

S2: E84: The Uncommon Secret of Unforgettable Storytelling

Hey there and welcome back. Today we're combining two powerful concepts, the art of storytelling and creating engaging teaching points in your talks that lead to transformation. We're going to explore how these elements can work together to make your message resonate deeply with your audience and create a true lasting impact. And we're going to look at storytelling from a unique angle that you've probably never heard of before. So before we do that, I'd like to paint a picture for you. A few years ago, I was invited to speak at a major industry conference. It was an incredible opportunity and I was excited to share my insights with a large audience. However, as the day of the conference approached, I found myself feeling increasingly anxious. I had my presentation ready, filled with amazing content, of course, polished slides, but something felt off. The night before my talks, I had a moment of clarity. I realized that when my presentation was super informative, probably the professor in me coming out, it lacked a personal touch. It didn't reflect the journey I had been on or the struggles I had overcome. I decided to take a risk, rewrite my introduction, incorporating a story that revealed my vulnerabilities and the challenges I faced in my career. The next day, as I stood on stage, I began my talk with this new introduction. I shared how early in my career, I struggled with self-doubt and fear of failure. I talked about a specific moment when I felt completely defeated and how with perseverance and support, I managed to turn things around. I could see the change in the audience's reaction. They leaned in, their faces softened, and they connected with me on a deeper level. As I continued my presentation, I wove in personal anecdotes, lessons learned, and the engagement in the room was palpable. People were nodding, smiling at some points, and towards the end, people even had tears in their eyes. I had not only conveyed my key teaching points, but also had built strong emotional connection with the audience. The feedback I received was overwhelming, and many attendees reached out to me afterwards sharing how my story inspired them and made a real impact on their lives. That experience taught me a powerful lesson, the importance of heroic vulnerability in storytelling. By sharing my true self, including struggles and triumphs, I was able to create a transformative experience for my audience. So let's dive in and really talk about how you can connect with your audience on a deeper level, making your message unforgettable. So we've all heard a ton about the power of storytelling. If you, unless you've been hiding under a rock, the power of storytelling, there's books around it. I mean, it's all over the place because it's powerful, and you're probably familiar with the hero's journey. So before we dive into the details today of how to craft engaging teaching points and a little bit more about that, I want to clarify these important story concepts because we're not talking about the hero's journey specifically. Here we're talking about heroic vulnerability. So both are powerful tools for connecting with your audience, but they serve different purposes and operate in distinct ways. So the hero's journey is a classic storytelling framework popularized by mythologist Joseph Campbell. It describes a universal pattern that many, many, many stories follow consisting of specific stages that the hero goes through. So we've seen this a billion times in books, on movies, in messaging, right? So I'm not going to teach deeply on this, but I am going to give you just a brief overview of the key stages. So if you're not familiar with it, you kind of have a sense of what that is. So it starts out with like the call to adventure. The hero starts in an ordinary world, receives this call to enter an unknown world of challenges, right? Then the hero leaves their familiar world behind. So this can often be

like a child who's grown up, who's leaving to college, or somebody who's had a ton of money and they leave everything behind to go do something. Those are just a few quick examples. Then the hero faces various challenges and obstacles. Then they meet a mentor who provides guidance, major crisis. There's an ultimate challenge, which is often called like the abyss or rock bottom. Then through overcoming the crisis, the hero undergoes transformation, and then they return to the ordinary world transformed with new wisdom or skills. This is a framework, and it's a lot of like those rags to riches stories as well follow this framework. There's nothing wrong with that, but it's kind of tried and true. Everybody's kind of familiar with it, right? It is very powerful because it resonates with people on a deep psychological level. We all go through our own versions of the hero's journey in life. So we all resonate with it on some level. And this structure helps us to relate to and to find inspiration in the stories we hear. Heroic vulnerability, on the other hand, is a much lesser known technique that's all about sharing your personal challenges, weaknesses, and failures in a way that shows your humanity and builds deeper connection with your audience. But it's not structured like the hero's journey. It's a technique that can be used at various points in your storytelling to create authenticity and trust, right? So heroic journey is very structured. It's like the story arc in a sense. And then heroic vulnerability is something you can pull in whenever you see fit. And they're two different things. So the key aspects of heroic vulnerability are honesty, openly sharing your true experiences, including your struggles and setbacks, relatability, which is, of course, making yourself relatable by showing that you are not perfect and that you face challenges similar to those the audience might be experiencing, empathy, really showing that you understand your audience and maybe challenges they have faced, and growth, highlighting growth and transformation, and just reminding them that overcoming challenges is possible. So the hero's journey provides a broad narrative arc. Heroic vulnerability focuses on the moments within the arc, or you can just skip the arc and use these moments where you reveal your true self. And I love this because we talk about heroic vulnerability and bake it into all of my clients' brand because when you show up as the hero, and like, I'm going to save the day, I'm going to fix you, that doesn't feel nearly as good as when you talk about, I'm going to show up as the guide, right? And when you do that, and you're vulnerable, and you're open, it builds that know, like, and trust factor, of course. So I do want to call out one caveat, though. There is a point of taking vulnerability too far, in my opinion. For instance, I swear every time I go on social media, which isn't super often these days, I will see videos or pictures of women crying and being, air quotes, vulnerable. Now, if this is you, you do you, I'm not, like, no shade here, I'm not judging other people. I'm just saying for me, that's too far. I can't imagine being in that state, and then in the moment, picking up my phone and documenting it and then putting it out on social media. Too vulnerable. And I just don't want to go there, like, that's a special sacred moment that I need to be experiencing, right? And I think oftentimes when we're documenting those things in the moment, it actually takes the moment away, right? So personally, I use heroic vulnerability, and this is what I teach all my branding clients, when it has context to what I'm sharing business wise, and after the time that that moment has passed, okay? So two things to think about of how to incorporate heroic vulnerability is choosing stories that highlight struggles, the lessons you've learned, and just being open and honest about your experiences. Not difficult, right? And you also want to remember, yes, you're sharing your challenges, but also highlight your successes. This is the other mistake I tend to see people making, is because as women, we often don't want to, like,

toot our own horn or, you know, share our successes. Now, again, there's some people out there that that's all they do is share their successes, and then they're not, you don't actually feel the vulnerability. So there's this balance that needs to happen, right? And so you want to really show your audience, yes, you overcame obstacles, and you're achieving your goals. So for instance, one example of this for me would be, I talk about how I was afraid to ask for ketchup at a restaurant as a child. I was afraid to be visible online when I first started my business. I was terrified thinking about public speaking, and that's relevant because now I've transformed, and not only have I, you know, been visible online, speak on stages, go on podcasts, do all the things, I now, as part of my holistic branding process, I'm teaching others how to create signature talks. So that is an example of me being vulnerable and also sharing, overcoming obstacles and successes, right? Also I've won speaking competitions, like I've come a very far away. So and I always say, if I can do it, so can anybody. So what I want you to think about today is what can you share using heroic vulnerability that will help your audience see your human side. I encourage you to journal and make a list, and I'm going to share some more actionable tips at the end of the podcast that you can really start to think about when you're crafting your signature story, incorporating all of these juicy tips. And before we move on to talking about engaging teaching points that will create transformation, one quick reminder, I have a lot of clients when we're going through this process, either the branding process or creating their signature talk, and they'll say, I have so many stories, I don't know which one to pick, or I feel like I don't have any good stories. The truth is, you can never have enough, and everybody has stories. I help so many clients who think they don't have stories, and once we open them up, they have tons of stories. But also, if you have a story that you're not comfortable sharing, don't share it. There's a lot of coaches out there that are like, oh, it's going to change everything. You have to share it. Share it when you're ready. Okay? That's one thing I never think is a good practice, is to be vulnerable for vulnerability's sake, and share things that we're not comfortable with. So just keep that in mind. Okay, so let's move on now to how you can create those engaging teaching points. So, so many of my clients, and I've talked about this in previous episodes, want to be on the TEDx stage, which is awesome. There's nothing wrong with that. However, I seriously think that for the time and efforts that's taken to create a TEDx talk, speak on that stage, the ROI of a signature talk is much more powerful. But the reason I bring that up is that those talks and those like inspirational talks have an end goal, and they're very inspiring, but they're not necessarily more of a training talk or a talk focused on taking your ideal client with the intention of inviting them to work with you at the end, right? And so the whole point of the signature talk is that you end up converting clients. People who are at the perfect spot, they truly need your help, and it's like a no-brainer to work with you. So at this point, engaging teaching points are essential because they help your audience understand and remember your message, and they make your talk more impactful. But most importantly, they ensure that your audience walks away with valuable insights and actual transformation. So we talked about, you know, the storytelling and how that vulnerability is key. Now what we want to do is blend that with really effective teaching points. So what you want to think about, and I love to have three main teaching points. That's my personal preference. I've had clients where we do four or five teaching points, but you want to think about like, who is my audience? What am I coming to teach? And the thing about a signature talk is it's a framework. So it's not like you're only going to have one signature talk throughout your entire career. For me, I have like 10

signature talks in my back pocket. One where I'm teaching about branding, one where I'm teaching about speaking, one where I'm talking about storytelling. So you can think about like the different things that you have in your business that you'd want to share. And then you bring in different teaching points and different stories for each actual signature talk that you're going to deliver. So some of the things you want to think about in your teaching points are simplifying complex ideas into easy to understand points. And you've probably heard this, like even in marketing language, you want to speak at like an eighth grade level and no higher because people are moving quickly. And if you talk quickly, like I do, and you're being super complex, people aren't going to get it. And I can't tell you how many clients I've had, they don't realize they're talking complexly because it's like second nature to them. But for instance, maybe I worked with a woman who's a psychologist and she was teaching different frameworks and it was going way above most people's head. So we really had to work to, and I don't want to use the term dumb it down, but we had to make it more approachable. So just make sure you're using clear and concise language to explain your thoughts. And a good rule of thumb for this is to ask like a friend, a partner, a child, like somebody who has no context, and see if it's understandable. Next up is ensuring each teaching point addresses your audience's needs and challenges. This seems obvious, but I can't tell you how many people I've, even just talks I've been to, and they're just making these high-level points that aren't really serving the audience. So it just makes your message more relevant and impactful if you're truly crafting your story towards a specific audience. A lot of times people will create one signature talk and they'll just spray it to whatever audience they're in, and it's not going to resonate with every audience. So the cool thing is you can make little tweaks by if you're speaking to, say, an audience of entrepreneurial women one week, and then a couple of weeks later, it's entrepreneurial men. I don't know, that's just a really easy example. Maybe there's some stories that are going to be more relevant to one audience or the other. Or you're speaking to chiropractors one week, and then you go and you're speaking to artists the next week, right? Really think about your audience. Next up is thinking about including mini stories or case studies. So with each teaching point that you're creating or providing, you want real-life examples that help to illustrate your point. Now we know this as well, sales pages, marketing materials, when we share case studies and mini stories, it's always going to help paint the picture for people and show results. So we want to do that in our signature talk as well. And those specific instances where you've helped someone who faced a similar challenge that you're teaching about is going to be key to really make the whole talk come alive. Another thing to keep in mind is once you do all of those things, you want to combine it. So there's a framework. So you open with a deep transformational story. You have three teaching points. Each teaching point is paired with a mini story. And then at the end, you want to make sure to summarize and recap your teaching points to reinforce the information, really ensuring the audience retains it. And then always summarize the key points as you go along throughout the talk as well. So after each three points, you're going to summarize and then summarize again at the end. And that's kind of like the whole cadence of the entire framework. So I hope and trust that that was helpful and provided you with a new angle to look at vulnerability and a new technique to use that's different from the hero's journey. And to finish up today, I want to leave you with a few actionable tips to help you refine your own stories of vulnerability and triumph, and also thinking about how to create those effective teaching points. So I really want to, again, encourage you to take some time to reflect on your

personal and professional journey, identify those key moments when you faced significant challenges or failures, and how you overcame them, because these moments are gold mines for heroic vulnerability stories. So this can be in your signature talks, you can share them in your social media posts, on workshops, on podcasts. It's really important that you take the time to really look at the story arc of your life and pull out those moments, because when you're asked, perhaps on the spot at some point to share a story, you'll have it in your back pocket, which is really cool. Then once you get those stories out, look for reoccurring themes or lessons in your stories. So these themes can form the basis of your teaching points. For example, maybe you notice that persistence and resilience are common themes in your stories, you can actually create teaching points around those qualities, which is pretty awesome, because then everything is really gonna tie together. Next up, this is similar, we talked about reflecting on your journey, but actually create a story bank when you have those moments, when you're creating new signature stories, you can even go back to this for writing your website, which we help clients do, or talking in your podcast. I mean, these points can be used in so many ways in your content. But not only do you wanna keep a collection of those stories, but keep like personal anecdotes, client success stories, relevant case studies, all of those in a repository is going to make it easier to select the right one for teaching points in your stories, and then also on sales pages and all sorts of places. Just makes life easier when you have a place to go back and just grab from instead of racking your brain and trying to figure it out. Okay, so those are some very specific focuses on stories. Now, here's a few techniques to think about when you're actually crafting the talk. So remember to aim for brevity and clarity. So similarly, we talked about before, you wanna kind of simplify the message, but also avoid jargon, making sure each point is easy to understand. And remember, I also love to use alliteration. So if I'm breaking down the teaching points, so I talk about, one example is, when I talk about a legacy brand, which is the main focus of my business and what I help people create, I talk about your business should be scalable, sustainable, and sellable, right? And so one of my signature talks have those three teaching points in it, and then I give stories along each one. And so personally, I love the alliteration of the S's. So think about that helps it, keep it easy to understand. And so I'll literally go back to my slides, and then those three S's keep coming up, and it's memorable for the audience when we do that, right? Along with that, when you include sensory details, that also helps trigger emotion and memory in people's brains. So the more vivid and engaging you can make the stories, the more powerful it's going to be. So really describing what you saw, what you heard, what you felt, what you experienced, dropping them into an actual moment so they can almost feel, taste, smell, see it. And this helps them visualize it and feel even more connected. Which leads into, you really want to create connection by asking questions. So immediately you can create a connection when you show you understand their struggles. So you can say something like, have you ever felt overwhelmed by X, Y, Z? Or have you ever experienced a moment where you X, Y, Z? So instead of going into your story and just talking about it, you can ask them a question first and then go in it. And that brings them into the story. Another thing to think about is using analogies and metaphors. Analogies and metaphors are just like triggers for the human brain because we, by comparing something we already know to something else, it's going to create a trigger, right? So for example, I compare the process of building a brand to planting and nurturing a garden. So what is that for what your business? Right? Let's see, next up and to wrap up, we want to talk about encouraging action. So this

again should be a no brainer and that's kind of what I'm modeling for you here today. I told a story at the beginning, we went through teaching points, now I'm giving you actionable tips, right? So you really want to think about ending teaching points or ending your entire talk with clear, actionable steps or at least one step that your audience can take. For example, start by setting aside 10 minutes each day to reflect on your progress and adjust your strategy accordingly. Whatever you're teaching on, give them actual takeaways because that not only are they going to be transformed during your talk, but they actually will begin implementing it. And every time they take that step, they're going to remember you and your talk and the transformation that they went through, right? Which is pretty awesome. So by implementing these tips, you're going to be well on your way to creating an engaging teaching points that resonate with your audience and inspire transformation. And remember, the goal is to connect deeply with your audience, provide valuable insights and guide them towards actionable steps that of course can improve their lives and businesses and then ultimately to convert and be a client if that's the right next steps for them. So speaking of that, if you're ready to take your business to the next level through speaking, I have a really exciting opportunity for you. If you've been following along for the last month or so, I've been talking all about how to craft your signature talk. And I've really given you all the tools on the podcast and shared all of my tips and techniques and tricks, but oftentimes one of the things that I'm famous for is you cannot see the label from inside the bottle, right? A lot of times we're so close to ourselves, our businesses, our lives, that it's hard to have an objective view on, okay, what teaching points should I share? What stories are relevant? What, you know, how do I go through this? What's the transitions? It can be really difficult to figure that out until you've gotten a handle on it. Like I can literally write a signature talk in like an hour at this point. But my goal for you is to take you through the process in what I'm calling summer sessions, crafting your signature talk, where in one week we're going to break down the process into easy to accomplish tasks. So you'll really walk away being able to have a signature talk. We're just going to focus on one in this session, but then now once you know the framework, you can apply it over and over. So this is, of course, if you want to share from stage, but also on podcasts, webinars, workshops, wherever you're called to share your message, you can use this framework. I've even had clients who've shared it, like my client, Leslie, she was asked to be on TV and she was like, I don't know what to say. So she took her signature talk and kind of condensed it down and she was prepared. So literally this can be used in so many different ways. We already have an amazing group that's forming. We have about, the time I'm recording this podcast, we're up to over 20 people in the group and we're prepping for our kickoff on July 15th. So I'd love to have you join us. This is really going to be giving you the signature talk framework. I'm also including a beautiful speaker one sheet template. So you will have a template to plug in your information. You can really begin pitching yourself for speaking more and more. A powerful visibility breakthrough session. If you're like me and just the thought of public speaking is really scary, it was for me. I'm gonna walk you through how to feel more comfortable and confident with that. Bonus trainings and workbooks to select your most impactful stories, clarify your vision and develop your most powerful teachings for your talk. And also three live implementation calls during the week and private access to a community that's not on social media for support during the week. So this is close to a \$2,000 value and I'm making it available and accessible for only \$47 because I'm passionate about helping true experts like you get seen and make an impact in the world. So really this is your

last chance. We're starting next week. Don't miss this opportunity to transform your speaking skills, inspire action and really move mountains in your business. So you can get the details and secure your spot by clicking down in the show notes. And I really look forward to seeing you there and helping you craft your own powerful signature talk. We'll see you next time.