

## HOW Design Live

### Terri Trespicio – *Send a Message: How to Keep Your Brand in Demand*

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We've got so much fun stuff to think about. And my goal is not to think that you're going to remember every single thing I say today, but my hope is that something will spark for you that you'll run ahead and get excited after and have to maybe even leave. Cause you have to go work on your stuff right away. Just because we have a lot of time now more than we thought we had does not mean we necessarily automatically have more inspiration. And I think people do a little inspiration shaming of themselves. They think, well, this time I should have done this and I should have written my book and I should have created this. And it's like, my God, people were dealing with a major serious thing.

We're dealing with a pandemic here, go a little easy on yourself. But some of you have been able to find some time when you're not as stressed or to focus on your work. And that's what I want to help you do now because yes, the world has changed a bit, just a bit. And so we want to dig in. We want to dig in and say, well, how are we going to come out of this? The name of this talk is ***Send a Message: How to Keep Your Brand in Demand***.

For people who are going WAIT, am I here on the wrong day, what's happening? Is this UX designed for digital marketers? Now that's down the hall, on the right. And here's how to know you're in the right place. You love what you do. And you want to know how to reach and serve the right people for you. You also know that you need to level up your presence since there is no business as usual anymore, right? We have to come out of this in a new way, even if we're doing the same thing and you want to get serious about this now, but it got a little inside. Every time you sit down to quote, work on your brand, please I'm a brand. I make my money working on people's brands and sitting down into my own brand oil. I get, I'm also get like, Oh God, I don't want to do it. So I understand what it is to feel stuck. Maybe you're not sure where to start. And so you keep starting things and then not finishing them. Or you just get overwhelmed. You get overwhelmed by all the advice. And you're not sure who to listen to. I've been there. Been there, been there. So what we're going to do today is we're going to focus on what matters most and nothing else. We are not taking on everything here. We're going to take on what is most important to do. First. We're going to get clear about what you're offering now and why it matters.

One thing at a time. You're also going to try your hand today and approach the helps you break through creative blocks because you know, as well as I do, if you cannot break through that block, if you feel emotionally stuck, it's getting very hard for you to move forward.

So a little bit about me, very, very little I've spent my career crafting ideas in and for the media for the first part of my career for many years. Creating whether I was on the gatekeeper side of media or the contributor side. I've done it all. TV, radio print, online, you name it. And today I've been working for myself now for better part of a decade. And I help people change the way they think about, talk about and communicate what they do. Messaging is platform agnostic.

And so, you know, there's not a place where you don't need it. And I help people in lots of different industries and lots of different walks of life. So the other thing by the way is that I did have a Ted talk

that did very well. It is ***Stop Searching for your Passion***. It has more than 6 million views. The reason I say this is because I'm not famous. And when I did this talk, no one was looking for me. This talk took off because the message mattered to the people who saw. It had very little to do with me at all. And so if I can somehow get 6 million people to pay attention to a message, then you can get far less and I can get far less. Trust me. I'm not getting six millions of people's attention every day, but we can get the attention of the people we want to do work with. So my question for you is this. And by the way, my one have a notebook handy because I'm going to be asking you some questions and you might want to write down the answers, or you might want to write down the questions. Why do you do what you do?

Maybe you say, well, I've always wanted to design a writer, create or do whatever for a living. And that's why you do it. Or you believe in the work you do, or you care about your clients. I hope so, because when you don't care, they can tell I want to help people. That's the number one thing people say they want to do. Of course, you want to help people I assume. Right? But you've heard the same advice. Well, if I want to get attention, what do I do? I have to stand out. Well, that's like, okay, how do you stand out? When you're not the only one doing it, right? You go, well, I'm a graphic designer, but how do I make myself stand out against other graphic designers? That's like throwing someone in a pool and saying swim. Well yeah, but it's better than drowning. Right? I do have to do something but telling someone they should stand out is not helpful. I know this. Being great at what you do isn't a brand. Cause we do have to define brand. Cause we all know we talk about brand and can mean a lot of different things to a lot different people. I'm just going to tell you what it means to me. I'm not saying I'm the only definitive person who has an opinion about it. This is how I see it. Being great at what you do isn't a brand, it's a prerequisite. You better be good at it, right? Just as it is caring for a client and being invested in your work, just as being good and passionate and dedicated is, it's the floor. You start there doing your job well is table stakes. And your brand is more than a website, a logo tagline. Yes, you need those things, but they are not you anymore than you are a thumb or a kidney. You have a thumb and a kidney, hopefully at least one of each. But that doesn't mean that's who you are. And it's also not your resume. Again. People want to know what you've done, what you've worked on sure, but they also want to know what you think now Your brand, my opinion is one thing. It's what you and your work mean to other people. And you control part of that. You don't control all of it, right? Because everyone sees you a little differently. But the intention here is that you help control that narrative a bit so that you can help people understand what they should expect from working with you. And what you want to do of course is to be more than a commodity. And if you want to be more than just a commodity, because that's a race to the bottom of the barrel in terms of pricing, you have to offer more than just the job you perform. I'm going to say that again because I think we think we know this, but when I look at people's websites, that's not what I see. I don't see that. In order to be more than a commodity, you have to offer more than the job you perform. Meaning what you do is not who you are. You're more than that. And that means a message is everything. There is no more mass market. You're not trying to reach everyone. That's a relief. Cause guess what? It'd be pretty impossible to reach literally everyone. And what a task, there's only, what you are doing to help the people you want to serve, right?

And to help them become what they want most. That's the job. When you want to help people, you're trying to help them do what they want and look great doing it. I'm pretty sure that we all could say we fall into that category, right? Even the gentleman who was helping us produce this webcast today, he's helping us and he's helping you and he wants to help me not fall on my face too. Right? So everyone's helping someone. Your message is how you articulate that. And it should be universal and uniquely yours. The big mistake is when people try to get bigger and have more presence by being broader or by trying to be better. I get the competition part where you're like, no, I'm going to be better than everyone else. But like there's so many people out there. How are we gonna have a metric for you being

better than everyone? And why is that important? It actually isn't. Here lies the generalist. Take a moment of silence for the generalist who tried to do everything and was not remembered for anything. So part of that is talking about niche and I get that. But it's also about things the way you do them. You know, if you, if you make brochures for a living, I'm not saying that you don't want to do great brochures. I'm not saying there's never going to be someone else who doesn't make great brochures. But if you try to do everything, it's very hard to articulate. So I like to rethink the idea of niche. And that is, it's not just a narrowing of your options. I would never tell you that you can't take money from certain people because that's not your niche. That's silly. I think of niche as the sharpening of an edge that you lead with.

I'll explain that as we go along here, but rest assured, and this is supposed to make you feel better. You're not for everyone. And everyone is not for you. When you look at the number of people you will work with over the course of your lifetime, meaningful long term clients, even that's not most of the world's population, that's not even most of your town's population. It's very small list. It's a specialist, it's your list. So let's get through to some of the pillars here that I think would be most helpful today. One is you get past the product and focus on the promise. Yes, you make this, yes you make X or Y or Z, or you offer those things. That's part of the discussion because if I'm looking for someone to design a logo, then I don't think you're also going to know how to reglaze my tub. So I do need to know what you do. But beyond that, the promise is what's missing from a lot of people's stuff. And this is one of my favorite ways of explaining that. You meet someone at a party and if they go, well, I have this, I have eyeballs. I have a couple of pairs of mounds. I've a couple of ears, I do this, I do that. I do this other thing. I also play in a band and I make logos. And I design these and I write this, you chose someone, a bunch of features. They don't remember you. When you walk in next time, it's kind of faceless. Like it's not the guy play in a band. It's hard to remember, but you never forget this guy, that face, you know, anywhere. Right? So what your brand is, is literally, it's a stand in for your face. It's kind of like the features put together in a certain way so that we know you, you as you, so don't sell the features. Don't just sell what you do, sell the face. For many of you, you are the face of your brand. And for a lot of you, the company, the company is the face of the brand. And you're you have internal clients and you have an internal brand. That's something too. My point is, you're not just selling what you do. You're selling how you do it.

So another thing is the difference between right business and brand business is how you make a living. That's how someone pays you to do things you can pay your way in life. Your brand is what that business means. So your business might be that you kill cockroaches. That might be a business you have, God bless you and thank you. Your brand promises a pest free life. So what you do, you kill cockroaches. But what you're promising is a life without cockroaches. That's different. Your business might be that you sell a shirt that looks good untucked. Someone made a lot of money on a shirt like that, but the brand isn't just shorter shirts. Because guess what anyone could say, Oh, I'm going to make a shirt that has less fabric in it. The brand is the look and the brand in this case is promising that you can look like an entrepreneur, you know, 30, 40 years ago, no one was trying to look at with their shirts on, on tucked. They weren't trying to look cool like that. They looked cool in different ways. Men wore hats. Ladies wear hats, but this guy created an empire on a shirt that looks good on tucked. He is an entrepreneur. He is selling the look of looking like an entrepreneur, even for people who aren't entrepreneurs.

So what are you promising maybe at some of these things, maybe it's more things on time delivery, standard results, soft engaging process. Guess what? So is everyone else. Everyone agrees with that list

and where you agree, you cannot differentiate. Here's a really quick case study a perfect example of this. A client of mine, wonderful group. They run *CTM Media Group*. And when they first came to me and I said, well, what do you, how do you describe what you do? And they said, we're one of the largest distributors of travel and tourism information in North America. I said, cool. What's that mean? I have no idea what that means to hand out flyers, you stick things under windshield wiper or what, why? Well, it turns out that they own brochure stands that have been in bus stations and train stations and hotels and all kinds of places, truck stops, and a clients of theirs will buy a slot in that stand. They'll help you create a brochure. If you don't already have one, if you have one, they'll give you the specs. So then they know what fits in the stand. This was their old website. And I said, I don't know what that means. That's word salad, man. I don't know what it means. What is it? W are you talking to? What are you saying? There's no promise. There's not even a sentence on this page. Brochures. However, were the problem because they are effective. But the new people in charge of marketing are going all digital campaigns. And so when they go, Hey, are you ready to up your account? Re up your account with us? We do the brochures. They're like, yeah, no, we're going digital. We'll cut that right out of the budget. So they didn't lose all their clients, but they realized this was a trend. And you know, this is the second page of their, their old website. Couldn't even really read it. But here's something very interesting here. Actions visitors take after picking up brochures, eight out of 10, alter their plans. If having a brochure in that stands means that someone might wander up and alter their plans in order to come to your attraction or mall or zip-lining business. That's pretty powerful. That's not about the brochure. The brochure is just the medium. What's really important is this. And this was their new, I don't know if they still have it up this way, but this was what we had launched is the new messaging that I wrote for them right now, someone somewhere is wondering what to do next. Because when I roll up into a train station in a city, I don't know. I don't go on Twitter. I look around and go, cool, look at this. I want to do these three things.

So what are they really selling? They're selling a magic window. They're selling an opportunity. Oh, that opportunity happens to come in the form of a brochure. Interesting. But if they leave with the brochure, it's game over. So that's why I'm saying don't lead with the thing because then they go, Oh yeah, I already have that. Well, what's the promise. Ask yourself this. What did your client actually wake up wanting today? And the client did not go, man. I wish I had a slot to put my brochure into. No, they woke up saying, we wish more people would come here. Someone who needs a copy editor, didn't wake up this morning going I need a copywriter with a really strong sense of language and good use of commas. They didn't wake up thinking that they said, Oh my God, I hope no one thinks I'm stupid. When I publish this, I hope I look as smart as I feel. That's the real thing, but you got to go underneath it right. To find that, that other thing that you're doing point to, don't just say you're different. Prove it. I did have a client who said we're different. And that was the branding. That was the branding thing.

I said, you don't get to say that you don't get to just say we're different. You got to show us. Here's an example that I know you'll like being a design crowd, *Nema*, startup that sells clothes for tall men starting with one tee shirt. I haven't talked to this guy in maybe a year now, but he's a very tall man. And he was looking all around at who's selling things for tall. It was big and tall and a lot of tall blogs about tall men, I guess, complaining about being tall. And he was like, I don't want to complain. I don't want to be part of this. I want to elevate the, the role of tall, make me feel good about being tall and that he wanted to elevate the language and tone around what it means to be tall. He also needed a name for a signature t-shirt, which I helped them come up with. And I really loved it. And he did too. Here's an example of some of his brand messaging and which we wrote. It's one thing to be tall. It's another to stand out. That it's okay to stand out for the right reasons. And the T shirt is called the *Capital T*, which I

kind of loved that kind of fun, but he is all about tall things. He shows pictures of tall buildings and the look and feel is to celebrate tall.

What are you celebrating? In terms of what we do differently. I'll give myself as an example. I've actually never shown what I do as an example, but I do a crazy thing. I mean, you have a brand, my brand advisor. Guess what? I got to go to throw a rock out this window and hit a brand adviser right now, even during COVID there's probably some brand advisor out there. So of course I I'm a writer. I help create brand messaging. A lot of people do that, but I do it in a way that's idiosyncratic to me. I created something I offer, I don't just sit down and write someone's website. Right. I created a thing. And this is when have to think about your own IP and what do you call, what you do. I call it a branding blueprint. I'm sure that's not very original either, but it's the concepts and language. And PivotTable messaging that attracts and engages the audience and makes you different from everyone else. That's what I do, right? How do I do it? I do it differently. So what I do is I meet while I used to meet in person with people lately, we were doing it virtually, but I dig down in like a couple hours.

I mean, just a couple hours. I dig in, come up with the and pull what I need out of them. I use a process to pull it out of them. I do a lot of notes and I go away and write it overnight. I don't know anyone who does that. I did it not because I'm like, I'm going to be the only one who does this crazy thing. Trust me. I wouldn't do it. If it were torture for me, I actually like to work under pressure. And I work well, when I'm in the flow, I don't want to come out of flow. So that's what I do differently. And people go, wow, you sold us with that. You're going to get it to us in a day. Yes. So that's why, that's how I made my process different, which suits me first because I wanted to do it. And then I realized it was a benefit to the client. So think about your own process. How do you do things that makes it different and maybe you don't and that's okay too. I'm just pointing out all the different things that you think about. Ask yourself. What do you do differently than your colleagues and competition? I really don't know any of my friends who do anything like this and they think I'm nuts for doing it. What about names for a second though? Because I know naming very important. I'm involved in a program, a project with Emerson College right now, naming a thing for them and naming is key. But you know what? It's also not everything in the world because the person whose name it matters most to is you. But *Wolf and Whale* looks a very techie looking thing, but *Wolf and Whale* are like natural animals. Very interesting. These guys are also designed from in fact, the guy from *Nema* was one of the guys, they're friends. *Wolf and Whale*, what does it mean? Well, what we came up with was great. Design is a force of nature. Why? Cause I asked the guy, why did you call it *Wolf and Whale*? And he said, Oh, it's stupid. I said, no, I'm sure it's not stupid. He said, well I'm kind of more of a whale because, and he talked about what he thought made him a whale, that he liked to move slowly. And, and his friend was a wolf and he was more cagey. And I said this is really fascinating. Like I've never thought of myself as those animals. I love it. So I asked them, what do they believe? What do you believe in that? And what they believe is this as an entrepreneur or product owner, you must be hungry and quick strategic and focused, wolf, but you also want to be lauded, massive and known, whale.

We believe that creating the most successful design and creative work spurs from a process of honing these two qualities. So someone, asked them at a party, what are your spirit animals? And that's what they came up with. And now it's the brand and it means something. And you can retrofit meaning. Absolutely. I've done it more than once. Some of their opinions. So is something you can do later. Think about your opinions, about what you think and maybe a bone to pick with your industry. Quite frankly, they were very clear about how they saw design. We never prioritize pixels over people or pallets over profit, transformation over transaction. So what do you believe? What do you loath about your

industry? You know, maybe you're a stylist and you go, I'm so tired of people. Think just picking out what it looks good on you. That's not how I approach it at all. Show us your different opinion. What do you disagree with? That's usually where I start is where do I fight with something? How do I disagree with what's already been done and you'll disagree with all of it. But what part of it feels like you, what do people assume about what you do and how is what you do actually different from that? Where you can interrupt. Assumption is where people remember you. Number three, don't pander, please. No one likes to be pandered too. We like when someone's direct, now I am direct. I am able to direct. You don't have to be as direct as me. You can have your own style, but we know when someone's being kind of mincing or waffling and it just, isn't a good look. So where you can be unapologetic and direct and you can do it in a sweet, Southern way, you can do it in a brash New York way, whatever way works for you.

Here's a group. I do a lot of work with financial services. I didn't set out to, but I got invited to speak at an event. And I've just been doing a lot of business with them. Ever since these guys are *Wells Fargo* advisors, they've been around for 40 years doing what they do. Okay. Their website, bah. This is the guy. He's the man. He is the Rainmaker. He has been the number one guy at *Wells Fargo* for a while. Like he's the king of that world, but this was their old website. They weren't getting business or website, but they were also kind of embarrassed of it. And I said, well, it's not moving me. Let's just say that. I mean, I was like, I can't even really read this thing. Is it an eye chart? Like what is happening? And I said, the one picture of you, Joe, is of you not even looking at us.

Right? So there were a lot of things here, but also they weren't thinking about it this way, but they realized they wanted to say something, which is usually when you know, someone's ready to think about their brand. And I said, well, what do you wish that your clients knew? What do you wish they'd understand? Same thing I'm asking you. They said, we wish our clients would be more patient. Well, yeah, they're growing their assets over decades. Not months. They don't want you to call every minute and ask if I'm rich yet. And so, these guys are also from Williamsburg, Virginia. They move slowly. They're gentlemen and gentlewomen. We're talking, rocking chair, sip a little sweet tea. You know what I'm saying? So I said, they also have a very good sense of humor. And so I created messaging for them that I thought landed what they were trying to say.

And it was risky because I was like, I don't know if you're going to go for this. I gave him a bunch of stuff and they loved this. No one wakes up wealthy. Unless of course they went to bed. That way what's being said here, you're not going to wake up wealthy because he worked with us tomorrow. So if that's your idea, you need to go find another firm. What they're saying is but you want to go to bed wealthy. That takes time. Ask herself what do you wish your clients knew and understood? Now I don't mean you're going to preach to them. You have to know that design takes a long time. No one wants to hear you preaching about how our job is. Nope. What do you wish they understood?

One of the things I say to people and this evolves, right? My messaging is always evolving. You're always having a conversation in your own head about it. I say to people, look, you're not hiring me to come in and give you a brand that wouldn't feel like you, that would be really arrogant of me. And I understand now my own process. I'm pulling it out of them. I'm not the only one who does that, but I realize that that's what I want. The clients know that they're not buying a brand off a shelf there of what's going to be unique to them. So what about what you do? Do you want them to understand? Which would actually make them want to work with you? And this is a good example for monument wealth management. You can be real clear on how you don't want to work with there's this idea that you're supposed to be like, Oh no, we work with everyone.

Stop with the everyone. As I said, there is no everyone. These guys love dogs. There's like three labs in their office at all times in DC. And they are very opinionated about their business and they don't want to work with everyone, not even close. And so we worked on a list of things that people they didn't want to work with and they put it on their site, spelling it out and guess how you know you won't like them. If you love jargon, you only trust people in suits. You throw a fit every time the market dips, you try to control the world with your thoughts and are legitimately upset when it doesn't happen. We're not going to get along. Oh, also this, you hate dogs. That's a deal breaker. I said, are you willing to not ever work with anyone who hates dogs? I said, yes, what's your deal breaker for some advisors. And I know we're not like a financial world here, but there's probably might be some people work in financial here. For some advisors they're like, please don't even knock on our door without 5 million in investible assets, because that's where they want to focus. That's where they're real good. So then he got to say that, but you got to know, and I think really great messaging, magnetizes the right people towards you, which means it also pushes everyone else away.

I believe your success now, I know we're not all freelancers here, but your success in business comes when you can turn the wrong client away because you know, and I am sure you know that for those of you in a position to accept or not accept client work or new business for your business, that when you kind of try to get someone to do it, because it sounds like a good idea. You know, it's an ill fitting thing. It's going to bite you later. So the way I look at it as it's really never worth it, if it's the wrong fit, they'll complain a lot. Ask yourself, how will someone know they're right for you? Because what I want to do is read someone's website and then go, Oh my God, that's me. They're talking to me. I want to qualify myself here. That's key. Jay Baer, who wrote the book *Utility*, fantastic book on the new age of marketing and online, he says, stop trying to be amazing and start being useful. And that is, has never been more important actually, because I think we're done right now being cool and edgy. Like I think we need to be useful to each other and of service.

This is a guy named Marcus Sheridan. He is a brick and mortar guy, or he was, he owned river pools and spas. He installed pools is what he does. Then 2008 happened. Now harken back years ago, crash scare similar brink of ruined times for him specifically because everyone wanted their deposits back. And then he was like about to be done because no one wanted a pool. Then he was not tech savvy. He was not like you guys. He was not a writer. But when he was looking around on the Google machine, Google said, content marketing is where it's at. And he was like, Oh, what's that? I'm not a writer. He started blogging. Now this is a while ago, but still he didn't know from blogging. And what did he do? He said, I stopped thinking like a swimming pool installer and started thinking like a swimming pool, consumer thinking the way they did.

And it landed him in the New York Times. You know what he did. He thought of every question he'd ever been asked in his hundreds of visits with clients and, and wrote down every question and answered them all. So we had all the written down and then he posted one question at a time and he's got hundreds of questions answered. And that led people to obviously helped with his search results. And people would hang out in the sites long enough that if they're gonna buy a pool, they're gonna buy from him. Pool business came back and he came back big time. But in fact, he kind of was almost over the pool business at this point because he became like a phenom. Listen to this. The average for sales appointments for closing a sale is 10% when he would go on sales house calls.

When they had spent time on his website, 30 pages, if they'd read 30 page of his website, they bought 80% of the time. That's some pretty amazing metrics really today, Marcus, the pool guy is an author, a keynote speaker and a web marketing guru, which is something he would have laughed at, you know, 10

years ago. He would have laughed at that. And now he's all new career. So that's just to say, there's no reason why you can't pivot and grow your expertise in an area. There just isn't. But as I was saying, you don't need to be cool, skip edgy and proceed directly to relatable and useful messaging is really everything. And it doesn't need to shout. It just needs to connect.

I want to show you an example of language that connects, right? And we've already seen some of them, but this is another financial firm. This was their old home page, perfectly nice. Good looking crowd. Nice picture. They got their logo. I told them there's nothing wrong with what you have, but there's no promise. I just think you're another firm. There's no way to stand out here. Right?

Well, this is their new site and you can't see, but it's animated. It goes from black and white to like Technicolor. The big picture of your life just got brighter. Why does that matter? Because they said, people come to them wondering if they have enough or, is not enough to work with them. And they also worry that they're not money people or they're not good at it. And they say they they're intimidated by the process. So look at the simplicity of this language. Cause they kept saying big picture. They kept saying, we really look at the big picture. So what does that mean? Why does it matter? Regardless of what you've been told your finances aren't black and white. In fact your financial life can be as colorful and dynamic as the rest of your life. It's not that you don't have enough money, it's you haven't been shown the full spectrum of possibility.

That's the crux. Isn't just, hey, we do financial plans and we look at the big picture. It's hey, no one showed you this. You could take that message and turn anything. It's not that you're not a great designer. It's that you haven't been shown what you couldn't do, right? Like there's a million ways to use that. But you see how it's kind to the reader because it says, Hey, things are actually better than you think. Not just I make financial plans. That's an emotional connection there. That's different.

Okay. Here are the points we covered. Focus on the promise, use language to demonstrate how you're different. Be unapologetic about what you believe and proceed directly to relatable, great messaging. You don't have to be appealed, surprise winning writer. Her. It has to be clear and direct and speak to your people. And it's more than just info. It tells a story. It's gotta be something in there that lets us feel connected to you or your firm or your company or your product. Great messaging actually emerges from curiosity, contradiction, even struggle. It doesn't emerge from I know more. And I'm going to tell you, what's what actually no one wants to hear that it elicits an emotional response as if we said, and it can be understood by anyone.

Here's an example of a headline that one guy wrote in his blog post. And he said, what do you think of this headline Certainty During Complex Uncertainty? He said, I wanted to sound professional. I said, I don't know what the hell that means. It sort of reads like a cone of some sort. And it gave me a headache. I was like there's so many c's and long words. And what are you really trying to say? And then he told me, he goes, well, it's just that. I don't want people to freak out that this bear market is different. Just say that. So I said, change the title and then he changed it. Don't jump, it's not that kind of bear market, which one reaches you in an emotional level. Right?

Skip the buzzwords please. And ask yourself, is your messaging facing the wrong way? Because how you communicate what you do, shouldn't be a mirror that you look at yourself in. It should be a mirror that the user can see herself in or himself turning that around. What do they see of themselves when they come? I know a guy who wants to help doctors accumulate wealth. That's what he does. He wants to

help physicians. That's his niche. I said why? He goes, because I understand them. They don't trust advisors. And I understand them and I respect them and they didn't wake up that morning going, I need an advisor. Cause the doctors won't admit that they want one. Cause they say they don't trust them. I said, then what do the doctors want? What did they wake up wanting? You know what? They woke up wanting to not be a doctor anymore, to not have to work and work and work and work. As we see, especially now that our health workers are under such extreme duress and stress. And also even if there wasn't such a thing as covert talk, just want to retire, yo, that done. And so he says, the problem is the way the industry is now in the doctor's world. They're not making money, hand over fist anymore. And they don't have the accumulations skill. And so the language isn't Hi, I'm Bob and I help doctors accumulate wealth. Thanks Bob. We're really more interested in ourselves right now. Okay? So this is the new language and see how it shows the user in. It. You're a doctor forever, but that shouldn't mean you have to work that long because you are a doctor forever.

You retire. You're still Dr. Jones, but you shouldn't have to work forever. And his job is to help doctors from working forever anymore. That's the goal. That's the language. Anything you do to communicate with your people should be like a message in a bottle. It should be that they get it. They go, oh my God, what's this going to say? What is that kind of whoa. Like I love thinking of them in terms of analog things, objects things in the matrix. A letter. In fact, when they talk about their own profiles or their websites, I said should read like a love letter. It doesn't have to be sentimental. It should maybe should not be sexy or romantic. But the idea that there is romance there because you are drawing someone in to make them feel that you can help them specifically.

And so that is the metaphor. If an actor will say, I have to find something to love in the character. I can't play the character. I've heard actors say that. I got to find something I love about what I'm writing about or I can't do it. And neither can you no wonder it feels hard, right?

Here's one last example. This is what another typical..., forget it. It could be a real estate company. You don't even know what it is by looking at it. Right? this is another firm just because I did a whole spate of them last year. This that's not really clear again, great group picture. What are you telling me? What do I need to know about you? What are you saying? Well, when I went and worked with them and got to know them, it turns out what they really cared about. Wasn't money at all. Nope. They said they really cared about time.

About helping people save time, about helping people get money in time, being able to retire and enjoy more of their time. So after a lot of talking and thinking, we created the messaging that is up there. Now money is one thing. Time is everything. And they said they had never had any kind of brand work done before. And they had no way of putting into one capsule. What it is they care about. And this is it that speaks to anyone, right? That's a lot different than your standard firm thing, right? This has an emotional feeling. I even got them to put a Mary Oliver quote on there. Tell me what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life. Now they're based in Alaska, which also helps with that kind of mood and the scene and the very nature kind of oriented world.

So that worked for them will work for you in Detroit, you could do something different in Detroit. Something that feels more like you. So now we get to the good part, the fun part we actually get to dig in because now you've got ideas floating around in your head. How do we get down to the marrow of that message? How do we get down into that? Because again, no one can hand it to you. You know who you are, you know what you're good at, but you're also inside the machine of your head. It's hard to get outside of it. Best way I know how to get outside of your head is to write. It starts where it all starts on the page. I don't care if it's startup, it's a product. It's a book. It starts on a cocktail, napkin, a notebook.

That's where we begin. So why don't we bust through some blocks right now and break on through to the other side. What do you say? We're going to do it.

How it works, it's deceptively simple. I'm going to give you a timed prompt, and then you're going to write, and then you're going to, if you like, not everyone, obviously we have a lot of people on this call share what you've written. If we were in my apartment together, literally right now, you would write. And then you would read. And then we would point out where the brilliance is. I'm telling you, you probably have never gotten feedback like this in your life, the rules. And here it's silly, right? Because we can't hear each other. Well, you can hear me, but I want you to understand the rules of Gateless feedback. Because when I create this container for us to work in right now, you're going to feel differently because of the rules, right?

So we're going to stay on the page. I'm going to be the one being the exemplary Gateless feedback person today. We only look at the work. We separate the work from the writer. In fact, we look at just what's on the page. We focus on what's working on the page. We don't criticize, we don't fix or judge, we don't judge the writer and we don't judge the work and we don't disclaim our work. So if you were going to read your work to me, I wouldn't let you say, Oh, I'm just Terry. Only in a few minutes. I don't think I don't really like this, blah, blah, blah. I wouldn't let you do it. Because what you're doing is sending out a signal to everyone that you don't trust us and that you don't like yourself and that's not helpful here. And we stay with the work when we're commenting, as you'll see, I will, I am not going to read your thing and then go, well, what happened to me once was it's not about me. When I'm talking about your work, it's about your work. Therefore, everyone feels safe and we know where our focus is.

Writing. Just the act of writing, whether you call yourself a writer or not, it doesn't matter. It activates flow in the brain. You're going to think things through the act of writing that you wouldn't have thought if you weren't literally writing or typing, we write to know our minds, how you're going to write to a prompt right now, as I'm going to just tell you what to think about. I'm going to actually focus your attention on something. You're going to listen to it. You're going to write about whatever the heck comes up. You don't have to appease me, right? You don't trying to, well, I have to write about what you wanted and that's not the idea. The prompt is just to nudge you in a direction. Cause if I said, write about anything will be hard. You're not going to write an essay. You're not gonna have time.

You're just going to get it going. Get the flow, going, let the work lead you. And you're going to not think about what are my opinions about things you're going to write from the body. So I'm going to give you a prompt and you, whatever memory comes up, you write it down. Okay. It was snowing. I was in Detroit. I don't know why I keep going back to Detroit. And I was wearing my favorite sweater. And I remember I was starving in the body. Stay with the physical. Once you go off into the realm of ideas, it's actually hard to get grip on the piece.

Think of this prompt as like a worm on the edge of a hook. And you're going to drop that hook into the water. And you're going to see what comes up. Weird. Stuff has been known to come up. You might think of something you haven't thought about a long time, or you might be writing about a thing that you've been wanting to write about whatever comes, let it come. Let it right through you. Don't overthink this. Do not. Don't start down. I'm going to control it. Just let it, let it right. No one ever has to

see it unless you want. Are you ready for your prompt? I want you to think about a time when you realized what you were capable of. Now, that might mean the moment you realize that you could walk out of a relationship that didn't work. You might, it might've been the time when you, when you got a project done on time under budget and your boss was psyched and you were like, yes, I can totally do this. Maybe it was the day you were promoted. Maybe it was a day you created something on your own that you never showed anyone, but you realized you can do it. I want you to focus on the moment something clicked for you and said, yes, this is what I can do. Maybe you jumped up and defended someone on the subway. Like just started being an advocate for someone who was getting pushed around. Maybe you surprised yourself. That's okay too.

I'd take a deep breath and sit quietly and just think what was a moment when you felt, yes, it could have happened yesterday. Start writing, just start writing the scene. Who's in the room. What did it look like? What did it feel like? Tastes like, just start writing. I'm going to keep an eye on the time. It's going to give you a few minutes.

Don't overthink that you can just write blah, blah, blah. You can write anything you want. It doesn't have to be perfect. You don't even need to use punctuation.

Keep going. Don't don't pause long enough for your brain, your judgy critical brain to come in and take over.

If you want to jump to another scene, by the way, go ahead. You don't have to stay in one scene, right? About when you're five jump to when you're 50, whatever comes up, this is the moment you have to capture it. And it is a rare moment.

If you stopped and you said, I think I said everything. Try to find one more detail or look at what you wrote and go, what else does this remind me of the more you get those trap doors inside your head to open. That's where all of the riches are. And it's not that it's not there. It's just that we often stop too soon. Obviously. Yes. I am going to ask if anyone wants to share what they did, but you still have a good two minutes to finish writing.

We want to drop into the scenes. That's why the stories are everything, right? The idea is not to make them too short, but to really go into it, wring out this time for as much as he can get just under a minute now.

We write usually a little longer, like 15, 20 minutes and I use them. I go and participate in salons myself so I can continue to keep material coming out of me. And I use it for all kinds of stuff. So what I'd like you to do is if you'd like to share what you wrote and get some Gateless feedback so you can understand what it sounds like please email it to Amy. That's why I was giving you Amy's email so you could pop it in there. And of course I won't get to all of them, but if you send over to Amy dot conover@howdesignlive.com she's gonna forward it to me. And I'm just gonna read a few so that you can get a sense of, of what this is like, right. What it means, what it sounds like and, and why it makes a difference for people to, to be there. So who'd like to go first, let's see what we got.

And honestly, like I said, there is no need to be shy about this. There is you will, you will not feel bad about sharing. You'll feel better. In fact, it's kind of like a one someone has shared and gotten Gateless feedback. They're always like, Oh my God, I can't believe I was nervous about that. And you got to do it. Okay. So we got some stuff. Let's see what we get.

I'm going to read this one from a Linda. Okay. After years of being a mom and then working in low paying jobs now at 68, the pandemic gave me an aha moment that I could try for a great job. I sent in

my resume had one interview was super high. They called me then a second interview and wonderfully then a third where I felt no way they will ever hire me. For the interview where I thought HR was going to make me an offer.

Nope, not yet to a fifth interview with the VP of all the Americas. When, well, then a call five interviews went, well, next need to do a 15 minute pretend customer presentation. Then a week and a half of the flu yesterday, I did the presentation. It was fine at first. And my PowerPoint meant I couldn't see anyone's faces. I got very scared. Just kept going, made it through it and then did well in the questions. I was so proud of myself, no matter what happens. One of the people said I did a good job. I clutched that praise to my heart and rejoiced. This process was a whole rollercoaster of emotions. Joy terror, pride feels so great that I did it. The company never considered a remote worker before this time. So it was a special chance. And this explains all the interviews, but still nerve wracking for someone who hadn't interviewed for 10 years.

Wow. Wow.

Thank you for this. And I'll tell you right at the top. And when we talk about feedback, we look at what's working. And when we talk about craft, we're looking at what in the work stood out and what makes us go wow about that. Now, if we were in a place where we could chat, I would want to see what comments you hear, but I will jump in and be a proxy for all of us, Linda, and say that this is the story where we are rooting for the hero, right? It tells us a lot about the speakers. I'm not talking to Linda. I'm talking about Linda. Now the speaker, who is the author, write this, but the speaker in the story, she says her age right up front. She says, I haven't done this in a long time, but why can't I do it?

Then she walks us through second interview. Third interview fourth. There is incredible use of craft here in terms of suspense, right? Drawing us out over it. She could have just said in one sentence, I tried out, I got a few interviews and went well, but here then she's on the thing. And then the stakes keep rising. So we suspend, we see suspense, we see stakes rising. We see a woman who she's scared, but she keeps going. She was scared before she even got in interviewing. She's like, I want to get a really great job and I'm going to go for it. And in the middle of that, she's sick and then comes out of it and says, I'm proud of myself no matter what happens. So already we know about the values of this person. She doesn't hate herself. If she doesn't come in first, she doesn't hate herself.

If she doesn't win, she says, I am proud no matter what, how do you think it would feel to have her as a boss? Pretty great. She knows when the stakes are high, she knows that you're scared to keep going. And she's proud because of effort not reward. That's what I know about this speaker. And then I'm honored to know, right? So she lets us experience that. And it was a rare opportunity. It's like the planets lining up. And then again, so we start with an age at 68. We end with, I hadn't done it in 10 years.

You guys didn't have a lot of time to write that. But if I were someone who was writing my story, if I were this speaker, right. And I were like, okay, these are the things I just heard. I heard that the there suspense, and there was a shape to the piece and there was good use of craft. And you know, the stakes were high. I got the reader involved and engaged and it showed what my values were. Right. That's what, that's what we heard from, from Linda. Terrific. Oh my goodness. I see a lot of things coming in. Holy cow. Okay. So we're obviously not going to get to all of these, but let me just pick some from the pile here. I'm going to pick and keep going.

Cause remember it doesn't matter if it answers the prompt, there is no, you don't get an a, if you meant, I matched the prompt, the prompt was when you realized you were capable. So it was interesting to see the different ways that people experienced that.

So I just picked one out. I don't know who's sending them because it's from Amy. So I open it and I, and I'm like, okay. And this one happens to be from a guy named John Lincoln whose name I actually know. John writes the energy in the room was a mix of curiosity and skepticism. 50 ish people from branch banks from around Atlanta were there to hear a new technology that were replaced their existing one. They meant something new, something different, more work, less work, more effortless effort, more time, less time. Scary, exciting. I've been working on the project for over a year.

At this point, I knew what we were presenting because I developed it. I also knew what these people did because I had gotten my start in the branches and learned all the tools, what worked well, what didn't I knew their pain. We had developed a presentation, hoping that the people would get excited and see that their work lives would be better. Once they started using the new system. I started speaking. I spoke about the features of the new system and language that they related to and pains that the new system addressed. You know, how, when you're searching for customers' information online, that you pages and pages of names and addresses on a small screen. And you're not sure which one to choose and usually choose the wrong one. And line of customers keeps getting longer and your customer is getting impatient and your heart's speeding.

And you're sweating. We fixed that. And I showed them how we did oohs and ahhs emanated from the room. People were sitting forward, they looked at one another with smiles and wide eyes. They were excited. I was too.

Thank you, John, for that. Now, what do you notice about that? Right? What did, what, what did you love about it? There's amazing scene creation here because we're in the scene. Here's, who's there 50 people from branch banks. Now we don't know what the platform is or what it does. Does it matter? We're on the page with this piece and we go, wow, we've been given everything we need to know. Stakes are high project. As long, we're aiming to fix a problem. Just like we all are right. Want to help people who want to serve. He has been working very hard to create this thing.

And everything's on the line and how you know this and you hate this. And he does a great job of explaining what it is to be in the body of the audience. It's one thing to be in the body of the speaker. I was nervous. This was happening, but he shows us how the audience feels because this audience has to deal with this problem all the time. Your heart's beating, you know, when you can do it. And yes, yes, yes. We hate that thing while we fixed it. Ah, it's a great tension relief at the end, right? Tension release at the end because they're listening forward. They're about as excited about that. As if I told you I had an invisibility cloak you could wear because this is what they woke up needing. So now what do we know about the speaker? The speaker is capable of identifying someone's need and solving it and working very hard to make that happen.

A great use of dialogue, putting us in the body of the audience, making us feel that we're there in the audience. It's fantastic. Curiosity and skepticism is where we start by the end. There's been a transformation. That story, we start with people wanting one thing and feeling something different by the end. It's fantastic. Again, do I need to tell you that you had seven minutes to write seven minutes? I mean, my guy, we waste seven minutes all the time. Can you imagine? I mean, what you could get done here.

Okay. I just opened another one from Kim. Here's what Kim writes. How are we doing over there? Freedom. She writes, I attained my first RE client. I started getting my welcome packet and materials designed and ready. I was supercharged with ideas, too many to keep track of. I knew I was going to succeed in real estate.

Even though they are way more than 300 agents in Cape County alone, I'm going to be different. I'm going to stand out. I'm going to give a phenomenal experience. I'm going to enjoy the freedom, working for myself, making my own decisions, following my gut and building my business. This is what was meant to be my next stage in life. It's my passion and passion. Like I've never felt with any job before my passion drives me to seek the answers to questions my clients have before they have them creating a less stressful transaction. I am their advisor, coach marketer, expert resource negotiator coordinator. I feel the spirit and energy of my grandma, her passion for learning and for teaching has driven me to have an educational focus to my business. I want to provide for my clients. I want to give an experience. They remember and tell their friends about it.

Brings my heart physical joy, a joy. I physically feel in my chest like a swelling. When I have made a difference in someone's life. It is what drives me. I want them to feel comfortable asking me any question, no matter how trivial kind of like talking with my daughter about the birds and the bees. I'm an open book. If I don't have an answer for you, I will get one, but I don't want anyone to hesitate and asking me a question. Real estate transactions are personal, dealing with a financial transaction. This big is personal.

Wow. Now that is the sound of exuberance. That is the sound of a person who knows what they want to be doing our full steam ahead. Right? Laser focused. But let's look at the things that jump out. She says, okay, there's competition. There's other people like me, but I'm going to, what, what does she say?

And this craft tool chooses is lists, lists and repeat, right? I'm going to do this. I'm going to do this. And then advisor, coach marketer expert. There's a sense of plenty from the work abundance. And she feels abundant in the work. So we feel that through her because of her words. But what was very interesting for me were hearing about I'm going to do this and I love this job, but I feel the spirit and energy of my grandma. Whoa, that turns it right. Takes us on a whole other place. Then we learn about the grandmother. This is a lineage of passion. And then she talks about it in the body, physical joy in her chest. And she describes what it feels like to do.

And it's a commitment to honesty and resourcefulness. I mean, how do you not want to work with this person? Right. Of course, kind of like talk with my daughter about the birds and the bees. We've gotten a very personal look through a professional lens. So people don't wish it to be professional or personal. You're both. And this is, it is masterful at making the professional personal. And she zeroes. When I said the marrow of what you're doing, the person woke up, who she wants to serve. That person woke up afraid of investing this much money in something. This is a personal investment. So she's like, I'm not just going to be a suit and a briefcase here. I need to make them feel reassured. Fantastic, really great writing. I want to, okay, so that was feedback. I will, we have time for a few more if you want, I might pull yours out of the bag there. Absolutely. But I wanted to make sure you knew in case you have to run, I wanted to tell you something that you get to do next, if you want. But I want to ask you this, just this feeling of having done something you didn't plan to do, you made something that wasn't there this morning. Imagine if you could hold off the critical mind long enough to get more stuff done. What if it had more of a hold right? Less of a hold on you and you had more of a hold on your creativity. What

have you felt ease and flow in your work? I mean, this is how I shaped my work around. I can't do it any other way. And what if he did it tomorrow night? You're on tomorrow night. You want to hang out tomorrow night, the zoom cocktail I'll do one better than zoom cocktail.

I'm going to be in, I already had this planned, but since I'm here, I wanted to invite you guys for showing up to join me for a free, full tilt Gateless writing session tomorrow. It is totally open. If you'd like to join me. It is tomorrow at 5:00 PM Eastern time. So that is a way that you can try this in a little bit of a bigger way. And then you can join and be part of it. You will have more time to write it. Of course it will be a larger group. So it's not like we're all being a zoom room together. But if you would like another chance at this to really do it, especially if you're like, God, I need to work on that thing.

Then come and work on that thing. We'll be together for about maybe an hour, maybe a little longer, but you can peel off if you need to. I would love to have you there really. I think this is just so much fun and I love seeing what comes out of people in seven minutes. Are you serious? And I'm also happy to take questions by the way, Amy. So if there's questions coming through that someone wants to ask, please pop them over to me. I'm just going to go whoop into this bag and grab something out here.

Ah, okay. I got one. I got short one at me. And then we can go to a question if you want, you're ready for this one.

I was 23 years old. I had my entire in front of me. I was being taken seriously at work. I was at work and had just been asked to switch from one department to another. My new boss was an amazing lady who encouraged me and became my mentor. I remember feeling on top of the world. I knew that my life was finally becoming what I wanted it to become. I was learning every day and excited to go to work. I don't think I've ever felt as accomplished as I did. Then. My memory of that time nearly 30 years ago is fragmented. Now it's jumbled and all over the place. I remember walking to work through the company gardens, which was so beautiful.

Cape Town is the most extraordinary city. The grittiness of arriving at work and seeing children's sleeping in the doorway opposite. Now this moment is this shining light from a young point, a point in her young life. And then we have a thing that happens where things get jumbled. Now we don't know what happened and that's not on the page. So we don't worry about what's on the page, but we, it almost has a feeling of a lyric poem at the end where it just leaves us with this kind of weirdly disturbing image, right? Of children's sleeping in the doorway, especially when the beginning of this piece is about a child, for lack of a better term, a young person who is at the threshold of new life and was totally alive and awake and ready. And it ends with a child sleeping in the doorway.

Sometimes we write things and we don't know why they're coming out of us when, but there's something very striking. The subconscious is at work there. And there's something really kind of strange and disturbing and interesting about that piece. So I want to thank you, Bridget, for sharing that piece.

I landed on about technical writing and I wanted to draw attention to something. Because writing is writing. I don't care if it's romance writing. I don't care if it's technical writing. So there's not a, it's very important to bring that up.

Any writing has an audience if it's meant to be read and if it's technical or it's this or that, it still can be its own genre. And you could still find flow in writing it or not find flow and writing it. So I encourage you to come even if, and come with an assignment you view, you have to listen to my prompt. If you have

something you want to work on, use that time to work on it. But I have a woman in one of my programs. I lead a program where we, we meet twice a week in a small group and we all write and share, write, I don't write, but they do. And it's called the six week sprint. One of the women in it is didn't even think of herself as a writer, but she had to, as part of her job to do technical writing about cause she works in the power business and she wrote some really bad ass blogs about batteries. It changed her whole. She said, I'm a writer now. And I didn't think I was before. And it really was exciting for her to discover a fresh way into her content. So it doesn't matter what genre please do come. If you like this, it's more about wanting to do it this way. What else we got?

I had one that came in separately from this, but it was how much does competition play into branding? And do you look at what other people are doing? Would you think, gosh, not important. Yeah, no. You know, it's funny. I know a lot of people do and they look at the competition and say, who's doing what I'm doing. And then how do I brand in reaction to that? I don't know if this is like a neuroses of mine. I mean, I don't know what is, but I don't do that. Maybe I should, but I'm telling you, I really don't. I have half an eye. Like I know other people do what I do, but I don't spend time studying other people's stuff and figuring out if all they already did that, then I can't do that.

That feels like scarcity thinking. I think it's always good to know what else is going on. But I have just had more luck focusing on my own stuff and understanding the needs of the market is different from knowing what other people are offering. Cause I'm not going to ever offer something just because someone else, well, I'm hearing that going for me, I'm hearing an echo. You mute yourself. Maybe, maybe a guy can help with it. Cause I'm hearing it now by bouncing back. It's gone now. Thanks. but now I'm telling you, like, I don't really do that if you want to do it great. But I say, what do you know what you would makes you use going to be different from what anyone else does? And so, you know, like I just don't know if you find it useful. Great. But a lot of times people are like, Oh, but this person's in there already doing it.

And I shouldn't even do it. And I'm like, ah, I don't do that. Now. I know people are requesting. I read there as a please know that they're coming. I have so many from Amy and then I don't know who's there from but I'm going to read one that is very different here because it's not, it's a different topic. This is from Nina. I love this for what seemed like forever. I wanted to be this person that this musician I wanted to know. I was good enough, actually not good enough. I wanted to know that I wasn't limited that the money or lack of didn't ultimately get in the way of the thing I loved. So I entered the room. My first audition in years, I prepared for it like mad over two weeks. Maybe I found the piece. I practice my scales.

I semi irritated my new roommates. I'm just going to try for this. Since I hadn't, before I demurred, I won't be doing this and definitely playing at odd hours and the apartment, I loved blind auditions. They always felt like protection for me. I don't see them. They don't see me. It's me and the music. I hear instructions from the judges play this scale, play the prepared to pieces as neutral as possible. No chatter, no excessive visibility, minimal judgements on the player. Aside from what she can do with her flute. I entered the room and found a, not blind audition, three conductors as judges, master instrumentalists in their own, right? Why is it even happening this way? I was banking on a blind audition. So we're left in kind of an exciting suspenseful moment, but I will tell you the little flip ending there, Whoa she has the, the speaker has something flip on her, but what I find that stands out to me in terms of what is so strong about this is the, this sort of wanting to be a thing and the honesty in her stating it I'd love.

I'd love this for what seems like for, I wanted to be this person and I wanted to know that money. Wasn't what would hold me back. So it's assessing our talents against the market against hopefully blunt

judges, maybe not, and against what we think we can do. I mean, that's the sound of a leader. To me, someone always bumping up against their own limit and seeing, you know, let me try for it. It's kind of like the other piece we heard the woman who was like, I'm going to try for it. I mean, there's so much spirit in these pieces is what I love. And I love that the prompt, you know, really brought that up for you. Terrific.

Here's another question, do you have any resources for silencing the critical voice I'm having trouble freeing myself from this to grow. Thanks in advance. Always enjoy your presentations. That's from Susan. That is the Gateless approach. I mean, there is no one, one flip switch like, Oh, it's off now. You will never get rid of the critic. What we do is change our response to what we hear. We call it the splendors. We call it a squeeze that kind of like, Oh, but I can't, I can't everything tightens up. What you need to do is push against that to open up the aperture, right? So there is a practice to it and actually die. I didn't continue with this, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. Sorry. I didn't show you the rest of what you're going to get.

I do have, this is what we're going to do tomorrow, by the way, we're going to, and this is what we're doing now. You're going deeper to generate ideas. You get, by the way, this is really great for helping you. You follow the work. The work tells you what's important to focus on. This is about trusting intuition here and what we're doing here. You're learning different ways of giving feedback, but what you're going to get, if you register for this thing I'm doing tomorrow you'll be on my list and you'll be getting this because I'll know you were here today. Five ways to unlock your creative genius. It's a free guide I put together. That's also an audio book that you can listen to and like 20 minutes that helps you start to do it. The only way to start to change your relationship to the critic is that you must practice.

Natalie Goldberg calls it, writing practice. She says, you don't think you don't think about writing. You write writers. Don't think about writing. They write. So if you're feeling the answer is to do and to do in spite of it, that guide is just kind of a way to start place setting in your brain. But nothing you read is going to do it. You can read it and then know what to do, but if you don't do it, nothing will change. So part of this is being part of, you know, you can do your own group and say, we're all going to write. And we're going to read what we wrote. We're not going to say anything critical about our work, or you can find out where there are groups like mine or other. People's where you can be part of it. But don't allow people who are critical to be in your space either.

Like when I write something, I don't send it to someone who is going to send it back with it, marked up with like put a comma here. And that's not what I want. I send it to my Gateless friends and I go here. I need Gateless feedback. Where's the strength and this, what do you see as the best parts of this so that I can focus on that. Let me tell you this way. You will never get better by listening to the critic, you can refine a piece. You can edit a piece later. You can trim it and get it ready for publication, whatever later. But when you're trying to come up with ideas, the critic is not your friend. It blocks the way to getting at your best ideas. So if someone's not helpful, you tune them out, right? You stop hanging out with them. Stop meeting them for coffee, stop answering their emails, stop answering the critic's emails. Stop listening to it. When my critic acts up, I go, I got good guy. I hear you. I hear you being a brat. I hear what you're saying. Please go into the other room and let me get some work done. I work more than, I think that's the goal you want to get rid of that critic. You should do that as well.

Yeah. That's great. Yeah, I think am I, are you still getting feedback when I talk? Well, no, I'm okay now. Okay, good. I don't see any more questions we've got about three more minutes. So I don't know if you want to read something another I'm writing quickly or if somebody has a quick question they want to send in. I think we could do another one. If you've got a short window here we do. We do. We have funny.

Okay, let, let's grab another one. Perfect. Out of a hat, Jackie. Okay. Jackie. When I moved for the 12th time in five years, all within the same neighborhood, definitely crazy. I felt proud. I realized that what most people find the thought of moving paralyzing for me, it's cathartic the lightness that washes over you. When you realize how little you need to survive, it's freeing.

It can also be super cold because when you pack all your winter jacket in storage and that storage unit, it looks like a game of pickup sticks. That'll collapse on you. If you remove anything while you think yourself next time, I won't forget to keep my coat on. Even if it is 80 degrees. The thing about all this moving in, searching for home after home to flip, you can never be exactly sure when you'll find that next place. You can't be sure what drama will await, but you can be pretty sure that there will in fact be drama. It's that moment of panic that rises up like bile in your throat. When you don't know how to get yourself out of situation, you've gotten yourself into, but then you realize that everything, everything can be figured out. And I have figured it out.

That is so fun. I love that. You know, what I love is that opening line. When I moved for the 12th time, instead of feeling crazy, I felt proud why this is what I talk about. When I talked about a counter idea of like, Oh my God, moving 12 times, I lose my mind. But then we learn later that she's a flipper, right? She turns and changes properties. So it's not, you know, why would you do that? But now we understand, but we don't need to know right away. So get incredible use of craft, of taking time to reveal the information until we needed to hear it. But she's funny. She's the, the idea of the lightness washing over you. When you realize how little you need to survive is just a really beautiful line. And what an unexpected take. I've never heard the take of someone from this perspective really beautiful writing. That's funny and sharp and evocative, and then realize that everything can be figured out. I mean, we want to follow this writer everywhere. That's the idea, right? And I think the important, thank you, Jackie, for that. I, this is terrific. I think you might go, Oh God. Well, that was really good. And I don't think I could do it. Something that Goodwill only had a few minutes. That's the squeeze. I hear it. I hear it.

What you want to do is think I can, when I decide, turn on the taps of my creative and now I can make this happen and I don't need a lot of time. I don't need a huge, hairy goal. I just need to keep going, make tracks on that page and you can connect it to branding because you're like, here's what I want to say to people. Here's a great last exercise to leave you with. If you are struggling with the brand messaging part, don't try to be cute. As I said, don't try to be cool in your tagline, right? And I'm going to make you write it a thousand word love letter to the person you want to serve. Write it as if you're writing to the person who could use your help, write that letter with all your heart in one, sitting time at 20 minutes of writing and then go back and find the parts that you can pull out and use that for your messaging.

It comes out of love for that client. And for that, that's great. That is a great way to end. Great way to end. Thank you so much.