

Ep #122: How to Avoid Marketing Like an Asshole

Full Episode Transcript



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.

Hey friends. What's going on? I just got back from an amazing five-day babymoon trip. I think this might be the first time I'm announcing officially on the podcast that I am pregnant. I'm about four months along and I am so excited. So is my husband.

Because of the pandemic, it's been so hard to travel but we managed to find a wonderful domestic destination. If anybody's curious, it's Jeju Island in the very southern tip of Korea. And if you know me, you know I love me the ocean. I love me some islands. And the whole island is the product of a volcanic explosion.

I feel like there's a word for it. Like a volcanic island? That sounds simple enough. It's a volcanic island and there's black rocks everywhere and if you go to the beach, it's all black rocky beaches. And it's beautiful. And I actually love the beach and I love the ocean when it's still kind of cold and wintery.

Something melancholy and moody and beautiful about it. And so I spent five days soaking it all in and celebrating what could possibly be our last. My husband and I's last romantic vacation just the two of us before the baby comes in the summer.

So just wanted to share that. Really excited. By the way, being pregnant has taught me so much about the creative process because I am literally creating a new human being. And I don't want to go into a whole tangent about that because I can talk about it for an hour, probably 10 hours.

But here's what I do want to say, which is we often discount how painful and messy and just chaotic and painful the creative process can be. And I was reminded of that just starting this pregnancy because you know, I mean, maybe you don't know, but if you're a mom you might know and if

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you've seen other women around you get pregnant you might know this, but I did not have full awareness of how god awful the first trimester would be.

I just kind of very naively thought that all that happens is that you get a baby in your belly and it just grows and you get kind of uncomfortable when it gets real big because it looks visibly uncomfortable, but then that's about it. And then the labor is what's painful.

Oh no, I didn't know about the first trimester where every day all day you feel like vomiting and you have no energy, you can barely keep yourself upright, and you just feel like death. And I had a really, really tough first trimester.

I threw up on more than one Zoom call. That is a fact. And my clients, they saw me - I told them, I shared with them that I was pregnant in my first trimester and they just saw me constantly eat saltines throughout the calls because there was no way I could keep myself semi un-nauseous.

So anyhow, it was tough. It was tough. And now that I'm in my second trimester and all of the - most of the nausea is gone. I have so much more energy, I feel so much better, it's like my body, it's almost pretending like, "Sick? We weren't sick. What are you talking about? Pregnancy is amazing."

But it just reminded me of like, oh, when we create anything new, including a brand-new business and we look at other people who are at the end of it, or rather who are in advanced, mature version of it, it's like somebody has a really adorable baby and you're like, oh my god, that baby is so cute, pregnancy must be amazing to make such a cute baby.

News flash, it's not. You see somebody with an amazing business and you're like, that looks like so much fun, oh my god, you have the freedom, you get to make this money, you get to help people, it's amazing, but we often forget the "first trimester," so to speak, of business building, which is

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also a creative process literally in the sense that you're creating something that didn't exist out of nothing, and you're giving it life, you're giving it form.

What I learned about the first versus second trimester is that the second trimester is relatively so much easier because all you're doing is growing what's already there. I'm adding fat to the fetus that's already in my belly, and its bones that are already there, the bone structure are just getting stronger and all the internal organs of the fetus have already been formed.

And it's just getting stronger, it's getting bigger. Whereas in the first trimester, the reason that my body felt so awful is because it was creating everything from scratch for the first time. It's like, oh, we got to make a heart from scratch and have it start beating. That's a big deal, right?

We're going to make a brain from scratch. Think about how crazy that is. making a brain from scratch. It's crazy. Also I'm saying this whole process is bananas. But anyway, we're going to create a spine, we're going to create arms and legs, we're going to create a little face. And it's all going to be from scratch.

And that initial phase of creating everything from scratch, it just makes the mother, the host body's hormones crazy. And it drains all the resources, all the energy from the rest of the mother's body to create this brand-new life form and that's why the first trimester feels so awful for so many moms.

But then it doesn't last forever. That's the thing. The really hard first trimester-ish part of you building your business does not last forever either. It's just the part where everything comes together for the first time. You think it's going to be this fun frolic through the flowery meadows, and you get to have that later, but for now it's like, alright, this is going to be some intense creation time.

And as painful as the first trimester is, it is also, like I said, intensely magical and miraculous. I cannot believe what used to be a couple of cells, my egg cell and my husband's sperm, two cells came together, and it

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multiplied and it turned into a tiny little bean. And now that tiny little bean is a whole freaking person.

I can see the body parts and the organs. I can geek out about this forever but I just could not help but to think about all the parallels with the creative process, especially when it comes to building a business. So if you feel like you're in the "first trimester" part of it, it's not going to be like that forever. It means that something miraculous is happening, so keep going.

Okay, so next I want to talk to you about how to not market like an asshole. But first, I want to share some celebrations from my Joyful Marketing community about those clients of mine who are learning very actively how to not market like an asshole and how to market from love and integrity and joy. And they are killing it.

Natalia is just celebrating. She says, "I signed a client. He didn't even ask for the price. He told me he's never had someone show him his mind like this before and asked me to send him an invoice and he'll take care of it. We scheduled his first session for next week. Holy cow, what's this sorcery? Booked my first three clients in two weeks."

Oh my goodness. Natalia came into the program with zero clients, and she had just started her coaching business and actually lots of - I get lots of questions from coaches or people who want to become coaches or those who are in training to become coaches, "Hey, is Joyful Marketing right for me?"

And I want to tell you, I mean, if you want to learn how to book your first client, your first three clients, your first five clients without stress while feeling joyful, while having fun, then absolutely it's the right place for you to be. Congratulations Natalia. This is the way to do it.

Michelle also says, "I am doing a happy dance. I launched my first coaching program ever and on the first day, three people signed up and paid. I've never seen that much money go through my account at once. I

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am freaking the F out. I'm like, why didn't I do this earlier? Big thanks to you Simone and all the people sharing their vulnerability and wins."

Listen, if you want to experience what it's like to do launches, to start selling your coaching packages successfully without stressful conversations, without marketing that feels like contorting yourself into a box, better surround yourself with people who are already doing it and creating amazing results and sharing all of their wins and all of their trials with you.

And I am so proud to watch this happen in our Joyful Marketing community every single day. You're surrounded by not only so much success but so much warmth and so much love and so much generous sharing from people who came in a little bit earlier and started doing the work about how to really make this process work for you and start creating extraordinary results.

So that's my invitation for you to come check out the work for yourself. Alright now, let's get right to it. How to not market like an asshole. I don't think anybody does this on purpose. I don't think anybody's like, "Yeah, I'm going to be an asshole today. I'm going to market like an asshole."

I think we do this, and by the way, I'm raising my hand first here. I have marketed like an asshole before in subtle ways and I think for the most part, the most common forms of it are very subtle. And we do it because of our own scarcity. We do it because we don't have enough trust that there's another way to do it and that it's going to work.

So I want to help you to be aware of when you are subtly or overly marketing like an asshole, thinking that it's a good strategy, but when you check in with yourself, it doesn't really feel good. Because that's ultimately the thing. You want to check in with yourself and think, "Does this feel good or not? Does this feel aligned with my ethics? Is this congruent with the way I want to treat people and the way that I want to be treated in the world?"

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And if not, you want to look at it and change it without beating ourselves up. Like I said, I am the first one to confess, I've done some of these things. And it's not because I'm a bad person. It's because I did not have the faculty to think about these things critically and to make better decisions, and I hope to offer that to you in this episode.

Because guess what, my program, all my teaching, this podcast is called Joyful Marketing. And that's because if it doesn't feel joyful, there's no point doing fucking anything. And such a foundational basic part of what can make marketing feel joyful is knowing that I am doing it in a way that is ethical, that serves and elevates everyone around me, that I'm doing it in a way that's good for the world.

That is such a basic foundation of joy and I want that for you, I want that for everybody in my community. So here are the three principles of not marketing like an asshole. In other words, how to market like the kind of person you want to be in the world, how to market with integrity and ethics.

So the first principle is don't lie. The second principle is don't use fear or scarcity as a motivational tactic. And three, never put anyone or anything down in order to make yourself look better.

Now, I'm going to go through these one by one because I think there's some nuance to be defined. So let's talk about the first one. How to just don't lie. Not lying, only telling the truth seems like such a basic thing. And yet I don't see everybody in the world really committed to this principle.

Here's the thing; I don't think anyone that I know, anyone that I see decides to tell overt lies with the malicious intention to be dishonest. I don't think that's what's really going on maybe ever. Maybe in a tiny, tiny percentage of the time people lie maliciously, but I don't know. That's a very small percentage and I don't think I know any coach.

All the coaches that I know are good people or at least they try to be good people, just like me. We're all imperfect but we try to be good. Now, here are some ways we lie inadvertently and subtly. One of the ways I see is

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that coaches lie in order to manufacture scarcity because they think it's going to help to motivate people into taking action to buy.

So an example of this that I see actually quite a bit, I see it just come up on my feed is coaches saying things like, "I only have two more spots for free consults this week and you should grab yours now," or, "I only have one more spot open at this pricing." This kind of thing like, there's not enough time, come get it, or I only have this many spots available.

I'm a business coach so I talk to lots of coaches, and I see the insides of lots of these businesses and I would say 85% of the time it's just not true. 85% of the time when somebody says they only have two spots left for free consults, they have 30 spots open. They would take a consult call any time of the day, any day of the week. Because they really want to create clients, they really want to talk to people.

But I think they think that it's going to help them look more in demand, it's going to feel fancier to say, "Oh, I have two spots left." And people - nobody has access to your calendar, so they don't know the truth. And so no harm done, right?

Well, except it is harm done because you know that you're kind of lying. When you say there's only one more spot left before the price goes up and you know that's not really true, and you're just saying that because you think it's going to make them want to take action faster, just - there is a cost to when you are being slightly subtly dishonest with your people a lot of the times.

It dents your self-respect; it dents the loving relationship that you have with your people. It's like, when you love somebody and you kind of a little bit lie to them, that gets in the way of your ability to fully love and to fully serve them. So that's why I'm saying don't lie. It's not because anybody's going to come barging into your calendar and confirm, "Hey, you lied about this," and tell the world and make you look bad.

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That's most likely not going to happen. But it's just you and your conscience and how you feel inside and whether you feel like the truth is good enough to offer to people. Another way that I see some coaches lying subtly is by subtly kind of puffing up your experience or credentials to make yourself look more impressive.

They think doing so makes them look more impressive. So again, this is very subtle. I don't think very many people outright lie in dramatic overt ways about this, but it's kind of like - for example, a lot of people think they have to lie and say in whatever topic they coach on, "Oh, I had this experience and I overcame my own..." or, "I achieved x, y, and z, and I don't struggle with this at all and I am an expert so I'm perfect when it comes to x, y, z."

I think a lot of people subtly kind of project this image of I have to be perfect and so here's all the ways I'm perfect, here's all the ways all my struggles are behind me. And now that is a very subtle form of lying because again, most likely that's not true. You can 100% be an expert, you can be a coach who provides amazing value that clients love working with, that they create amazing results working with, and not be perfect and not have all the things that you think you need in order for people to be impressed by you.

So just to be aware of yourself and to be aware of okay, is there anywhere in my marketing where I am slightly subtly lying, slightly subtly not telling the entire truth because I think I need to in order to seem impressive, I think I need to in order to look like I'm in demand, I think I need to in order for them to be impressed with me.

But here's the thing; your truth is good enough. If you have all the spots open for consults because you don't have enough clients and you're looking for more clients all the time, that does not disqualify you from being a powerful coach who has the solution for the problem that that's going to change their lives.

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That's not a bad thing to have lots of space. In fact, it's a great thing. I mean, you don't have to focus on that and talk about that and zero in on it. But I'm just saying you never have to use fake scarcity for anything. So simply put, don't ever say I only have this many spots open, I only have this much availability unless that is 100% absolutely true.

So if you literally will not - you don't care how much money somebody's offering you, you don't care what's going on, you literally cannot make any more time that week for a client conversation, you literally will not take somebody's money because you don't have more room in your roster, then say that if that's actually true.

Anything that's not actually true, you don't need to say it. Now, this doesn't mean that you have to go air all your dark secrets and all of your dirty laundry and all of the nitty-gritty of the reality of your business. That's not what I'm saying. But I'm just saying the reality of your business as it is, you can invite people into it and feel really good about that reality if you feel really good about that reality with no puffing up, with no exaggeration, with no manufactured fake scarcity.

Just you as you are today right now is amazing. And you can offer so much value for your clients and you as you are today exactly is exactly somebody out there's dream come true coach situation. And that's the problem with subtly not telling the truth is that you deny that person their exact dream coach scenario because you think it has to look like something else.

You don't need to be in more demand, you don't need to be more experienced, you don't need to have whatever, you don't need to be superhuman. Who you are right now is perfect for at least one person out there and remember, we only book clients one client at a time, and so focus on that authenticity, that openness, that honesty of connection and that's going to happen when every time you kind of subtly want to not tell the entire truth, you ask yourself, hey, what's wrong with the truth?

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What if I felt really good about the truth? Just have that little conversation with yourself, check in with yourself, and sell with your truth and don't lie. That sounds like a really basic principle, but somehow not enough people are actively practicing this commitment to be completely honest.

So that's the first principle, and here's the second principle. Do not use fear as a motivational tactic. Now, I already talked about fake manufactured scarcity a little bit. Don't use that as a motivational tactic either.

Now, I want you to really think about anything that you say in order to sell. Any psychological - if you go to some marketing circles, there's a lot of talk about understanding buyer psychology and kind of deliberately knowing how to influence their psychology.

Now, I think all of that could be really fascinating and useful to just learn about and be aware of. Just learning about how - what makes humans tick. So I don't want to poo-poo that. But at the same time, you want to ask yourself if I were on the receiving end of this marketing, how would that make me feel?

So this is a kind of an exaggerated example, but I see marketing from coaches that's a little bit like if you don't get the help you need at this time, if you don't ask for help with this issue, you know where you're going to be in six months. Your life is going to suck. The problem's going to keep getting worse and you're going to look back and regret it.

Again, that was a little bit exaggerated. People don't necessarily say it like that, although I guess some people actually do. So you know what I'm talking about. Kind of instilling them a fear of the future in which they are not getting coaching. If you don't hire me, your life is going to suck, therefore you should hire me.

Here's the thing; that's what I mean by using fear as a selling tactic and it works a lot of the time. Meaning fear is an effective motivator, just like scarcity is an effective motivator. If there's only one of something, it's going to motivate people to want to get it, even if they don't really want it.

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It's like when something goes on sale, it's like, oh, I want to buy it. That's how consumer psychology works. People buy crap on sale that they don't even need, they didn't even really want in the first place. And people will buy things out of fear if you make them scared enough about what's going to happen if they don't buy.

But why would you want to motivate someone to buy from you from fear or scarcity when there are better alternatives? To me, all of it came from noticing how it felt to me as the consumer when somebody else uses fear as a selling tactic. It's like, oh, your life is going to suck, it's going to be like this if you don't take advantage of this opportunity, there's only this much of it left, you better jump on it now.

I remember how it felt to me on the receiving end was I felt pressured, I felt afraid, anxious, stressed out, and I thought that buying the thing would be the answer to relieving me of my fear and pressure and anxiety. So that's how I ended up buying lots of things I have bought in the past.

Like I said, this strategy works. But then here's what happens is that when you rely on fear and scarcity to get someone to buy, you keep having to rely on fear and scarcity to get them to take action, create the transformation, do whatever it is they need to do in your coaching. But then I don't think that fear and anxiety and stress are the most effective motivators in the world when it comes to driving change.

I think I learn so much better, I change so much better when I am relaxed, when I am plugged into abundance, when I trust myself and feel good about my future. You can 100% sell and sell a lot and make a lot of money and be very good at marketing selling and use zero fear and zero scarcity.

And the upside of that is that people will actually like being marketed to by you. People will actually enjoy being sold to by you because you're not intentionally generating stressful emotions and you're doing it out of your truth and out of your love.

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Now, that kind of experience, and I believe that in my experience, that is what creates a raving fan base of people who want to buy from you because you're the best at what you do, who buy from you because they love you. Not because they're afraid of what will happen if they don't buy from you.

So please, from one coach to another, from one consumer to another, let's all not contribute to creating a marketing culture of scarcity and fear. And let's just all take a vow to not use language like unless you do this coaching program, unless you take advantage of this opportunity, unless you do this with me, all these awful things are going to happen, your reality is going to continue to suck.

Because here's the other thing; I understand what it's like to really believe in your program and think it's god's answer to what your clients need. Hey, I feel that way about my programs. I'm very proud of them and I'm very certain that it's exactly what so many people need to create the results they want.

And at the same time, I'm not god. I created my program Joyful Marketing and also my mastermind to be the highest value, the most amazing solution for your problems so that you can become amazing at marketing and selling coaching and love it and have fun with it.

And at the same time, there's no way for me to know that you're not going to create that result even if you never buy from me. In fact, I know for a fact that there are tons of people who are marketing and selling joyfully and killing it and being really successful who have never heard of my name, who have nothing to do with me.

So a really important part of it is being humble enough to acknowledge there are so many ways to get to the goal. There's so many ways to get to the gold and I'm not the only way. I want the right people who resonate with what I'm saying, who are served by the things I've already created for free, who are served by my marketing content.

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I would love to invite them into the container that I created, but that doesn't mean that I know that their business is going to suck if they don't hire me. That's preposterous. I'm not god. And I never know, I just don't know. And I want everybody to admit that too, that they're not god.

And all we can do is to paint a vision that we believe in of what's possible for them and give them a really strong vivid sense of the truth of who you are and you communicate that with love and you issue an invitation for them to join you.

And the invitation has to come from love, and an invitation that doesn't come from love, I mean, I'm sorry to draw this comparison but it really makes things very starkly clear is when - you know how it is with those stories when abusive partners kind of pressure their partners into staying in the relationship by saying, "No one else will ever love you, no one will take care of you, I'm the only one who can be with you, who can put up with you," that kind of garbage language, that kind of abusive language.

Nobody wants to be on the receiving side of that. Nobody wants to be told nobody else will ever want to be with you, only I will put up with you, you need me in order to be happy. That's a really extreme example but yeah, no one will make you as happy as I make you.

These are all either straight up abusive or borderline manipulative abusive tactics. We don't like these dynamics in relationships and we're not going to use these dynamics in marketing either. So if you ever catch yourself instilling fear or scarcity as a motivational tactic, if you ever catch yourself believing that your clients out there would be screwed without you, they need to hire you, just check in with yourself and just notice, hey, I'm not god, I don't actually know that that's going to happen. People might be fine without me.

And I just want to invite in the people who maybe could achieve the outcome a different way but they want to do it with me because of who I am, because of the unique value that I bring, because of the container that

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I invite them to. That's enough. That's enough to make you very successful, make you lots of money. Take my word for it.

Okay, so here's the third principle to how to not market like an asshole and how to market in a way where you rack up some good karma points. Never put anything or anyone down to make yourself look better. This one really breaks my heart because I do see it quite a bit. I see it a lot in my feed and in the stuff that I see other coaches doing.

Putting someone down to make yourself look better in the most common form that I see it looks like I tried this thing with this coach, I tried that modality with that program, and that sucks and I'm sure you tried it too and you saw how it sucks, and mine doesn't suck because mine is different, right?

It's poo-pooing something else, a competitor, or even if you don't actually consider them your competitor but just making a common enemy out of something so that in an effort to establish common ground with and win over your prospect.

Here's the thing; it's just unnecessary. It's just unnecessary to make anyone or anything else look bad in order for you to look good. Now, it might be true that you genuinely believe that something else is ineffective or you think that people should definitely not go to some other place but come to you instead. You might genuinely believe that. But it doesn't mean that that is a marketing message that you necessarily want to center your messaging around.

I kind of said as a joke that this is a way to do good karma marketing, you create good karma with your marketing, but it's not really a joke. I really believe in karma. If you are against something and you have to be against something in order to be for what you are, what you're inviting in is someone else out there being against you in order to convince their people to be for them.

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I really believe that when we choose to live in a universe where somebody has to lose in order for you to win, that dynamic is going to keep playing out, you're going to keep creating it for yourself. And you're either winning or you have to be the one that loses so that somebody else can win.

And it's just not - I don't like that. Why? Why choose to perpetuate that dynamic if there's a better way? Another way that - the thing is that I think this happens in very subtle ways and I don't think a lot of coaches out there are like, yeah, I'm going to put this other person down. But they think that they're just telling the truth in service of the client.

Like when they refer to other things, external programs, coaches, modalities, whatever, and actually even the coaching industry. "Well, the coaching industry sucks and I'm the one that doesn't suck," or, "Here are all the things wrong with coaching and here's all the things wrong with other coaches and here's all the ways that everybody else is fucking it up, and I'm the only one who has it right so you better work with me."

Here's the thing; that might actually work to rile people up. If you post something like that, a lot of times you get comments from people who agree with you saying, "Oh yeah, I think these practices are bad, that person is bad, that modality is bad and they suck and yeah, I agree, you're the only one doing the right thing."

Just because it works to rile people up, it works to get people to bond with you and agree with you. It doesn't necessarily mean it's the best way to do anything. Here's what I prefer instead is to make myself look good by being really good at articulating the value of what I bring. Make my offer attractive by creating a really beautiful compelling invitation, rather than drawing a contrast between somebody else out there or something out there that I think sucks.

I think it's possible. I know that it's possible to speak from my highest self, to the client's highest self in a way that elevates not just me and them but in a way that elevates everybody. It's a more generous way of looking and the

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world. It's a way of making allies out of everyone in the world as opposed to enemies, where somebody has to be down for you to be up.

A lot of times I also see coaches who talk about experiences of - they think that they've been screwed over by different coaches in the past or different experiences that they've had or I wasted lots of money on useless, awful programs that sucked and they were all scams and my program is not going to be a scam, my program isn't going to be one of those things.

That actually makes you look like a victim. The more you stay in your lane, the better you get at articulating why your offer is awesome, and why you're awesome, and why your client is awesome. The better you get at articulating your offer in a way that elevates everyone that's involved, the less you need to put down other offers.

I actually think that needing to put down other people is a form of lazy selling and lazy marketing. It's an easy and lazy way to convey value and it kind of saves you from the work of having to figure out how to explain your offer, how to pitch it in a way where your offer just stands on the awesomeness of its own self.

Focusing on that is always going to be a better way to go. The golden rule when it comes to everything in the world always applies to marketing. Whatever you wouldn't want someone else doing to you, however you don't like being made to feel on the receiving end of somebody else talking about you or somebody else marketing to you, commit to not doing it to other people. That is how you rack up good karma points. That's how you don't market like an asshole.

And actually, best of all, it's how you market from your greatest strength. It's how you market from your integrity and your values. It's how you market from love, it's how you are going to access the joy that comes from being fully turned on to your own excellence and the beautiful relationship that you have with those whom you can serve.

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I believe ethics are a core part of joy. I believe that being - living by the golden rule, being a good person. I mean, listen, I think everybody's a good person but it's subtly catching the ways we stray from our own values because we think we need it in order to sell. We need to be aware of that and just decide to shift gears.

I just want to reiterate, if you've done any of these things, again, I have done some of these things, seriously. Not because I'm a bad person but because I thought I needed to. I thought there was no other way. I didn't know better. Don't beat yourself up. Doesn't mean you're a bad person, it doesn't mean anything.

Does not mean anything except that you are an entrepreneur, you're creative, you tried some things and now you can just decide to do things differently. You can just decide I'm going to market in a way that feels really good to me, that really feels aligned with my values.

I'm going to only tell the truth. I am never going to use fear or scarcity as a motivational tactic, I'm going to market to people in a way that feels good for me and in a way that feels really good for the recipient whether they choose to buy from me or not, whether they end up being my people or not, I'm going to market in a way that elevates everyone and that does not need to put anyone or anything down in order for me to look good.

I'm going to always speak from my highest self to the clients' highest self, and when you commit to doing this, I promise you, you will love and enjoy marketing so much more. And when you love and enjoy marketing, guess what? You get really good at it. And when you get really good at it, you make a lot of money.

So that's what I want for all of you. Happy joyful, ethical marketing and I'll talk to you next week.

Hey, if you want a shot of fresh inspiration and actionable tips to improve your marketing every single week in your inbox you'd better get on my email list. Sign up to receive my free e-book called *20 Unsolicited Copy*

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Tips. It's been known to get people to come out of the woodwork and ask to work with you. So get on that. Link in the show notes, and I'll see you in your inbox next time.