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With Your Host
Simone Grace Seol

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, buying 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, I am here to talk to you today about a very important concept that I think when you're aware of it, it's going to make a huge difference in your marketing. So, what I want to talk to you about is what I'm calling marketing perfectionist fantasy.

First, I have to tell you what a perfectionist fantasy is. And this is actually a concept that was created not by me, but my friend and colleague Kara Loewentheil, who is the host of the absolutely genius and totally fabulous podcast, Unfuck Your Brain. So I highly recommend that you check that out if you haven't yet.

So, according to Kara, so by the way, there's a podcast episode of hers, number 90 to be exact, that is titled Perfectionist Fantasies And Tomorrow Thinking. So I want you to listen to the episode, but after you've already listened to this one. So finish listening to this one first, because her episode is not about marketing but it's sort of like generally about our brains and our perfectionistic tendencies, and sort of how to get out of it. So super useful.

So, I want to give you a brief summary of what a perfectionist fantasy is as Kara defines it as I understand it. And I want to tell you how it applies to marketing and why it's so important to know, to catch, when you are indulging in a perfectionist fantasy about marketing.

So, according to Kara a perfectionist fantasy is a fantasy about being perfect. You know, I don't know about you but in my own life I have spent so many years thinking if only I were 10 pounds thinner. If only I had a loving partner. If only I stopped procrastinating, right? If only I were the kind of person who paid my bills on time, whatever, then I would finally be happy. I would finally be good enough. I would finally be the kind of person that I want to be. I would have the kind of life I'd want.

You know, I honestly thought like, you know, so for a few years when I was single, I was thinking if only I had a wonderful partner, then I would just like wake up happy and like be happy all day and go to bed happy. And then we would just like frolic in the meadows together. And I would have no worries. And, you know, I just had all these like, it sounds completely ridiculous when I say it out loud. But come on, like that's how so many of us think, right?

I think the fantasy about losing weight, that's a very common one in our society as well. Somehow when I lose this much weight. When my body looks more like that, then somehow I will have everything that I want, I'll have more opportunities. I'll be more confident. I'll like myself more. I'll have better dates, like whatever, right? When I have more money, then I'll finally feel sufficient, then I'll be da, da, da.

So it's always putting your own happiness, your fulfillment, your ability to love yourself, your ability to really be present and enjoy your life. It's putting that always just out of reach of yourself because it's always just over there. Right?

And the problem with a perfectionist fantasy, as Kara points out, you know, there's nothing wrong with having a goal, right? Like if your goal is to lose 10 pounds, if your goal is to find a romantic partner, there's nothing wrong with that. But when something becomes a perfectionist fantasy rather than a goal, is that it becomes something that you like long for but not in a productive way. Right?

So that you kind of think, "Oh yeah, I'll like go on a diet tomorrow. I'll start eating salads tomorrow." And then you don't start because you always think you're going to do it tomorrow. Or you have really grand ambitions that's kind of like hard to live up to, you know, on a day-to-day basis. And then there's a setback and then there's a challenge and then you give up and you think, "Oh, it's so hard for me." And then it's like you ate three brownies and you're like, "Oh, fuck it." And then you go eat 10 other things

and then you're like, "Oh, I knew it. Like I just blew it again. I'll never be 10 pounds thinner. I'll never be happier. Oh, I guess I'll start tomorrow."

And then you go into this vicious cycle, this vicious loop of, again, just going deeper, like committing deeper to like the insufficiency and the imperfection of now. And again, the goalpost is always over there. Right? So it's a miserable way to live. So, Kara, if you're listening and you're like, "I described it way better." Sorry, this is the way I understood it.

So I want you to think about what that is, right? Like always thinking that a more perfect, happier, you know, whatever version of your life is just right there. If only you could achieve, if only you could have X, Y, Z, that kind of perpetually seems out of reach, right? So you're just always living in the state of longing and wanting and insufficiency.

So here is how I see the same idea applying to marketing. So I asked Kara if I could talk about her concept in the context of marketing, and she gave me permission to do this episode. So, let me tell you how I see perfectionist fantasies manifest in marketing. I mainly see it in three broad categories in my clients, okay?

So, the first way people have perfectionist fantasies in marketing is when people think that marketing will be easier when, or I'll be able to do it better when I have something that I don't have now.

So some examples of this is like, oh, I'll be able to market better when I have this program that I can't afford right now. I'll be able to market better when I'm in this mastermind that I'm not in right now. Marketing will be easier when I have this secret knowledge that they have that I don't have.

For a long time, I certainly thought that, you know, my marketing would work better if I had a bigger audience. I was like, "Oh, I only have 120 Instagram followers, for sure, my marketing would be better if I had, you know, 20,000 followers instead." Or "I'll be able to market a lot better when I have a lot more time that I don't have now." Right?

So the first category of perfectionist fantasy is sort of a longing for something that you think you need that you don't have. And you're not yearning for it in a way where you're like setting a goal to achieve it and you take action and you feel really good about it. You're just like, it's just kind of like, it's just got kind of like a self-pitying quality about it like, "Oh, if only I had a bigger audience. Oh, if only I had a book under my name. Oh, if only I had her following Oh, if only I had, you know, access to this program." Etc., etc., right? So it's a longing for something that you don't have, which you think is going to make your marketing amazing.

The second category is when you think that marketing will be easier, better, more effective, when you have a skill that you don't think you currently have. Right? So it's not like an external thing out there that you want, but it's like, "Oh, when I am better at something."

So, for example, there are so many coaches who tell me they need to get better at copy in order for their marketing to work. That's a perfectionist fantasy. Because right now they're saying my copy just isn't good enough, that's why my marketing isn't working. If I could write better copy, it'll work better.

And it sounds so like, logical, right? Like, of course, if I wrote better copy my marketing would be better. But again, most of the time they're not saying it in a way where they are taking concrete steps to, you know, pick up copywriting skills, and they're practicing them in a very systematic way. They feel really good about the track they're on.

And it's not like that, it's usually just kind of like a subtle, pervasive feeling of like you don't have it. Like you just suck at it now and oh, wouldn't it be so nice if I could write copy like so and so, right? So anytime, again, there's like a vague feeling of like, not enoughness longing, indulging in that like if only the kind of feeling that's a telltale sign that it's a perfectionist fantasy rather than like a useful goal to have.

A lot of people also, I see them telling themselves, "I'll be able to market better when I'm better at technology." Right? Like, "Oh, all this tech just really overwhelms me. Once I get a better handle on all the tech, I'll be better at marketing. Once I'm better at networking, I suck at networking. I think I'm awkward, I think da, da, da, da. I don't know that many people, right? Once I'm better at networking, then all of my marketing will fall into place."

So thinking that you need a skill that you don't have now and thinking that that skill is going to make everything so much easier and better, that's the second category of perfectionist fantasies that appear in marketing.

The third and last category that I want to tell you about is when you think that everything will work perfectly, your marketing will be amazing when you are an improved and the superior version of yourself. So, for example, a lot of people, so many coaches are so deeply convinced, and then they tell me that their marketing will be better when they have better belief.

Raise your hand if this has been you, right? Like they conclude, you know, they see coaches like me talking about the importance of belief and then they use it against themselves as a form of a perfectionist fantasy. And they think, "Oh, the reason my marketing sucks right now is because I have shitty belief. And if I had better belief, consistent belief, deeper belief, then all the right words and all the right ideas will flow out of me. And then my marketing will be a be amazing." Right?

Or "I'll be able to market better when I'm more confident." Right? So I'm just like waiting for the version of myself with a lot more confidence just arrive, and it's not here yet. "I'll be better at marketing, when I get over my fear of visibility. I just have this fear of being visible and I never know what to say. And when I get over these issues, then my marketing will be amazing." Right?

So these are all the ideas that we can, they're very sneaky, like we can believe them, we can indulge in them about how there's some internal

aspect of you. Like you are somehow not a good enough version of yourself for your marketing to work. Right?

And here's a confession, like this is going to sound, I don't know, I think it sounds weird even though it was completely true of my life for a long time. And I know I'm not the only one. Like I honestly used to think that my marketing would be better if I was thinner. Which I've never been an overweight person, like I've always been in a, you know, whatever, like I don't even know what to call it. Like I've never been overweight.

But even so I thought, I looked at all the, you know, like influencers on Instagram, and they just always looked like a little bit smaller than I always have been. And I was like, "Oh, if only I were thinner then I'd take way better pictures. I'd look way more attractive and credible or whatever in my photos. And I'll be able to do like webinars or whatever more confidently. And then my marketing will be better."

Like I told you this, like when I say it out loud it sounds a little cuckoo. But like this is the kind of programming from society that we're all subject to, that have us always believing that a better version of ourselves, better in quotes, right? Like a "better" version of ourselves is just over there. It's perpetually out of reach and when we're there it's going to be better. When we're there marketing is going to be better.

So my friends, ask yourself, what are you telling yourself will make your marketing better and easier and perfect? Right? Are you believing, like what are you believing you need in order for you to market better? Right? What are you believing that you need outside of yourself? What are you believing that you need to be good at before you can market well, right? What do you think is holding you back because you don't have it or because you're not good at it? And in what ways are you believing that you need to be a different version of yourself than who you are now, right?

Maybe you think, "Oh, I need to be healed." Right, that's a trap that a lot of us can fall into. Like I need to heal this and that aspect of myself. I need to

heal my inner child. I need to like not have this trauma; I need to like get over this issue before I can be more confident so I can market better. So, that's another form of a marketing perfectionist fantasy, right?

Now here's the thing, thinking this way, I mean, I talked about this a little bit earlier introducing the concept. But thinking this way, it's the most surefire way to disconnect you from the power, and the belief, and the resources, and the creativity that you have access to now. It always has you, like perfectionist fantasy in marketing has you living in some nebulous, imaginary, fantasy future scenario and thinking that all the good stuff is over there.

So like you can't even look at what you already have that is so useful and perfect, and amazing, and fertile, and abundant because you're not looking at what you have now. You're looking at what you think you'll have when you're over there, which is all made up in your mind. Right?

So this is a tremendous, I want to say misdirection of all the resources, all the power that you have at your disposal now. It's a way to not ever have to live in the present. It's a way to not have to mine for your power and resourcefulness in the present.

It's the best way to ignore your gifts in the present. It's the best way to avoid having to celebrate who you are and what you are connected to in the present, right? It's a sucky way to live, it's a sucky way to do business, to be forever caught in a marketing perfectionist fantasy without the awareness that that's what's going on. Right?

So, I think the reason that so many people fall into a perfectionist fantasy about marketing is because they feel that marketing is hard. And they think there comes a point where it stops being challenging. And they're waiting for it to stop feeling challenging before they can give themselves permission to really do it or feel like they're good at it. Right?

So when they try to post something they're like, "Oh, it's hard for me to think of what to say." When they write something they're like, "Oh, this

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sounds dumb. It doesn't sound brilliant like that other coach who's always saying brilliant things. I sound stupid."

Or they make an offer and nobody responds. And they're like, "Uh, see, it must be because my belief sucks, or must be because my strategy sucks. It must be because I'm lacking some know how, I'm lacking a five-step process that is taught in this program that I don't have the money to join right now. If I had that, if I were more like this, da, da, da, da, right, then I won't be experiencing these emotions of vulnerability, and anxiety, and fear." Right?

And, again, a lot of people use that as an excuse to just kind of not take a lot of action and kind of dawdle and like wait for those perfect conditions to arrive, which is never, right? And when you're in a perfectionist fantasy, that's a way of being, it's a way of thinking, right?

So let's say you are telling yourself that all of your problems will be solved if only I could be in that program. If I could only buy that one solution that some other expert is proposing, right? Like, I think if I were just in that program, I think if I were part of this mastermind, I think if I just bought that product, then all of my marketing problems will be solved. Then it'll be easy, right?

You go into that program; you go into the purchase with a perfectionist fantasy. And what happens is that as soon as you have the new thing, right, as soon as you're in the program, as soon as you're in the mastermind, as soon as you buy the product and you have it in your hands, guess what your brain is going to do? It's going to immediately look for all the reasons why that's not enough and why you need something else. Right?

It keeps you in this perpetual loop of there will be better than here, and I have to wait until I'm somewhere else until I can take action. Until I can feel proud of myself. Until I can make a difference. Until I can connect. Until I can market powerfully, right?

But the reason that marketing is hard is not because you're lacking some things or because you're lacking some skills or because you are an insufficiently improved version of yourself. The reason marketing is hard is because of one reason and one reason only. Marketing goes against a lot of the ways your brain naturally operates.

Listen to me, your brain would always rather have you sit on the couch, eat cake, and watch Netflix all day long. At least my brain would rather do that all day long. Because that way, number one, you don't have to risk judgment, rejection, and ridicule by sticking your face out there, sticking your voice out there, out in the big bad world among all the people out there. Right?

Your brain does not want to do that. They're like, "Why do we want to put our ideas in front of other people? That sounds horrible, they could judge us, they could reject us." Right?

And number two, your brain does not want you to like step outside of your own ego to think about other people and how to serve them. You know, I mean, the way I put it is like your brain would always rather have you be in your own head then have to take your brain out of your ass, so to speak. You know what I mean?

It's like your brain is very comfortable in that like egocentric tunnel vision, at least speaking for myself. And you have to like pull yourself out of it and your brain doesn't want to do it because it's uncomfortable. It doesn't want to think about other people. It doesn't want to, you know, find out what that might be like.

And the third reason your brain doesn't want to market is because if you are just sitting at home eating cake and watching Netflix you don't have to try anything new. And marketing means trying new things all the time. And if you don't have to try anything new, that also means you never have to risk failing at anything.

Your brain hates failing because it equates feeling with like dying. You know, if I fail at something I'll get cast out of my tribe, and I'm going to die. So your brain is like, "Let's make sure you never fail at anything." And how we make sure of that is that you never try anything new. Right? So don't go out there, be in your own silo. Don't put your ideas in front of other people, that's dangerous. Keep them inside your own head. Just don't do anything new, keep doing the same thing. Like this is your brain's way of keeping you alive and safe. That's what it thinks, right?

And I'm sorry to say, at every stage of marketing you have to do those things over and over again. I have to keep putting myself out there, I have to keep putting my ideas out there in the world for you guys to listen to. It's scary for me too. I still have to pull my head out of my own ass and stop thinking about myself and start thinking about other people. I have to think about you and how to serve you. It's very uncomfortable because I'm way more comfortable thinking just about myself, right?

And three, I have to keep trying new things. I have to feel the terror of potential failure. I have to feel the embarrassment of possibly being rejected, of doing something and then being ignored, right? These are the constants that happen over and over again, when you are marketing.

The only reason marketing is hard is because it will go against your brain's natural tendencies to want to keep you in "safety". And it's really important to remember that none of it is going to change because you have more followers, because you have access to some program, because somebody else gave you the secrets to whatever, because you are a more disciplined version of yourself, because you suddenly have better skills in copywriting or, you know, graphic design, or you have a fancy photo shoot. Whatever it is, right?

So if you find yourself being in a perfectionist fantasy about marketing, what is the solution? I'm going to share with you what they are.

So the first step towards fixing this is to, one, be honest with yourself about when this is happening and be able to call yourself out on it. Or call yourself in, whatever version works, right? By the way, this is the most normal thing in the universe. "Oh, I'm finding myself blaming the number of followers I have. I'm finding myself blaming the lack of, you know, design polish. I'm finding myself blaming the lack of a snappy tagline like I saw that other coach have. And if I also had a perfect snappy tagline, then all the right clients would line up to work with me." Right? If only, right?

So whenever you catch yourself thinking, "If only... then my life would be easier. If only ... then my marketing would work better." Just tell yourself and just notice and say, "Hey, I'm in a marketing perfectionist fantasy." Much like when you're coaching your clients, they might think that if only I were 10 pounds thinner. If only I had a partner who treated me right. If only I had whatever, right?

All the things that our life coaching clients think will give them happiness that doesn't come from inside them. Oh, that's what's going on with me, right? Like I have that moment of being honest with yourself, catching yourself when you're in that perfectionist fantasy. Number one is to catch yourself.

What to do next is to feed yourself some alternate intentional thoughts, right? Intentional re-frames, different ways of looking at where you are that puts you in a different relationship to the resources that you have at your disposal and the power and the skills that you already have. Right?

So I'm going to share with you some thoughts that I have that I remind myself of when I get into a marketing perfectionist fantasy. Because hey, I have a human brain too. My brain also likes to feel like a victim of, you know, being in scarcity of things that I think would make my life easier.

So, here's what I remind myself whenever I find myself thinking, "Oh, if only I had ..." Right? I remind myself, "Hey, this is as good as it gets." Right? Like the state of my brain now, the state of my skills now. The resources

that I have at my disposal. However I'm feeling right now. Whoever is around me right now, this is as good as it gets because the circumstances don't create my feelings. It's my thoughts.

So when you consider, let's say, you're feeling a little crappy, you're feeling a little bit self-pitying, thinking there will be better than here. When you think to yourself, "What if this is as good as it gets?" And that thought horrifies you a little bit, and trust me, I relate to that, right? Like, I get that, it's like, "Oh my God, this is as good as it gets? It's never going to get better? That's horrible." Right?

So if you're feeling that way your work is not to change the circumstances. It's not to become a better version of yourself, but to investigate the thoughts that make you judge who you are and where you are so harshly. Like really ask yourself that. Like if this is as good as it gets, if this is as easy as marketing is ever going to get. If this is as, you know, as good as I'm ever going to feel marketing, then, you know, how do I feel about that? Right?

If you're like, "That feels horrible." Great. That's an invitation to investigate the thoughts that make the here and now so unacceptable. What are you telling yourself about who you are? What are you telling yourself about the skills you have? What are you telling yourself about the resources that you have and who's around you that make it so unbearable?

Are you telling yourself it's not enough? Right? Are you telling yourself, I don't know, I mean, to me it always comes down to some version of it's not enough, it should be better, it should be more? Right? Then oh, the only thing that I have to change in order to feel better is my thought that this is not enough, that I am not enough, that I should be better, or the circumstances should be different. Right?

Now, I'm sure you know this from coaching your own clients because you're all life coaches, you're really smart, you have a lot of wisdom. Because a lot of people can have fear that if I think that what I have now is

sufficient, it's as good as it gets, then I won't have the impetus. I won't be motivated to improve; I wouldn't be motivated to learn.

But you know that's not true. You know, as a life coach that the best fuel for learning the best fuel for growth is not, "I suck and this isn't good enough, and I'll be happier when I get there." But from an unconditional self-acceptance and self-appreciation and self-love.

And from that sufficiency, from that appreciation, you want to expand. You have the courage to, you know, conduct experiments. You have the courage and the resilience to go try something and potentially be rejected, to fail. And that sort of thick skin, right, or that sort of abundance. That internal confidence, right, to go out and learn something new, right, and to get better at something or to go, you know, make an investment.

The expansion that it takes to do that can only come from, well it's really the best if it comes from your inner sufficiency of, "Hey, right now, the circumstances might not be perfect. But the thought that I'm going to choose to have about it is that this is exactly what I need. This is as good as it gets. And I can change how good it feels by changing how the thought that I have about it. Because my thoughts create my feelings." Right?

So depending on where you are just in terms of your mental state, this might feel accessible or it might honestly kind of feel like a tall order. And if it does feel like a tall order, I don't blame you. And sometimes it feels like a tall order for me too, to be okay with where things are when sometimes I'm in really harsh judgment of what is a totally normal, totally human, and that's okay. Right?

But even like being aware of that is different from just completely 100% believing the thought that I need to be somewhere else, right? Like, "Oh, I'm finding that, I'm noticing that I'm having this thought but I need to be somewhere else." Like it feels really hard to believe that everything I need is in the present moment. But here we are, right, like I'm in this mood, right? And I am giving myself permission to be here.

Like that's very different from just digging your heels into believing in a perfectionist fantasy, and kind of being an avoidance, right, of meeting yourself where you are right now.

So having said that, I'm going to offer you some other intentional thought in this vein that really helped me combat the perfectionist fantasies. So it's thoughts like, "I have everything I need. And also, who I am today is exactly who my ideal clients need me to be." Right? And if I think about that, that is so true.

There are clients that I served two years ago, maybe even a year ago, and at that time I was exactly the version of the coach that they needed to best serve their transformation. I look back at the marketing that I did three years ago and it's not the same marketing I would do now because I'm a different person. In many ways, I had less skills, I had less finesse. I had a way smaller audience three years ago.

But the marketing I was doing three years ago was exactly the marketing I needed to do to serve the people who were around me then. How do I know? It's because that's what happened, I did the marketing and it served the people who were around me then. Right? So who I am today is exactly who my ideal clients need me to be today. Okay?

And the next thought is a little bastardization of a famous quote by Arthur Ashe, the legendary tennis icon. And he said this quote, "Start where you are, use what you have, and do what you can." And so my sort of riff on that is, the best marketing happens when I start from where I am, use what I have, and do what I can. I'm going to repeat that, the best marketing I can possibly do happens when I start from where I am, use what I have, and do what I can today now.

Here's another one, when I think there is better than here, I miss out on the opportunity to serve those who are around me now, looking to me for help now. Right?

It's kind of like, you know, I had the experience of dating people, right, looking for the one. And I have to say, I spent a lot of years looking for some, you know, perfect person who must be out there, ignoring somebody who was kind of like right under my nose, right? Because I was thinking there's no way it's right here, it has to be like halfway across the globe.

If you're like, personally friends with me you know what I'm talking about. Right? And when I started looking like right around me, I was like, "Oh, here's this person." And that's who I ended up marrying.

Anyway, that's just a little little story, a little anecdote. But think of how this is true in so many areas of life, including marketing. When I think there is better than here, I miss out on all the opportunities to serve people who are around me now who are looking at me now. I don't even see them when I'm thinking I should be somewhere else, right?

And lastly, when I think I need to be a better version of myself to market better, I miss out on connecting to those who will relate best to exactly who I am now. And I miss out on connecting to those who would get the best transformation from the version of myself now.

You know, you can be a very polished version of yourself. There are people who are looking for a very polished coach. If you're a little bit rough around the edges, a little unpolished, like me, or maybe in a different way than me. I mean, for sure in a different way than me because we're different people, right? There are people who are looking for somebody who's a little bit unpolished, right?

There are people who are looking for coaches that are very proper. And then there are people who really resonate with, you know, foul mouth coaches like me. Right? There are people who really love a beautiful Instagram grid that has been perfectly curated. And then there are people who kind of appreciate the imperfection of a hodgepodge Instagram grid like mine, right?

And you could have the perfect, slick, you know, website copy, or you could just have words that tumble out of your heart that somebody just reads and it's like, "Oh my God, that is like what I needed to hear today. It's not the most polished words, but that person I can tell they're speaking from their heart. And my goodness, like, this is what I need." Right?

So when you don't express that version of yourself, when you don't step out to connect with that version of yourself, whatever level of skill, whatever, "weaknesses and flaws" you think you have. Like if you're not showing up with that now, I guarantee you there's somebody who's longing to connect with that version of you. You will not get to serve them, you will not get to connect to them, you will not give them a chance to be helped by you if you're thinking I need to be different, right?

So that's my little sermon on overcoming your marketing perfectionist fantasy. The best place to do the most powerful marketing is always now, with what you have. I invite you to really give that thought, give it a try. Right, experiment with it. What happens when I really believe this, right? What emotions do I feel? What kind of fuel do I get to take into my marketing? And I am fairly certain that you will be surprised by the results.

All right my friends, use the power that you have today. And have a wonderful week and I'll talk to you next week. Bye.

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