

Ep #151: The Key to Scroll-Stopping Content

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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.

Hey friends. I want to share with you today an idea, a concept, a practice that I have consistently practiced myself in my own business, in my own copywriting for years, and has been honestly one of the most impactful things that has brought me all the wonderful things in my business.

And it's a really simple idea and I really, really want to - imagine that you're in front of me and imagine that I'm holding you in your shoulders, looking deeply into your eyes and saying, "Please, please, please do this when you write your copy. Please do this when you write your posts, please do this when you send your emails."

And have this moment with yourself when you check in and slow down and do this before you post. Because this is going to be what gets you that scroll-stopping content that people aren't just going to gloss over, that makes people stop and read and look and think and engage.

I get so much wonderful feedback on my copy like, I get emails all the time from people on my email list saying your emails are the only ones I read, and I can't get enough of your emails, I print these out and I read them over and over, and I just love your emails so much.

Why do I get those emails? It's because I do this. Why do I get people - at my revenue level right now of multiple seven-figure revenue level, compared to other people at this range, I have very few followers. I don't have a big audience.

But the reason that I'm able to have the business that I have today is because the comparatively few people who do follow me are just obsessed with everything that I say. And again, how do you cultivate that? It's by doing this one thing to create scroll-stopping content over and over and over again.

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And it's this. Take emotional risks. It's three words. And such an important, profound, game-changing practice if you commit to doing it consistently. Don't just write. Write and take an emotional risk.

Don't just show up and talk. Before you talk, think about what emotional risk you're going to take to get real with the people that you're talking to. And of course I'm going to expand a little bit about on what it means to take emotional risks.

A lot of the times, the reason that our copywriting, our marketing falls flat is because we unconsciously go into a kind of performative mode. And when we write, we accidentally end up writing in this kind of infomercial voice, which is different from the way you normally talk to your friends and family and just the people you know in real life.

Very, very few people - and it takes a lot of practice and skill to do this actually, but very few people write copy the way they talk. I am willing to bet that if 98% of my listeners - that's you - were to read your own copy out loud to yourself, it would sound nothing like the way you normally talk.

If you were to read your copy out loud to your best friend, your best friend is probably most likely not going to say, yup, that basically sounds like you. They're going to be like, who is this marketing persona?

And the reason that happens is because we just unconsciously get into this little dissociation between our real selves and our marketing selves, and we put on this persona, and so the antidote to that is to take emotional risks and the act of taking an emotional risk, what it does is it kind of punches a hole through this performative marketing persona with this infomercial voice.

Like, "Have you ever experienced... well, I've got the solution for you. Click here if you want to book a..." you know what I'm talking about? That's the infomercial voice.

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So many of us end up writing, speaking in that voice, or we say, “There’s so much inner fulfillment that you can experience and…” and you would never use those words if you’re just talking to your close friend. So what taking emotional risks does is that it’ll punch a hole through that fake marketing persona that creates a distance between you and whoever is listening to you because it doesn’t sound like you.

And it’ll bring what you’re saying down to a very personal, intimate level, which is inherently 100,000 times way more interesting to the listener, to the reader, and it draws them in in a way where an infomercial voice never will. Because it’ll actually sound like a human being is talking to them.

Let’s say for example that I want to write copy about the importance of good habits. This is a totally generic example. The importance of good habits and how they’re actually a lot easier to build than you would think.

So let’s say that’s something you want to talk about as a life coach. And so left to our own devices, on default, people just stay at the level of talking about abstractions, about concepts, of this is why habits are important and this is why we don’t tend to cultivate good habits, and this happens, and we kind of get into this conceptual abstract level where we’re talking about ideas.

About what habits are like, and why we have them, why we don’t, how to cultivate good ones here, step one, two, three. These are what - I call these staying in the realm of ideas and concepts.

So when I ask myself - and this was me not too long ago. I was a general life coach coaching on all of the topics. I was not always a business coach. And then when I caught myself thinking okay, so I want to write something about habits and I want to let people know how to create good habits, or let people know that I can help them with that, and instead of going to the default thing that my brain wants to do, which is to talk about habits and talk about ideas related to habits, I would ask myself, “Okay, how can I take an emotional risk with this topic?”

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And often, the way was to get a little more personal. Because there's no emotional risk in talking about the nature of habits. You just spout off your thoughts and your ideas and you know that all of those ideas are good and it'll be enlightening and it'll be interesting and these are all good ideas, great. There's no emotional edge there. There's no risk taking there. You're not revealing anything interesting. You're just trying to teach them an idea.

So oftentimes, this is not the only way to take an emotional risk, but oftentimes when I would ask myself, okay, how can I take an emotional risk with this, the answer was okay, I could get a little personal with it.

So instead of talking about habits, I could think about, let me see, what's a time that I personally struggled with a habit? How could I get even more personal? Maybe I can talk about that time recently where I was trying to stop eating junk food.

I'm kind of making this up but not really because this is not that different from what I actually used to do and still do. I will talk about my own successes and failures - actually, I would pick a specific story from my life that would illustrate the point I'm trying to make that would actually get me to slow down and reveal something about myself and risk being seen, risk being known, risk people having thoughts about this specific aspect of my life because I'm telling them an intimate story about it.

Or if I were to get more specific and get more personal, it might not be about me, but I might tell you about a story from one of my clients. And when I do that, I would either leave the specifics vague so it's not identifiable who I'm talking about, or I would get permission from my client to talk about it in my marketing first. That's important.

But when I think about okay, so I'm going to tell this story about my client, that's far more of a risk than just talking about the nature of habits. Because there's risk in specificity. I'm going to say that one more time because it's really important. There is risk in specificity.

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Because if you're being general, if you're being abstract, if you're being conceptual, nobody can fight you about it. Nobody can disagree with it. If you say good habits are important, who's going to argue with that?

But if you give them something way more specific, like you tell a real story from your life and you're like, this was the cost of abandoning the habit that I committed to and you're specific about what that is and this is what tangibly improved in my life because I did this habit, again, just as an example, that gives the reader or the listener, whatever, far more to think about and to potentially disagree with you about, or potentially pick bones with, pick problems with.

That is what emotional risk means, and that is a good thing. If there's nothing in your copy that anybody can disagree with or be offended by or potentially misunderstand, that is not good. What that makes your copy is generic and forgettable and scroll-pastable.

So I always just start by asking myself this question. How can I take more of an emotional risk with this? And like I said, I either get personal and tell a more personal story that feels a little bit vulnerable to tell, I get more specific about how something shows up in my life or the lives of people around me, and I take the risk of giving a specific example that people may or may not resonate with or that might make people feel called out or make me feel called out.

There it is, the emotional risk. Another question that I ask myself is when I'm about to say something, when I'm about to talk about something, I ask myself, okay, what's the more honest version of what I'm trying to say?

Let's say I'm talking about goal setting. I want to talk about - I want to write copy about an aspect of goal setting that I want to teach my people about. And instead of talking about this is why it's so important to set goals and this is probably what you're doing wrong with goal setting, I ask myself, how would I say this if I were telling a more honest version of this topic?

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How can I be more real about this? What would be a way of saying this without any bullshit? That's one of my favorite questions. How can I be more real? What's a more honest version? What's the version of this without bullshit, without pretension?

And when I just kind of fling that question out there for my brain to play with, it always comes up with something really interesting, always comes up with like, oh, you know what, here's how I'm going to get real about this, here's the part where I'm going to be really honest about the thing that would be so much easier to pretend to be more whatever, more socially appropriate, more polite, less risky.

I can tell you that basically, I actually - I'm telling you the complete truth. I actually stop and ask myself this exact question in probably two thirds of the emails that I send to my people.

That literally - if you're on my email list and you've ever thought, "Oh my God, her emails are so good," it's literally because I stop before I start writing and I ask myself, okay, I want to talk about a thing, what's the most honest version of that that I can talk about? What's the real version? How do I say this without bullshit?

And that - these questions point my mind to where I was trying to pretend, where I was trying to put a little distance, a formality and performativeness between me and my audience. And I just sweep that layer away and then what it has the effect of is pulling you in closer to me.

It's like I imagine I'm pulling my chair up closer to be like, listen, I don't tell everybody this but this is what's really going down. I trust you, so I'm going to tell you the version without bullshit. That is the effect that that has, and that is what gets people being like, wow, this is actually interesting for me to read.

A related question that I ask myself, how would I say this if I weren't in a performative kind of mode? That's a million-dollar question. If I wasn't trying

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to be performative, if I wasn't trying to be expert or whatever, how would I say this if I were being fucking real?

If I were going past the noise and the politeness and being appropriate and looking like an expert, if I take all of that away, what would I say? What story would I tell? What is the emotional risk I can take here?

Say something that feels like an edge of safety. Push the boundaries. Say what you really mean. Say the thing that's a little bit scary for you to say. Say something that you're like, "Oh no, I know who's going to get mad about this. Oh no, I know who's going to misunderstand this. Oh no, this is going to get some people unsubscribing. Oh no, if I say this, they might think..."

Your brain will give you so much crap to keep you from taking emotional risks because your brain thinks that safety is found in safety. Being bland, being generic, being polite, being conceptual, being performative, putting a safe distance between you and the reader so that you don't have to take any risks, you don't have to risk being known, you don't have to risk triggering thoughts in them.

And what that does is it makes you likeable, it makes you unquestionable, it makes you forgettable. This is a maxim that I live by, a marketing principle that I live by: if it's not repelling anyone, it's not powerfully drawing anyone in either.

I'm going to say that again. It's so important. If it's not repelling someone, it's not powerfully drawing in anyone either. If you're not inviting some people to say no, or I don't get it, or I disagree, or whatever, then you're not inviting people into a fuck yes experience either.

When you take emotional risks, that's when you become interesting. That's when you become scroll-stop worthy. When you try to be safe and likeable and professional and all of that, that makes you forgettable.

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Now, this isn't like being - this is an important caveat. This isn't being provocative for provocation's sake. This isn't like, you've got to piss people off or you got to also always tell super personal stories, you have to be super edgy all the time. That's not what I mean.

What I mean is that you have to - every time you write and every time you speak, I encourage you to pause a little bit and check which parts of you is showing up that kind of wants to hide behind this marketing persona and then instead, getting rid of that, and instead drawing the reader or listener into a kind of intimacy with you.

It's about - the intimacy requires trust. You have to trust your reader first. You have to trust the listener first to see you, to like you, to get you, to be on board with you, to want to go there with you. You have to trust them to be honored and interested and appreciative that you're sharing your truth, that you're taking this emotional risk.

Now, will everybody feel that way? No. But then guess what? Not everybody is your people. Not everybody is going to buy from you. What taking emotional risks does is it repels those who are never going to be your clients, who are never going to give you any money, who are never going to go with you to the place that you want to go with your community, with your business, and then it lets your people know, oh, this is the conversation I want to be a part of.

It's about intimacy. It's about a relationship of trust and realness and honesty that you first take the initiative to show them, on my end here, I am showing up as the real me and I'm inviting you to sit down in this conversation with me.

We all want more of the real authentic you. And the real authentic you is not a pastel cat video that everybody likes. It's not - you are complex, you are gritty, you have lots of opinions that not everybody agrees with. You have a unique way of looking at things that not everybody agrees with. Show us all of the edges.

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And when you ask yourself, how do I take an emotional risk with this? That question is going to point you to a place where you can show up and experiment with trusting people with some of your edges. That's going to get people stopping scrolling and paying attention to you.

So we don't have to make it more complicated than it needs to be. Every time you want to say something, ask yourself, what's an emotional risk I can take here so that I can get into a deeper intimacy with the people I serve? What's an emotional risk I can take here so I can be more real with the people who I want them to trust me with their inner lives, that's what we life coaches do, right?

We're inviting them to trust us. We're inviting them to basically tell us their deepest, darkest secrets, and to have enough trust in us to feel safe really handing over the inside of their hearts and minds. Isn't that our job? That is our job. That's what we do as life coaches.

And so to create that relationship of trust and mutual seeing, you've got to show up and do your part first. You want them to trust you? You have to trust them. You have to trust them to see you and love you through what you reveal through taking those emotional risks.

Alright, so that's it. Very simple. Before you write, before you speak, ask yourself, how can I take an emotional risk here? What's the honest version of this? How can I be real about it? How can I say this without the bullshit? Who am I willing to offend with this? Where am I willing to be misunderstood because it's that important to me to just say what I mean? How would I say this if I'm going beyond trying to perform, if I'm going past the noise, if I'm going past the politeness, what would I say?

Reach within. Pull out the answer. That is going to be the glue of connection that puts your business on a totally different level. It's going to change everything. Alright my friends, 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

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email list. Sign up to receive my free e-book 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.