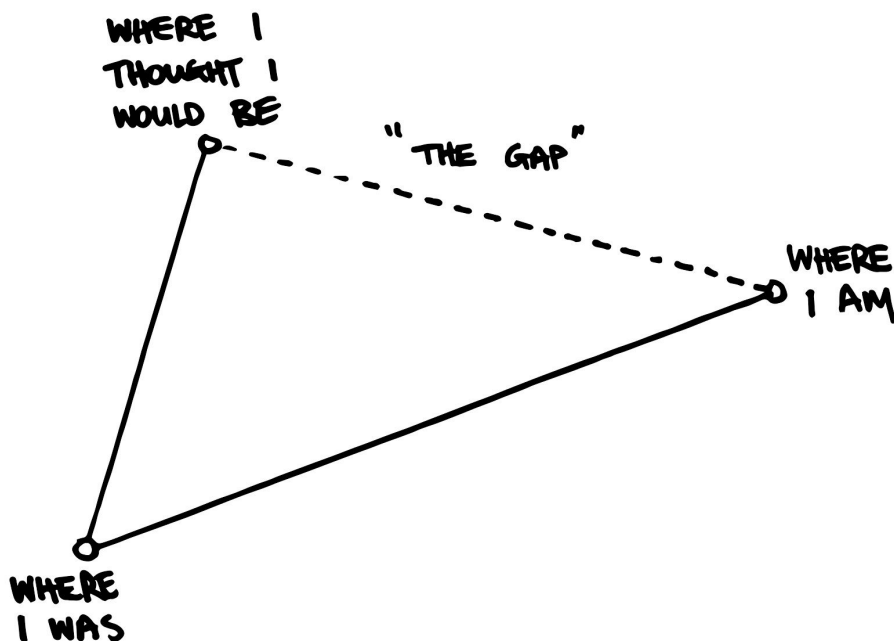
How can this tie into your business marketing or client retention?

If you aren't publishing, can you start, today?

LEVERAGING WHAT MAKES YOU “YOU”

There’s probably a gap between where you are, and where you thought you’d be right now. Maybe it’s in your work, your job or a relationship. I remember when I was 24, I had no idea I’d be working with small business coaching now.

So the gap isn’t one of “better or worse,” just different. Not a vertical gap. It’s lateral, or sideways.



We can look at the gap in two ways – one is we “fell short,” we didn’t have the strength, or, we lacked in some area.

The other way to look at it is that the gap was created by a unique set of values or strengths, that created a new direction. The interesting question is what were these values or strengths?

So, what was the driver of the gap?

More often than not - the thing that changed your trajectory was part of who you are. Part of your unique set of values, or your way of seeing the world.

What would it look like to double down on this?

What would it look like to leverage these strengths or unique characteristics into your current work?

When you leverage what makes you “you,” you can start to create resonance out in the world with the people you want to help.

I USED TO TRAIN LIKE A MADMAN

When I opened a gym, I thought the owners who did the best were the ones who were the fittest, could do all the skills and knew the most.

It wasn't a conscious thing, but looking back, I put the strongest, coolest, most flexible and knowledgeable people on a pedestal. I figured naturally that their businesses would be going through the roof, right alongside their feats of strength.

So naturally, I got deep into my own training. I had to catch up. Sometimes I did sales calls, sometimes I did marketing, occasionally team meetings...

But I always trained. 6 days per week, usually twice-a-day.

In the end, I could do a lot of the "things." I built some strength and flexibility. But even still, nobody was paying attention, the reward of the progress was fleeting, and I realised it. The burnout hit.

My health went through the floor. I denied it – I was a health practitioner after all right? I was flat. Depressed. At times, I'm pretty sure I was a shitty husband (and brother, friend, boss...). I threw responsibilities as far away from me as I could, craving more "space," trying to take the burden off. It just made it worse.

So here I was, a gym owner, and for a while, barely training a couple times per week. Instead, I'd walk along the Melbourne river-banks in the low winter sun. I got back into my meditation practice because I had more time again, and ended up enrolling in a long teacher training course nearby.

I started to do retreats again. Solo-silent trips away. Somehow these reminded me of the ocean sailing passages we used to do when I was younger.

I figured the biz would suffer, because I wasn't doing as much as all the other trainers and gym owners. I went off social media.

I started to talk about what I was learning around stress, food, meditation, and this other stuff that was on my mind more now because of what I had experienced.

By now I figured, well – nobody really cares anyway, you may as well just do whatever you feel is right. My energy started to creep back. All of a sudden people started coming out of the woodwork.

I got flooded with individual training clients. People wanted to come on retreats that I ran. I had started a blog, and people actually wanted to read it. I realised something.

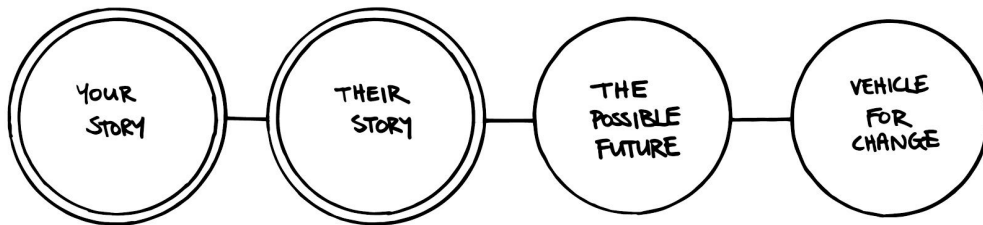
Over a certain level, the knowledge, strength, or flexibility I had as a trainer or coach didn't mean anything. Beyond a point, nobody cared, because it was commoditised. A lot of people had it, and it wasn't actually relevant to the people I wanted to serve.

Really, people care about the story you're creating and how well you can serve them.

The service and transformation is essential, but deep down we want to hang around people who are living into their truths.

We don't buy information or the things you can do, we buy into your story, your values and the way they make us feel.

THEIR STORY



YOUR FAVOURITE CLIENT, CUSTOMER, OR STUDENT: Who are they?

Chris Anderson taught us about the long tail future that the internet would bring. And he was spot on.

We no longer have one particular “market,” we have many smaller markets.

Small groups of particular world views and interests that have resonance within them, and, that largely ignore one another. What’s important to one group is irrelevant to the next (Yep, some serious downsides to the micro belief bubbles, but more on that in another book).

Anyway, knowing this, you need to be specific. Who do you want to work with? Who would you like to help?

What’s their story? What are they into?

Our job in business isn’t to do whatever we feel like, our job is to create a specific solution, transformation and transmission for a particular market.

If the first part of resonance was based on self inquiry, the second part is based on empathy.

Who do you really want to help? How are they feeling right now? What’s their story?

Do you know these things?

Does your team know?

(A lot of times, when people are early in their journey, they have trouble figuring out who they want to help, or their “niche.” The main thing is to not get too hung up on it, and *choose* someone to begin with. You’ll still attract people on either side of this person, and it gives you something to work with)

Focus Questions:

Who is your favourite or ideal client?

What is their life situation?

When you bring on new staff or do some marketing, how do you bring this information into your work?

CREATING RESONANCE - UNDERSTANDING THEIR STORY

Say you've got two kids. One of them has a birthday party coming up this weekend. Everyone got together and hired a local clown to come do some magic tricks. The day before the event, the clown calls in sick. They can't make it.

Your partner looks at you, and you know what the stare means. You're on the hook. You argue that you don't have a clown costume, but magically the next door neighbour does.

The weekend rolls around, you're all dressed up, and it's show time.

How do you show up?

Do you turn up wishing you were out playing golf?
Or do you show up as the ultimate clown?

And if you're the clown, how do you speak? How do you act?

Well, first, *how old are the kids? And what are they into?*

How you choose to show up in your work is important. You can turn up based on how you feel today, or, you can try to understand who you're looking to work with, and show up in a way that resonates.

In this next section, we're going to run through four key questions to understand our customers a little bit better - where are they at, what's on their mind and where do they want to go.

FLIGHTS TO NOWHERE

On October 10th, 2020, QF787 took off from Sydney and flew around some of Australia.

Seven hours later, the plane, and 150 passengers, landed back in Sydney. The plane never stopped. It was a sight-seeing trip.

Tickets sold out in ten minutes, and were between \$787-\$3,787 depending on your seat.

People are keen to fly.

These flights to nowhere – or “scenic flights” are happening in other countries at the moment as well.

To me, this is kind of a crazy use of a day.

For others, it’s a big adventure.

For most of the passengers though, while the views were novel, flying is such a big part of who they are, that this flight helped reinforce a sense of identity.

“Travellers” who have been starved of travel. The overpriced tickets were a bargain to maintain their narrative and status, in a fun way.

Who we see ourselves as, or our narrative, leads most of what we do. It influences our purchases, our memberships and our clubs.

And if it will drive us to an expensive plane ride for 7 hours, it’s definitely in play for customers at your café, gym, or restaurant.

When you think of the people you want to work with, what’s important?
Who do they see themselves as, and where can you use this in your biz?

*This can be a key reason to create “extras” in your business - the T-shirts, apparel, or bottles. These allow us to remind ourselves - and the world - who we are, and who we hang out with.)

**Since writing this, it turns out that in Singapore, they did a similar thing but the plane never took off! The “passengers” enjoyed a meal in the plane, then disembarked.

WHAT'S THEIR SITUATION

First we want a snapshot of who the person is you want to help.

You need to get an image of them in your mind's eye. While this will just be one person visually, it turns out that a lot of us think in similar patterns. If you can get really clear on the situation and world view of a small group of people, you'll find resonance with others "like" them.

Focus Questions:

Think of your ideal client.

What's their name?

What's their situation?

What do they do for work?

Where do they live?

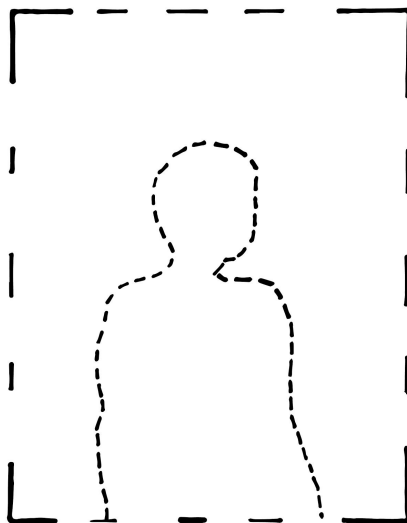
Do they have a family?

Do they drive a car? What kind?

If you don't know these things, how can you find out?

This is like a broad brush stroke of someone's overall situation.

Remember, choose one person, don't "blend" a bunch together, and with that one person in your mind's eye, outline all of their basic information. Also remember, even though you are "choosing" one person, you'll continue to serve others - this just allows you to get clear on your messaging and service.



FRUSTRATIONS AND ELEVATIONS

In any moment, we try to maintain our position in life (keep things the same, but with less stress) or improve it (go to the next level.)

So when we believe something stops this, it pisses us off. And it's the same for the people you want to help.

When you think about the people you want to help, what are some of the *frustrations* they are experiencing? For the kids at the birthday party we talked about, this could be that they're hungry, or they don't want to feel left out.

Elevations are things that would make everything *better*. It could be acceptance, recognition or acknowledgement, or a tangible sign that we belong to a group.

It also could be positive feedback or acknowledgement on work that we do.

Spend some time thinking about the people you want to help, and getting clear on their frustrations and elevations.

What pisses them off? What lights them up?

THEIR NARRATIVE

Previously, we unpacked our own narrative. We looked at how *we* see the world and tried to figure out a few key belief statements. We saw that we also need to practice publishing, or "putting these out there" to get clearer on it all.

We also want to do this for the people you want to help.

Here we're looking at the narrative of the people that you want to help.

We all want to belong. We all want to feel secure. So these are some starters. But what else? What is specific to the people you want to help?

What do they want?
 What do they believe?
 What do they think?

If the kids at the party want fun, high energy and laughter, it's worth knowing, because as the ring-in clown, we can deliver. A lot of times, this stuff will make sense. But when you're bringing a new product or service out to the world, it is worth the deep dive. We want to understand what's really driving someone to want to engage in our work (or not)

For the gym or café you want to open - how do they want to feel? What kind of music does that mean? What kind of energy will you put into the experience? How will you structure your class or sessions? Social events? How clean will you keep the gym?

Of course we never know for sure. But we can put in the work to make an educated guess. Having not just an accurate - but consistent understanding of the narrative of the people you want to work with is a far more helpful way to go than seeing how you feel on the day.

DESIRED TRANSFORMATIONS

When you think of the people you want to work with, what's the actual transformation they want to make?

The kids at the party might be there because they got invited, but who do they want to become? What's the transformation they want to make? Perhaps it's to be more popular, to have fun, to break up their school holidays, or to be a better friend for Joe.

Maybe - like a lot of us - they want to feel more included.

What about the people who go to the local take-away only café on the way to work?

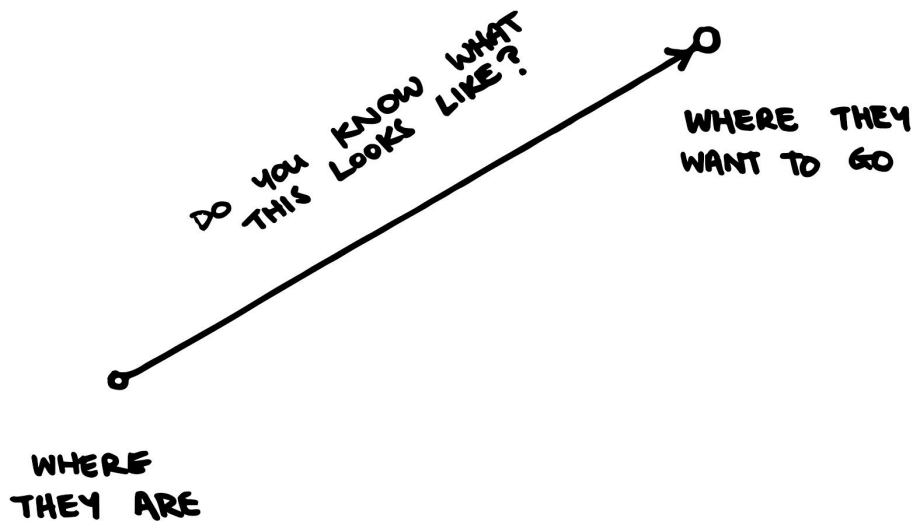
You know the ones - who don't stop to sit down. They're focused. They're leading.

And they love when you know their name. They've been coming in for two years, as they climb the corporate ladder.

They love exceptional, and fast, service, because they don't like to be late to the office. Maybe they like the TV screen up behind the machines, outlining the stock market announcements coming up for the day.

Each of us is trying to become someone. Maybe a more solidified and stable version of ourselves, or, maybe a new kind of artist or creator?

When you do this part, step into the shoes of the people you want to help, and write out half a page of statements: "I want to become the kind of person that..."



WHO WE ARE, WHO WE AREN'T

Do you remember learning to draw “negative space?”

You’d have the chair, but then try to focus on all of the space in between the legs, rather than the legs themselves.

On the paper in front of you, you create rectangle after misshapen rectangle, as you keep trying not to look at the legs of the chair. Finally you back away, and you see a remaining form that looks kind of like a chair.

By outlining what is not, we can often see what is.

When we go to engage in a service, a lot of times, we play the same game.

As I write this to you now, I get to identify as a “blogger,” a “creator,” or a writer (marginal call, for sure) and, at the same time I’m *not* a golfer or singer.

In fact, I hardly have a musical bone in my body.

By coming to your café and investing \$4.00 on an espresso, I’m part of your tribe who enjoys these things, and I’m not part of the McCafé \$1.00 club..

As a consumer, the service you offer, and the story you tell can help me fall a little more in love with myself through three avenues:

You can help me cement who I think I am

You can help me transform into the person I want to be, or

You can help me move further away from the person I’m clearly not.

All of these can feel good at different times. The negatives are just as important as the positives.

When you think about your customer, who are they? Who aren’t they? Try to write out a list of 12 things that they *aren’t*!

Focus Questions:

Are you clear on who your customers *are*?

Are you clear on who your customers *are not*?

How has this come through your language and marketing in the last week?

Is this clear with your team?

WHEN YOU KNOW THEIR FREQUENCY

When you know their frequency, things start to click.

You know the internal questions they ask themselves.

You feel their frustrations.

You sense their pains.

You know what lights them up.

And so, you can see that through cultivating empathy for your people at deeper levels, you can find innovative ways of how you can deliver this and design it into your work.

Creating consistent resonance isn't about showing up as you feel. It's about owning your own frequency and values, understanding who you want to work with, and showing up consistently as you look to create a fit.

Once you have resonance, together, this allows you to tell a new story, as you create a new possible future.

Focus Questions:

What are some of the nuances of your customers that only you know?

What are some of their favourite words?

What brands do they love?

How do these brands that they buy help them move closer to their vision or purpose?

A POSSIBLE FUTURE

There are infinite possible futures.

You could go left, you could go right, you could turn around!

You can start a new job, you can stay in the one that you have.

You also have possible futures with the people you serve. And maybe there is one specific part of a possible future you want to create.

Your business or your project can't move forward to this possible future on its own. Anything you do, is co-created between you and the people that you serve.

Patagonia and the raving fans *together* are creating a more environmentally sustainable future.

Nike and its raving fans *together* are creating a future where no human is limited.

Apple and its raving fans *together* are creating a future where everyone appreciates good design.

These possible futures didn't exist before the business was created, and they couldn't exist without the help of the customers, or the people who are co-creators. The fact that they buy the product is just one part of the bigger movement.

Focus Questions:

What is the new possible future that you are co-creating with your people?

What would happen in the culture if you were *wildly successful*?

What is the global change you'd like to see if it was available?

RESONANCE OVER TIME

Advertisers and marketers love “urgency.” You see this all the time - scarcity tactics - “Quick! Only 3 days left!” The goal is to ramp up the urgency so that we might click buy. And it works sometimes. But generally, urgency without resonance doesn’t do much in the long run.

Resonance between the creator and the customers (or “co-creators”) will usually be more important than timing. When there’s resonance, we can wait, or we can buy now. We want to be involved. In fact, I just waited 6 months before a slot opened up in an online marketing group that I’m a part of.

This means that early adopters will often buy because there’s resonance, rather than because it’s the perfect “time” to buy. We sometimes say it’s because the time is right, but this is usually something we make up to justify the purchase.

The resonance is the driver, because when we spend more time with things that resonate, we feel better. And when we feel better, a purchase makes sense! If I hang out with my mum and we go past a Patagonia store, she’s straight in there looking for something to buy. The resonance is driving the whole buying cycle.

We find a person or concept that resonates, then we start to sense alignment with the direction we want to go (or are already going), so we pay attention. We may or may not have seen the need at the original time.

“I really like this person or business...”

“What can I buy?”

“What can I be a part of?”

Urgency and timing is an important tactic, and it tells part of a smaller story. But resonance with the creator or idea in the first place sets us up.

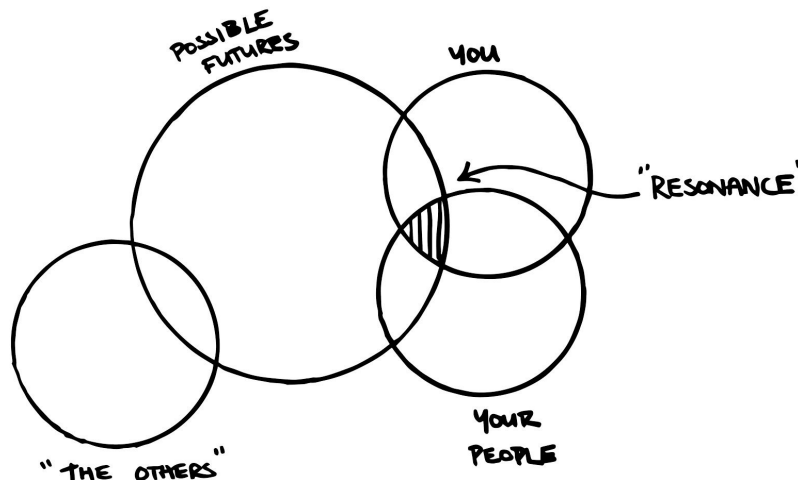


“OUTSIDERS”

There’s an intersection between three circles. Your story: Your strengths, values and experience,

The story of the people you want to serve: Their situation, beliefs, and questions, and
A possible future.

A “possible future” is a big circle. These are all the changes we could make, or all of the future outcomes that are available. Some of these you’ll be a part of, most of these you won’t.



The people you want to serve also intersect with this circle. That’s the things they will do, who they become, or what they create.

At the intersection between your story and their story, you have shared beliefs. At the intersection of all three, of course, you have resonance – the future you create with your people. Now, there’s a fourth circle. Another group entirely, we call this “the others”.

This is a huge circle. It definitely intersects with the future possibility, but it sits off to the side. There’s no intersection with *your* circle.

There is not enough overlap between that change you want to make, or your story as a creator, for these people to even care about anything you’re doing.

Marketer Seth Godin has a term for these other people. He calls them “non-believers.”

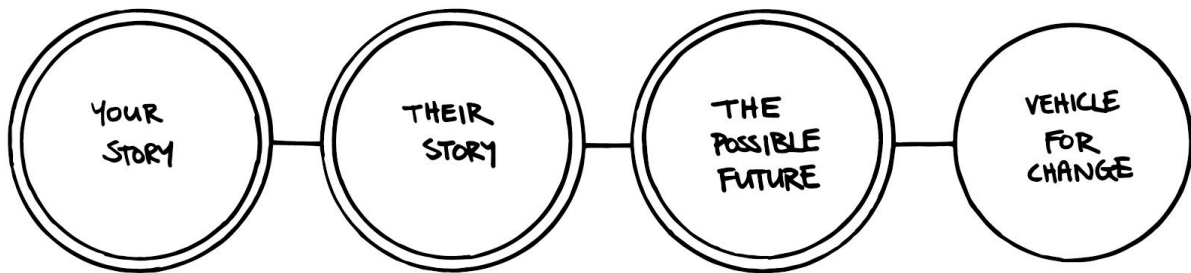
They aren’t dumb.
They aren’t ignorant.

They just aren’t a fit. They don’t resonate. They have a different story and are on a different path.

You aren’t talking to them, so you don’t need to consider them. It’s nothing against them, it’s just that you would be going against your true nature and your own unique story if you tried to change the work that you do, in order to please them. And to ask them to change, is to ask them to deny their own true nature as well.

THE STORY YOU TELL TOGETHER

“THE POSSIBLE FUTURE”



FINDING YOUR “FUEL” TO KEEP GOING

You’re going to be half way through a project, and hit a rut. Maybe you feel a little “off” one day. Maybe you fall into a full blown hole. Something is going to come up that really gets to you. It could even be that you’re just “over it.”

Should you stop?

It doesn’t feel like it’s working, so...

Should you quit?

The *present* self is really good at “reason.” I know this for sure. The present self, with all of its “reasoning” has delayed, stopped and halted my efforts a ton of times.

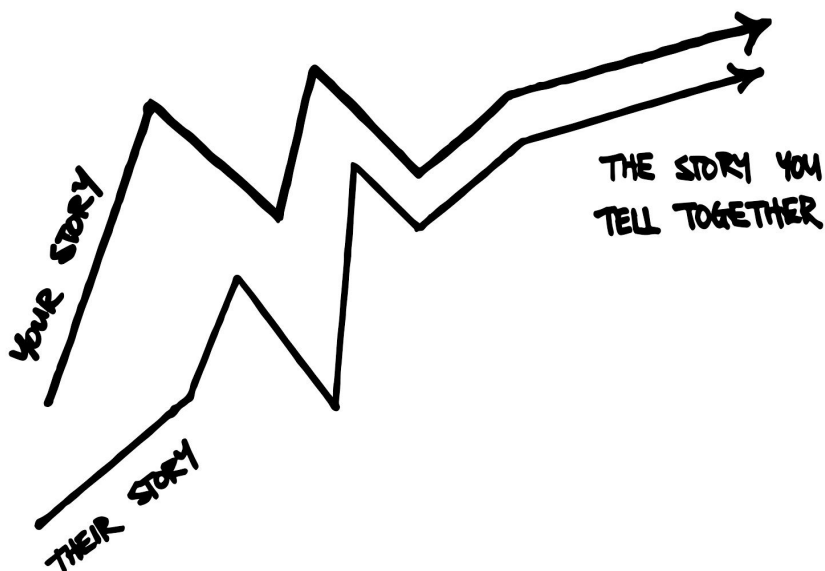
If you have a particular goal however, your *future* self doesn’t care how frustrated you are right now. In fact, your future self might even prefer the tension, because if you walk away – if you stop – then so does the goal.

Most of the time, the future self wants you to push on. It wants you to face the challenge to get the upgrade in awareness. The growth. Growth comes from following through on the task – and then from putting the work out there.

As far as the future self, the market, or the universe is concerned, whether our current emotional state is high, low, focused, or distant is irrelevant, because the emotion will pass.

Generally speaking, the new future you want to create needs to drive our action, not how we feel when we get out of bed.

The story you tell together is the change you want to make with your people. This is a co-creation. This is your driver (not your coffee, not the news, not a guru, not your mood)



THE STORY YOU TELL TOGETHER

The Autumn Rooms is a place where people get together. People tuck away in a corner, deep in conversation, sitting at small tables along the green wall.

They do this over great food and coffee

Ben, the owner, has always created spaces for people to connect. Restaurants, night clubs, a Tea Room, and now the café. But he can't do this alone. He needs the people who prefer the slower pace that he creates with the team, rather than the grab n' go takeaway from down the street.

The stories that are told within the Autumn Rooms, as well as the story of The Autumn Rooms, can't be a one sided affair. Ben needs the loyal customers, and the loyal customers need Ben.

It turns out, the story they created together around connection is so powerful that when they had to close their business in 2020 for the Coronavirus lockdown, they were able to pivot into a new chapter altogether.

Unable to trade in the space, Ben and the team put together hamper boxes, which were quickly snapped up.

When we play a part of a story, we want to see it continue. We don't like to see it cut, or stop short. We support you and your journey, because we have resonance, and therefore it also supports us on our journey.

Starting a business isn't about you wanting to have a certain job title, status, income, or lifestyle. The market isn't bothered if you start a business or not. They care about the possible future you want to make. Or the specific change in a part of the culture you want to focus on.

This possible future you want to create, or your idea that you want to share, is one side of the coin. The other side is the people who want to see a similar thing happen. They are your co-creators.

It's your job to show up in a way that resonates, and communicate with them in a way that lands.

HONEST PAPER (SELLING FROM RESONANCE)

I needed to send out a bunch of packages, so I headed into a boutique paper store not far from here. I walked in, pretending I knew what I was doing. A tiny shop. Loaded with stuff but in an organised way.

Small diaries, handmade cards, different ribbons, nice planners.

Realising I wasn't going to get far very quickly, I started talking to the owner, who also works there. Before I got too far trying to explain what I wanted, she smiled and kindly interrupted me.

She asked why I wanted it? What was I looking to create?

I told her about my upcoming event, who was involved, and the kind of gift I wanted to deliver. The story resonated, she took it and ran. She started to fill in the gaps. She knew what I wanted to create better than I did.

Once this clicked for me, I was kind of relieved. We were able to find out what I actually needed.

Together, we came up with a really cool outcome, that I could never have done on my own.

There's a term in sales called "diagnostic" selling. This means you ask question after question, to understand the exact need of the client or prospect. It can be effective, because you can get really clear on the obstacles, and be pretty sure if the solution you have is a fit.

It also works because it can cross over to different industries. As long as you know the features and benefits of the products you stock, you can generally make sales that match the needs of the person.

In the paper store, there was no need to diagnose.

There was resonance. The store owner could resonate with what I wanted to do, as she had seen this before.

In fact, delighting people with gift boxes, beautiful cards and wrapping was part of her story. There was resonance, and she was able to create something special.

When you're really clear on who your work is for you often don't need a million details or questions in the sale. A lot of those questions have already been asked by how you are communicating your own story and what your business is about.

EASERS AND ELEVATORS

A while back, we identified some of the frustrations and elevations that the people you want to work with might be feeling.

In the new situation you want to create, how are you going to *actually* ease these pains? How are you going to create these specific elevations in your business?

Where do these fit in your program exactly?

Remember, the market doesn't care if you and I *want* to go into business. It cares if we can recognise a transformation they want to make, and provide ways to help make this happen.

It could be the ambiance, the coffee you serve, the free wifi, or the waitstaff who are able to remember the first name of the people who come in.

If you're a coach and your clients want to get clear on the voices in their head versus the feelings in their heart, how will you coach? What will you do in your sessions?

If you're a personal trainer and your type of clients want to *feel* like they've done a "workout," will you make them feel wrong by giving them an hour of stretching? Or will you include a short workout at the end?

This section will include some of the underlying features of your service. These will be the key aspects of what you do, or *how* you do it, that solve the main problems or issues for the people you work with.

This can also include some of the key ways you can elevate your clients.

Make a list with two columns. One column is for "easers," one column is for "elevators." Underneath each one, write out what actual aspects of your business will elevate your people or ease their current pains.

"EASERS"	"ELEVATORS"

TRANSFORMATIONS

I remember when I wrapped up all the endurance racing I was doing. I had gone hard in triathlons and ironman races for a while, and I was keen to get back into some strength training.

I found a local community gym, and decided to go check it out.

I walked in, and immediately had a crush on the guy who owned the place.

Brandon was strong, he owned a gym, and his car was all stickered-up with his gym logos. Very cool.

I ended up joining the gym and had a lot of fun learning about what he did, and how he did it.

I turned up, and slowly got stronger as well. When you hang around that kind of community, it tends to come a little more easily.

A couple of years later, I opened a gym of my own.

So when I walked into his space years ago, what was the transformation I was looking to make?

To get stronger?

To get “faster?”

To belong to a group?

Or, was it to eventually “lead” a group of my own and open my own gym?

We can never know for sure (and it can change over time), but when you think about the people you serve, and the new future you’re trying to create, what are the transformations that they want to happen?

Focus Questions:

What are some of the potential “big” shifts they want to make in their life?

Do you know?

Have you asked them? If not, why not?

(What about each member of your staff?)

HIDDEN TRANSFORMATIONS

The other day my wife walks back in after a coffee date with her friend.

Her stride tells me she's got something to say.

"You'll love this."

I look up, and wait for it. She knows I love stories of small biz and in particular cafés (if you've read my blogs, this isn't news to you).

She drags it out. I would too. She's enjoying the fact that I'm slightly frustrated I don't have this story myself, and that she's got the stage...

"We're having coffee together by the entrance, and there's a screen door that you go through as you come in."

I wait.

"Well, the screw on the door hinge must have been loose... Every time people came in, the door would slam. Bam! Right in our face."

"What did you do?"

"I thought, hold on, we're trying to enjoy a coffee. This isn't good enough. At the end, I walked right up to the barista and said "I'm sorry, but we could hardly hear each other over that slamming door, they need to fix the little screw on it to make it quiet. It's an easy fix.'"

The barista stared back at her.

"Sorry, it just does that... It's been doing it for a while. Nothing we can do"

They paid, and left.

Rather than a story about how she connected with her friend over a nice coffee, I now got to hear the story of the overpriced chai and slamming door that was driving people away. And not only that, but a story of staff who hadn't been trained in a way that allowed them to find solutions to unique problems.

A café is only partially about the coffee. Your business is only partially about the explicit service that's on your website.

A big part of the transformation you help to make is about the people, the experience, the connection and the emotion that the product, service or space creates.

Is part of the story your customer wants to create here about feeling relaxed and connected with their friend? Or perhaps it's about the 30minutes that day they get to carve out alone without the three kids, like the woman two tables down...

If so, some cool art on the wall, a clean bathroom, or a slamming door is right up there as a priority alongside the grind consistency of the bean that day.

“DON’T SWEAT THE SMALL STUFF”

Really?

When you order a coffee, which is “smaller:”

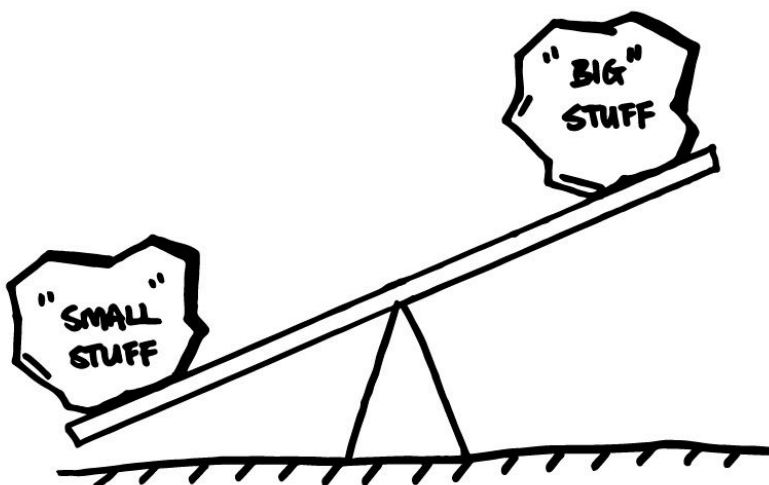
The \$3.00 you hand over, or, the pause, smile and-heart-felt-thank-you that you can choose to give the barista who was up at 4:30am for doors open at 6?

The “small stuff” creates the moment.

It creates the resonance.

The “small stuff” creates the fabric of your story.

This creates resonance. The small stuff supports the so-called “big stuff.”



Focus Questions:

What is some of the “small stuff” you focused on in your business today?

How could doubling down on the small stuff help you create the big stuff (big results and transformations you’re after)?

ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENTS

Mr. Churchill was a bit of a jerk. No two ways about it.

I can remember two completely different teachers from high school. Mr. Churchill, and Alistair. Alistair was our art teacher (I don't even know his last name, he just used his first), and Mr. Churchill was a science teacher a couple of years earlier.

Every time we would walk into painting, Alistair was kind, supportive and generous with his teaching and time. We would play different music while we painted, he pushed us to experiment in any direction we wanted to go.

Mr. Churchill used to dominate over kids. He'd attack them personally, make them feel bad in front of the class.

The thing was, both of these stories exist because each of them had practiced a different attitude, for years. Each of them told themselves a different story about what it means to be a teacher, and their attitude reflected that.

At the end of the day, we get to choose how we look at our work, and the story that we tell ourselves about it. And therefore, we get to choose to *practice* positive attitude adjustments, which directly influences our transmission and personal brand.

Emotions come and emotions go. And at the same time, if we're dealing with others in our business or work, our attitude is likely a part of the job.

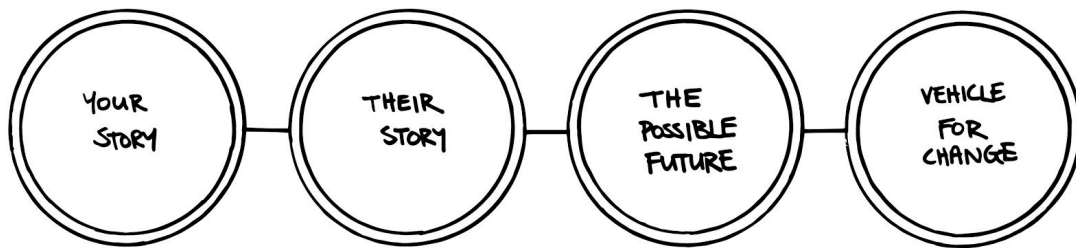
Focus Questions:

Our personal transmission is a huge part of our business and marketing, as it makes our audience *feel* a certain way.

When was the last time you got feedback on this?

What could you work on to potentially improve here (yes, it's an ongoing practice for *all* of us!)

VEHICLE FOR CHANGE



THE VEHICLE FOR CHANGE (OR, WHAT IT ALL LOOKS LIKE)

I love good gelato. My favourite spot is here in Newy, called Popolo.

Popolo sells gelato. But really, they sell joy. And it comes in a cup or a cone.

The way they do this - or the vehicle for change - is a bunch of different (rotating) flavours, a small spoon, a great in-store experience, and a colourful cardboard cup.

The price? Between \$3 and \$8.

When they set up the two micro shops, the owners of Popolo were clear on their story, and the story of the people they wanted to delight. They had resonance.

They had a clear vision for the new situation they wanted to create and the rest of it started to fall into place. The colours are fun, the music is light, the waitstaff are friendly.

For some businesses, such as the gelato store, the vehicle for change is pretty straightforward (but even so, everything from price, to service and branding needs to map to your customer to create resonance).

For people in service businesses though, this can be more complex, because there are less constraints.

How long is your coaching engagement?

What is your main method of delivery?

Is it online or offline?

What does your content marketing strategy look like? Do you even *do* content marketing? Price?

Go back through your service or offering, and see how your vehicle for change maps to the story of the people you want to help.

It's not about being cheaper. It's not about being brighter. What matters is, does it resonate for your particular people?

Focus Questions:

What does your service look like *exactly*? (These are the nuts and bolts)

How will each component make them feel?

Does it map to the story you want to create?

Will they feel like they belong to something? What? How will they show this?

What part of their transformation is each part of your business helping with?

Are there areas of your service you can improve to create even more resonance?

PROGRAM OR SERVICE

In service businesses, it's important to realise that we need to "define" the boundaries. In order to maintain resonance, we need to create something that is still a "fit" in the world view of the people we serve, and is still aligned with our values.

It's easy, and tempting to "add" more options, until we find ourselves both broad, and burnt out. One of the case studies that we talked about earlier was Ben Greenwood, from Race Ready Offroad Coaching.

One of the hurdles that Ben had earlier this year was that his business was growing, and he wasn't able to manage all of the coaching calls effectively.

His work was taking him away from his own training and family, and burning him out. And having a great lifestyle was one of the original reasons he started his business!

So Ben made a decision. He switched the format of his client work from individual calls to bi-monthly group calls.

This switch to the "vehicle for change" - or program - resonated with his own values of family and health, and also tied in well with the values of connection and camaraderie that his clients wanted more as well.

A lot of times we can be afraid of this kind of change. We made a promise, and it can feel like we might break it if we change things. While this is sometimes true, we need to remember the golden rule. If we create something that isn't aligned with our own values, it's not sustainable.

For Ben, in the end this was a win-win situation, which allowed him to level up, and grow his business more sustainably.

Had Ben switched to the group format "just to scale and make more money" it likely wouldn't have worked - he needed to create a program or format that was aligned with his own values and those he served.

CONTENT CREATION

This book wouldn't be complete if we didn't talk about content creation.

Content (at its best) is a way to show up consistently and bring educational or entertainment value that can help your clients and potential clients on their own journeys.

At its best, content is a key way to create more resonance with the people you want to serve.

At its worst, content creation is a crap-shoot as people try to grab attention over and over.

Earlier in this book, we unpacked a huge part of what makes you tick. Your insights, your values, your narrative. We also looked at where your ideal client is in his or her own life. Their situation, their frustrations, their narrative and their desired transformations.

This is perfect fuel for content!

Focus Questions:

In what ways does your content feel natural to your audience?

How are you infusing your personal story and insights into your content?

How are you showing that you understand the frustrations or interests of your audience in your content?

SEVEN THOUGHTS ON CONTENT

1. Share some stories that brought you particular insights
2. Outline one of your values, and how it's represented in your work
3. "Show don't tell" your narrative through a photo, or short video giving us some behind the scenes context of what you're into.
4. Create an education piece for your client to help them with one of their desired transformations
5. Showcase some results from someone you work with. Where did they come from? Where have they gotten to?
6. Share some of your interests in your weekly email - what's lighting you up right now? What's a resource that you're into? This is great to help build resonance with those you want to serve.
7. Ask a question - what is something your audience is working on at the moment? What is interesting for them?

“FREE” AS A TWO-WAY GIFT

One summer as a teenager I worked in a sailboat rigging factory in New Zealand.

Half of the floor had guys working on stainless and aluminium – machining fittings or welding spreader attachments.

Our half was working on carbon fibre mast laminations.

The factory floor smelled like hot metal, and the occasional clouds of smoke hung around head-height in the air over whoever was working. In our area, the floor was littered with little scraps of black carbon cutoffs.

In the background, The Rock (90.2FM) was blaring through tin-like speakers, and Guns n’ Roses was only interrupted by the smoko bell, or people yelling at each other.

As usual with radio, ads would come on every 10 minutes or so.

They’d be the same ones on repeat (same with the songs, really), selling insurance, or dental, or some electronics superstore.

In the past, paid advertising on platforms has been one of the main ways for businesses to tell their story. A 30 second interruption and the hope that something about our values or discount actually sticks with the listener or viewer enough for them to seek out the product down the line.

And now we have “Free.”

Free to create.

Free to distribute.

Free to educate, bring value, and even entertain along the way.

Most importantly, no matter what business you’re in, it’s now free for you to tell your story.

It’s free to create resonance with the people you want to work with.

Chris Anderson’s concept of “Free” as a side-arm business model doesn’t just benefit the user. It’s now easier than ever for you to tell your story, at no cost, to the people you want to work with.

And you don’t even need to interrupt their favourite song.

(MORE) NOTES ON CONTENT CREATION

The work we've done so far has allowed us to identify

1. Key events, turning points or challenges in your life
2. The insights or learnings that these brought
3. The values that are true to you, or the values that have been lived "through" you
4. Your narrative, beliefs and world views
5. The situation of the people you want to help, and more.

This all makes great prompts for content, that gives insights, education and context about your, your business and the work that you do.

STORYTELLING CONTENT AND RESONANCE

Only when we use the full engaging, coherent story do the responses spread deeper into the brain, into higher order areas which include the front cortex and parietal cortex.... These responses are similar across listeners, because the meaning conveyed by the speaker. - Uri Hasson

When you tell a story in your content, you're dipping into one of the oldest forms of communication. You're describing an arc - a character who is faced with a challenge, and then undergoes a change of some sort.

The story is more than a collection of words or sounds. It's a way to create resonance. Uri Hasson teaches us about neural "entrainment" - which describes the way in which my brain will start to resonate with your brain, as you tell me a story.

This of course also changes the neurochemical response in my brain. The *beginning* of your story creates a pattern that I notice. This snaps me to attention, and raises cortisol in the brain. The middle of the story drives up oxytocin, as I empathise with the character. And the end leaves me with the insight. I think about the possibilities ahead not just for you or the character, but in my own life.

When you use storytelling in your content, you're going down an entirely different communication road than if you just try to teach.

With storytelling, you're literally *creating* resonance in the content itself.

You can tell stories from your own personal journey.

You can tell stories that you learn from your customers or clients.

You can tell stories about an event that happened today.

When you tell stories, write copy, or fill in your "about" page, it's important to use your own language. If you strain for new vocabulary that's not natural to you, it's harder to create resonance.

PERSONAL BRAND

Who are you? What do you stand for, and, how do you want us to feel about you and who you're becoming?

The godfather of brand Marty Neumeier describes "brand" as our gut feeling about what you do. So when we think about personal brand, we are talking about our gut feeling about you and your actions as a person. Basically, your reputation.

So everything influences personal brand - a pretty deep rabbit hole for sure. The main thing is to realise that a strong personal brand (or reputation) is an asset that's definitely worth developing (if you can,) and we can do this easily with the personal story and resonance work that you've done.

To create a sustainable personal brand, it really has to come from a stable base. Something that's true to you. This means your insights, your values and your narrative can help guide your personal brand.

When you choose colours or fonts, you can often let these "come" to you - if you grew up around the ocean, how do you feel about blues, purples or even a light pink of the sunset?

If you grew up inland amongst rolling fields, how do you feel about greens, yellows or a lighter blue?

Think about this when you choose fonts as well. If you're quite structural and strong, choose a sharp, strong, sans serif font. If you have a softer touch, your second font could be a little rounder, with a serif on it. Does it "feel" like you?

The brand identity work is certainly somewhere you can bring in a professional. And, at the beginning, you can also get pretty far if you listen to your story, and stay consistent.

Focus Questions:

Rather than thinking about "brand identity" such as logos, colours and fonts, how are you thinking about your personal frequency, transmission or story?

When you read your own work, do you feel like you belong? Does it feel like your voice?

WHAT ELSE DO I INCLUDE?

While personal brand is based on your story, your values and beliefs, we probably don't care too much about your food - unless you're a chef.

We also probably don't care too much if you're having a bad day, or, if you didn't sleep well, or what the latest epiphany about your childhood is - unless it's a really big one maybe.

So you need to include some things that make you uniquely you - which we've uncovered a lot of already - but you don't need to share everything. Stay consistent.

Remember who your work is for, what they're about, the feeling you want to create, and stay consistent around that.

PERSONAL BRAND IS MORE THAN CONTENT

In the client and freelancer relationship, you see all kinds of stuff go down.

Late replies, no replies, changes to the projects, date changes, fee changes, scope changes... It can be a wild world out there, you never know what you're gonna get.

Not with Johan.

I've worked with Johan on a few projects. In fact I'm working with him on one right now. He's on time. He over-communicates. He's patient. And this is all before we even talk about the high quality of the design and branding work that he does.

Your personal brand isn't a few interests you share on social media or your brand colours, it's how we feel about you and your work. It's not just what you create, it's how you show up in each individual action or interaction. It's your values and how you show or express your values.

Everything you do tells a story. And the way you do things around your business tells us the story of how you think about your work.

This is important to us.

Johan cares for his work, and the people he works with. He has strong personal brand. How we feel matters, and in a crowded marketplace, personal brand matters more than ever.

Focus Questions:

Outside of content and marketing, how do you think about personal brand?

Can you list ten things that you focus on personally that are consciously helping you build brand?

How do these tie back to your values?

PERSONAL BRAND IS... (19 Ideas)

1. Being on time (or late) - Your relationship with space and time is huge. It has such a direct impact on our experience when we deal with you, that it can be a complete game changer. This might be the engineer in me speaking, but a minute late is late. And as they say in the military, early is on time.

2. What you leave in your wake - When I used to own a gym, we'd have "open gym" sessions. There were two groups of people - those who cleaned up all of their weights when they left, and those who left a bunch of stuff out "in their wake" - your wake creates a feeling, which means it's part of your brand.

3. Your gratitude notes - Doug Conant was the CEO of Campbell's Soup for around 30 years. In that time, he took the company to number one on the food index. He also sent out around 35,000 thank you cards in that period to employees and colleagues. When Doug was in a car accident, he received hundreds of cards and notes while he was in the hospital.

4. Your posture - Want to have a more magnetic personal brand? Stand, sit and walk more magnetically! Everybody *knows* this is called non-verbal communication, but very few people *practice* non-verbal communication. This is a key part of your transmission, and changes how we feel about you.

5. The music you play in your business - Business brand/personal brand. This one is an overlap. Nothing worse than the grating, over-bass, over-treble pop garbage that a lot of the malls play throughout their sound systems. Sure it's good for some people, but not for me.

6. Seeing your face - Whether it's on social media, on your website, or in meetings. We can't have a gut feeling about you if we never see you! This is a practice!

7. Your website - Again, business brand for sure, but if you're the face of the business this is definitely going to influence personal brand!

8. Your tone of voice, speed of speech and eye contact - How you speak completely changes your personal brand. One drill I often give to coaching clients when they are going into a difficult conversation is to check in on their voice, you can try this right now: When you speak, *where are you speaking from?* Is it from your belly? Is it from your chest? Is it from your throat? Where you speak from, how fast you speak and your engagement (directly!) changes how we feel (about ourselves, and therefore about you!)

9. Your ability to listen - The ability to shut up and listen is underrated. We love to hear ourselves speak, but when we listen, the other side feels "heard." This is a deep, deep need for all humans, so will directly influence your personal brand.

10. Doing what you say! - Don Miguel Ruiz talks about "impeccability" - be impeccable with your words. Doing our best on an ongoing basis. When you say you're going to do something, practice following through! I can think of the top 10 people I pay to do business with, and they all (every one!) are more or less impeccable with their words and actions.

11. Your smile and your laugh - My wife has a great smile and a big laugh. The smile is infectious - when she blasts that out there she steals the show. I could wave a flag in front of people, and still get no attention. The smile creates a far deeper level of resonance and attention with *all* humans, of *all* ages. Your smile is a practice, and it's part of your brand.

12. The time you give - Time is valuable. When you travel across town/state/country, we *feel* that. When you call a friend, when you drop in, when you take a customer out to breakfast. The *time you give* is directly linked to your personal brand.

13. Your initiative - I was talking to two different business owners in the last 24 hours that both were looking for staff. These are great opportunities with industry leaders, *but* they can't find people with initiative! The tools of the trade can often be taught, but the *initiative* is a deeper one! If there's something around you that needs doing, and you can pitch in, that's initiative.

14. Your organising - If you want to change how we feel about you, take the lead. Organise a group. Get three people together for a club. Get the team out for breakfast. Organise a guest speaker to come in and motivate the group. When you organise and connect, you build trust, you build brand.

15. Your clothes - Your clothes tell a story! How you dress is a signal that you get to play with. Think of people you look up to - I bet you can write down how they dress - and, how this makes you feel about them! Choose your clothes.

16. Your words - Your actual language and words evoke an emotion. If you read a lot, your vocabulary range will naturally go up. We'll pick that up in your language. Words carry meaning, and the way you speak changes how we feel about you!

17. Subconscious - Personal brand isn't something that's always conscious. A lot of the time this stuff is running below the surface. This means we might need some feedback or insights from others to help us understand how we're showing up and the personal brand that we have at any point.

18. Brands you like - The brands, sports teams, food choices we affiliate with are all part of personal brand. They say - I'm the kind of person that does this - and we say it through our purchases. Are you an espresso person? Or a peppermint tea? Two different drinks, two different feelings.

19. Everything you do! - Everything you do impacts your personal brand. It takes a long time to develop, and can be undone very quickly!

WHAT ARE THEY SAYING?

(and how are they saying it?)

One of my heroes I've stolen a lot of ideas from is Seth Godin. One of my highlights this year was having him on the podcast as a guest. One question he often asks when we look at a new business or product is: "What stories will they tell?"

"When someone walks away from your product or service, what are they going to say?"

This is critical. The stories they tell are effectively the feedback to determine if you've created resonance.

Patagonia fans tell stories about their clothing repair policies, or a recent community event they were involved in.

CrossFit fans tell stories about the AMRAP workout they did while they hobble up the stairs at work.

Starbucks fans tell stories about the size or strength of their coffee.

The "telling of the stories" about your product or service is really what we are going for here. On a small scale, this means you have a happy customer, who's got enough confidence to talk about the work that you do.

On a big scale, you've got a business that spreads organically, and fast.

What will they say?

Better yet, what are they saying? (check social media, shares, comments and more)

Knowing what you want them to say is important, knowing what they *do* say is critical. If they don't say anything, then you might not be evoking enough emotion.

Focus Questions:

What can you see people saying about your service?

(Don't look at reviews - look for peer to peer messaging, sentences, or language you hear from others.)

26 SMALL/BIG WAYS TO CREATE RESONANCE

1. Figure out key events in your life that have helped shape how you see the world
2. Share short snippets of these stories
3. Put your face to your work - social media handle, website, bios... smiling! (unless you want to transmit a different emotion - remember that you'll evoke an emotion in us each time we see you!)
4. Your social handles should be your name or something uniquely known to you!
5. Share your values
6. Share your insights
7. Tell stories that show you understand the values of those you want to serve
8. Share client stories that illustrate the big transformation!
9. Write and speak in your own words and language
10. Don't overcomplicate your language!
11. Celebrate the wins of everyone around you - this amplifies their desired transformation and status
12. Maintain high frequency in your content. Remember frequency (oddly/unfairly) creates trust.
13. Share some behind the scenes (bts), what are you working on, what are your interests?
14. Don't outsource your content creation - keep it in house. If you outsource, you're inviting a completely different language, tone or set of words
15. Listen, listen, listen. Listen to people in person, listen to comments, listen to social media posts. Listen to what people are saying, as this is going to help you with your creating.
16. If you do paid work outside of your area of interest, and you don't want more, don't advertise it.
17. Don't advertise or offer work that doesn't align with your own values or story
18. Everyone, everyone, everyone, wants to be seen and heard. This is part of all of our narrative. If you can build in ways to see the people you want to serve, you'll automatically increase resonance.
19. Don't try to solve too many transformations. Nothing will resonate powerfully
20. Keep in tune with the culture. What are your people interested in? Talk about it, use current stuff as examples in your stories.
21. Create more of your own work rather than sharing everyone else's work
22. Reply promptly to messages and comments
23. Do what they do. Spend time *literally* in their shoes. Eat lunch with your clients, hang out with them, workout with them. Do what they do so you can feel what they feel.
24. Create like your (professional) life depends on it. The more you create, write, and speak, the more you'll find your voice. Then the more you can resonate.
25. Show more of "you"
26. Show more of the fact that you know "them"

WRAP UP

All the time I hear from small business owners that they want to get more traction, or more reach with their work. That even when they do things for free, to try and build awareness, not enough people pick up on it, and they feel frustrated with how slow it all is.

It can be pretty frustrating. And, now we have a choice in how we move forward.

While business does take time, we also know that creating resonance is becoming ever more important. As we identify our unique story, and understand more about the people we want to help, we see unique ways to stand out.

And from here, we can communicate in ways that land well with the people we want to work with.

So from here we find a practice of noticing, creating, publishing, listening, iterating, creating again... Resonance isn't fixed, it's an ongoing way of thinking that you can bring into your innovation work, your service and your marketing.

While only you can know what it looks like to bring more of your full self to work, if you focus on creating resonance rather than grabbing attention, you'll be able to build a business you're proud of.

I look forward to seeing what you create and can't wait to hear about it.

John

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Pg. 7 “Neuroception a subconscious system for detecting threats and safety” - [Dr. Stephen Porges](#)

Pg. 11 “Authenticity is a trap” - Seth Godin (this has been in various Seth Godin books, including The Practice)

Pg. 12 Alma Reville - Psycho Test Screen - [Wikipedia](#)

Pg. 13 Resonance Beats Accountability - Personal conversation and observation of Lissome

Pg. 15 Case Study Offroad Performance Coach - Personal Conversation and observation

Pg. 18. Eddy Robinson - “How to Arrive” - Eddy Robinson, as part of Michale Bungay-Stanier’s teaching program A Year of Living Brilliantly. [You can find Eddy’s work here.](#)

Pg. 21 “Are Those Your Values?” - This concept is inspired by Parker Palmer, in his moving book “Let Your Life Speak”

Pg. 30 “Press Publish” - This was a personal lesson that was inspired by Seth Godin, who taught me the power of the daily blogging. Further to this, the work of Austin Kleon in Steal Like an Artist was also important

Pg. 34 “The Long Tail” - Chris Anderson - [Wired Magazine](#)

Pg. 38 “Frustrations and Elevations” - this concept was originally taught as Pain Relievers and Gain Creators, in “Value Proposition Design” by Osterwalder et al. (pg. 30)

Pg. 58 “Free - The Future of a Radical Price” - Chris Anderson. I’ve never read the actual book! My reference is the discussion of Anderson’s work on page 89 of the Business Model Generation book by Osterwalder et al.

Pg. 59 “This is your brain on communication” Uri Hassan, [TED talk](#)

Pg. 60 Brand definition -pg. 20 of “Zag” by Marty Neumeier

Pg. 64 “What are they saying about your work” - a concept from Seth Godin’s altMBA program in one of the prompts.

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