

Ep #114: How to Get Amazing Testimonials

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With Your Host

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Welcome to Joyful Marketing! I'm Simone Seol, and I teach you how to get your life coaching practice fully booked without having to pay for ads, buy Instagram followers, or complicated sales funnels. It's not rocket science and you can do it too. Listen on to find out how.

Hello my friends. Today we're going to talk about testimonials. There's so much I want to tell you about testimonials because there's so many things that people think about them that are totally wrong.

I don't love using language like right and wrong, but in this case, I feel really strongly about things I believe about testimonials, and I want y'all to know about them as well. So I got to thinking about testimonials because I just collected a whole buttload of - did I just say buttload?

Okay, a whole buttload of testimonials from my mastermind clients to put on the invitation page for the mastermind that's opening up in April, and for which applications are opening up in February.

And I just took a look at my current mastermind students and I was like, oh my god, this is just way too good, I have to share their stories. And so I just asked for and got a whole bunch of testimonials that honestly bring tears to my eyes.

Going to get a little bit nostalgic here and rewind the clock to February of last year, so 2020 when I had this idea for my mastermind, the 6 Months to Fully Booked Mastermind for the first time. And I had so much certainty in the beginning when I was putting this program together that this is going to be where coaches come to create fully-booked practices.

So I had so much certainty in that, even before a single person knew about it, even before I'd wrote a single word of copy for it, even before I wrote a single word of the famous mastermind workbook that I created. So looking back a year from then, my clients are not only getting fully booked, but blowing their own minds, creating a quality of life and kind of - having businesses that really have their sole purpose infused in it so it just feels like just a joy.

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It feels like sacred work they're doing and so many of my clients crossing the \$100,000 mark and setting very ease-filled realistic plans to scale to multiple six figures and eventually to a million, not in too distant of a future. It's just all of my dreams from a year ago come true. It is just magic. And I cannot wait to share them with you.

And by the time you're listening to this podcast, it probably will be up on my website. So if you are interested in applying to the next round of mastermind, and if you're interested in hearing the stories of coaches who got fully booked and who started from, a lot of times, what seems like very unlikely circumstances, I invite you to come check it out.

I'll add the link in the show notes. Adds your email address to the early application access notification list so that you can apply early if you must be in this mastermind, if you must get fully booked. If you're on that list, you're going to get access to the application a few days earlier than when I open it up to the general public.

And last time, all but one or two of the spots sold out from that early notification list so I had to close down the application in like, two hours after opening up to general public. So if you're like, 2021, this is the year I get fully booked, this is the year I lay the foundation for my eventually million-dollar coaching business, come join the party.

Like I said, applications are going to open up in February. Now, on to the scheduled programming. Alright, here's the first thing you need to know about testimonials that I feel really strongly about is that you don't need them. You don't need them.

I think there's a lot that goes around in this online business world about the importance of social proof. It's like, oh well, you should let people know that lots of other people are using your services and they love it and because people want proof that other people are already doing something before they want to do it.

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I mean, there's a truth to that, so I'm not going to say that's not true. There is a truth to that. But there is such a thing as over-reliance on testimonials that could give off a funky smell to your audience, to your clients.

What I mean when I say over-reliance on testimonials is kind of using the testimonials to convince and validate you as a coach when you are lacking in belief and you're kind of soliciting and advertising with these testimonials as a way to sort of cover up your gaps in belief, or try to cover up the gaps in your clients' beliefs instead of being like, I don't need this testimonial to prove that my coaching works. I know my coaching works 1000%.

And this just happens to be icing on the cake. Like oh hey, you don't need this testimonial, I totally have the skills to communicate the value of my coaching to you with just my words. I don't need the testimonial to sell, but I'll throw it in as an extra to help comfort your brain even more.

Just notice when you think you need more testimonials or you think you need better testimonials. Just notice where you are thinking that because you're not confidence enough in your own belief, which makes you not confident enough in your own ability to sell just by speaking about the problem in an effective way and presenting the solution in an effective way that creates a desire for your client to buy and to get the transformation for themselves.

Testimonials do not validate you as a coach, just like the lack of testimonials do not invalidate you as a coach. Your beliefs about yourself as a coach are what validate you, and your beliefs about yourself as a coach are what's going to sell your coaching. It's never the testimonial. The testimonial is always just a nice extra.

And if you have crappy beliefs about your coach, no amount of amazing testimonials that you put out there is going to really make a dent on your efforts. So always get your beliefs first. People don't buy from testimonials. People buy from your beliefs.

That said, if you have them, it's a nice extra. I really think that it could be the thing that helps to calm your prospective clients' primal brain fear about

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oh no, I really want this, but am I stupid for wanting it? And then you say no, you're not stupid for wanting it because look at all these other people getting results from it.

So yes, there is that layer of safety, extra safety that testimonials can provide. You do not have to rely on it to sell. So I have to get that message out of the way.

Here is the super important thing that I want you to know about testimonials that's going to make it so much easier for you to ask for them and not feel weird and awkward about it, and it's going to have you soliciting testimonials that actually helps your clients buy.

And it's this; a testimonial is not about look at me, look how great I am, look how amazing I am as a coach and look at all these wonderful things my client thinks about how awesome I am as a coach. It is not about that. Instead, it is about hey, here is what is possible for you. Let me give you a glimpse into a future that you might not have thought is possible for you and sell you on why it's possible by showing you this example.

A testimonial of the best kind is a celebration of transformation and therefore, it's a celebration of possibility for people who want that transformation. It's not about getting the client to say nice things about you. Nobody gives a shit about you.

You know what I mean, I mean that in a nice way. Okay, so I think so many of my clients, I see them feeling weird and hesitant about asking for testimonials because they have this entrenched idea and I can't blame them. I think it's a product of really bad marketing culture, like shitty corporate marketing culture.

They think they're soliciting their client to say, oh, my coach is great, she's the best, you should definitely hire her. If your clients writes a testimonial like that, that is not going to be a good testimonial. It is not about the coach. The coach is not what gets the clients to buy coaching. What gets a client to buy coaching is believing that they're capable of a transformation that matters a lot to them.

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So the testimonial has to be about the client getting to A to B and showing other people that getting from A to B is possible for them too. Hey, you want to lose 50 pounds? I know it sounds impossible but this person did it and that opens up a possibility in their brains, maybe I can do it too.

And that is a sacred service. I mean, I use the weight loss example, but anything. I'm just making this up, but I had a history of abuse and neglect in my childhood and now because of that I'm really unhappy, but hold on, you're telling me that someone could have had a similar history of abuse in their childhood and they healed all of that and now they're thriving in life and they're writing a book and they're leading this community? What, hold on, what? I want that, I didn't know you could do that.

Think about how sacred it is to break open people's limited ideas about what's possible for them and what they take for granted, what they think is realistic, and showing them hold on, look at this person who's not a unicorn, they are human just like you, they have a lot of similar challenges as you and look at their transformation.

This is not because they're so great, it's not because the coach is so great. It's because you have it in you too. That is the fundamental essence of what a testimonial is supposed to be about. It is always about the client and their transformation.

So I'm hoping that that is going to take the weird and the ick out of it. It is not about telling people how great you are. Obviously, it can include some of that. In fact, when you ask people, happy clients to write you testimonials, they are going to sing your praises, that's good, that's fine. We're not saying never include any nice words about the coach. Of course they will. But that should never be the focal point.

So now I'm going to tell you what makes a testimonial ineffective and what makes testimonials more effective. The reason I'm telling you this is because your clients don't come pre-programmed knowing how to write amazing testimonials.

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What I recommend a lot of the time, you don't have to do this, but what's great is instead of asking the client to write a testimonial, you can do that, but a lot of times it's really fun and useful to have a conversation. Say hey, can I just ask you some things about the transformation that you've had, the coaching we've had?

And you tell them that you're trying to put together testimonials, but that I'd rather do it in conversation, I'd rather do it almost like an interview, rather than you writing something. And you could invite them to a conversation that way and you could frame your conversation in a way where they're going to give you a great testimonial. The kind that changes other people's minds.

And this could be done so simply. You don't do this during coaching, but you can ask your clients, hey, would you mind scheduling a 10-minute conversation with me? We could get on a call for 10 minutes and I just ask you some questions about our coaching, I'm trying to put together a testimonial and I think your experience and your transformation is such an example of what's possible and we'll just have a conversation for 10 minutes if you'll give me permission to record it, I'll transcribe it.

You can share the video itself or you can share the audio, whatever you end up wanting to do. Be clear about it in the beginning and ask for their permission. But if you present it as, hey, want to have a pop on the call for a quick 10-minute conversation celebrating your transformation? They're going to be like, obviously, yeah, of course.

So that's a great way that I recommend you set this up with your clients. Or you can ask in advance and say, hey, after our coaching call today, would you mind staying on for another five, 10 minutes to record a testimonial and it'll just be me asking you a few questions and it'll just be in the form of a casual conversation and you'd give me permission to record it. How about that?

Just like, add on an extra five, 10 minutes after today's call if you have it. Just present it casually and they'll say yes, of course. Trust me, you're

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going to way better testimonials this way than just asking, hey, can you write me a testimonial? Because the conversation is going to make what they're saying so much more dynamic.

And then like I said, you can just - when that conversation is done, with their permission, you can share the whole thing, or you can just transcribe it and use the words that they said. It's your choice.

So this is what you need to remember. What makes a testimonial ineffective is when it's 100% about the coach or mostly about the coach. So this goes along with what I said earlier is that the common misconception that a testimonial is about how great the coach is.

And a lot of your clients might do this by accident because they think that's what a testimonial is about. They'll say oh, Amy is amazing and she's an amazing coach and she changed my life and she's so smart and she always has the answers and I felt so great with her.

They will want to say things like that, but then you have to notice when that's happening, say, yeah, I know I'm great, thank you. But let's talk about you. So the number one thing to watch out for in ineffective testimonials is when it's about the coach.

And number two thing is when the testimonial, it has vagueness. When it's vague. Here is an example of a vague testimonial. I experienced the greatest transformation of my life working with Sammy and Sammy really helped me to believe in myself and see new possibilities and be happier, and et cetera.

I just made that up. But it's not too far off from how a lot of people write testimonials. This coach changed my life, I'm so much happier. These don't tell you anything about what transformations actually occurred. I became a new version of myself because of this coach. What does that mean?

Is it vague or is it specific? Is it just kind of like, life-coachy, self-helpy words or is it actually telling a story? Again, your clients will probably want

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to be vague only because our brains - most of our brains think in a vague way on default.

So if you have a chance to talk to them about it, you really want to ask them questions that's going to take things in a more specific direction. So I'm going to say more about that in a bit. So let's get right into what actually does make an effective testimonial.

It's like the flip of everything that I just said. So the number one thing about an effective testimonial is that it is about the client and them getting from point A to point B. So it's not about how great the coach is. It's about how the client got from point A to point B.

So for the kind of people you serve, what's point A for them? Maybe they had chronic anxiety, doubting all of their decisions in life, and procrastinating all the time, that's where they were, and now they're super confident at work and they are super confident in their love life, and they don't procrastinate anymore and they spring out of bed with amazing energy.

Okay, there's point A, there's point B. And it's about celebrating the transformation that was possible for the client. It's celebrating the client who is the one who created that. You didn't create that as a coach. The client created that.

So it's a celebration of their transformation, not of the coach primarily. So effective testimonial, it's about the client. Secondly, an effective testimonial is specific. It's not that my life is so much better, I'm so much happier, I recommend this coaching to everybody. Specific.

Like, what was the thing that helped the most? What did you learn that was a game-changer? What was surprising for you in terms of your own transformation? Tell us a story. You don't have to get super-duper detailed about it, but it has to be an actual story that comes from the client that is from their lives, rather than I got this coaching and everything was amazing.

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Get specific. Get into the process. How was it for you to be coached? What was surprising about it? What was hard about it? What made you the greatest difference? And why was it worth it? Ask them specific questions about the process.

What made the biggest difference for you? What was the biggest catalyst for your growth? What are you most proud to have overcome or to have created? What tool or what idea was the biggest game-changer for you?

So these questions are going to lead to such higher-quality answers than just tell people how great I am. So be specific. And third, an amazing testimonial is one that addresses the doubts and fears that people already have about what coaching might entail.

So for example, this is going to be shared on the mastermind invitation page, but one of my clients Angie just got fully booked in her coaching practice and her testimonial that she wrote to me, I didn't coach her through this at all, she just wrote it to me, it begins with her talking about how her goal for the year, last year 2020, her goal starting the year was \$10,000.

Because she assumed that more than that would be way too much because she already had a full-time job, she had two kids, she had a family, she had all these things. And she thought there's no way I can work enough to create more than \$10,000.

And then she got into the mastermind and then she created many times that and created a fully-booked practice. And now she has a waitlist and raised her price. And she was talking about how it was so surprising to her that she could create a really successful coaching business in part-time schedule.

She's like, these are the worries I had. Turns out when I work with Simone, she prioritizes that you have a life that you love, that you have all the time that you want to give yourself to be with your family, to have fun, to sleep, to enjoy your life, and she taught me how to build a successful business with all of that. And so now my life is so much better.

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I'm kind of paraphrasing her testimonial, but these are the actual words she said. Now, the beauty of this testimonial is that it lets people know that they don't need to have a million hours open in a day to be able to build a successful coaching business. You can do it even if you have a full-time job. You can do it even if you're running after little kids.

And this addresses the doubts and fears that lots of people have. I probably can't do that because x, y, z. That person can do it, but not me because I have... and asking your clients specific questions about what were you concerned about when you were starting out, what was the thing that made you think I'm the one who can't do it because of whatever reason, what were those reasons?

You might want to ask them. Addressing people's fears and doubts, it starts with sentences like even though... I was able to... even though I feared, even though I doubted because... I was able to create this result anyway. I promise you, every single one of your clients who are getting amazing results have something that they overcame.

Maybe it's a health thing, maybe it's a relationship thing, maybe it's a whatever, mind thing. I'm the one who can't do it because of whatever, and being able to kind of highlight this part of a client transformation journey is going to be such a service to people who read it, who watch it and think, "Wow, maybe this is not as big an obstacle as I thought it was for me. Maybe I can do it too because that person did it."

Guys, testimonials are like sacred business. It's sacred business because you are literally helping to open new possibilities in somebody. And you're not just doing that by telling them that you can do it. You're doing it with actual examples of real people just like them.

So that's why I invite you to think about testimonials in this way, where it's sacred service to the people you serve, and what I love about the testimonials I get is that you don't even need to buy from me ever for my testimonials to serve you.

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There's tons of people who will read my mastermind testimonials and will never apply to my mastermind for whatever reason. And my testimonials will still serve them because they'll say, "Look at all of these examples of success. Look at all of these examples of what people were able to overcome in order to create amazing coaching business."

Even if this mastermind is not exactly right for me for whatever reason, look at all of this possibility, right? And it changes the way they think about themselves. It changes the way they think about the world. That's why it's so important for me.

Alright my friends, that's everything I want you to know for now about testimonials. Don't be afraid to ask for them. Ask for all of the testimonials and why wouldn't you if selling and marketing your coaching is just 100% of the time, it's a celebration of transformation, celebration of possibility. If you're not doing that all the time, I don't even know what you're doing.

It's not a celebration of you. Don't be timid about asking for them. Don't be timid about sharing them. If you get permission from the client to share their stories, share their name, and if they prefer to be anonymous, they can be anonymous. There's no one right way to do it.

You can share their photo or not, you can make it video or audio. There are no rules. But if you're coming from a place where you are genuinely celebrating their transformation and you're soliciting and sharing the testimonial from the place of wanting to inspire other people.

And regardless of whether they buy from you, allowing that testimonial to be an act of service in itself, to awaken people to say yes to their desires, to want more, to dare to believe that they can do it. If you are genuinely coming from that energy, as opposed to having it be about look at me, I'm so great, look how great my client says I am and you should all hire me, here's why you should hire me because I'm so great, if you're not coming from that, the whole process of doing testimonials is going to feel like a joy and it's going to be of such amazing service to everyone around you.

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Give your clients the opportunity to become an example of what's possible. And if they're not thinking of themselves in that way quite yet, then invite them into a way of thinking where they're like, yeah, I am an example of what's possible, I'm amazing, look at my transformation.

Alright my friends, that's what I got for today. I'll be back next time and until then, happy marketing, which is another way of saying happy celebrating possibility, happy celebrating transformation.

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