

S2: E163: The Invisible Shift Thought Leaders Need to Make in 2026

Hey there and welcome back or welcome to if this is your first time the Make Your Message a Movement Podcast this is your host Tiffany Neuman and I'm so happy to be here really entering this new magical year of 2026 with you and there's something that I feel called to talk about today a shift that I'm feeling and I've noticed with clients and peers and I'm dubbing it the invisible shift every thought leader must make in 2026.

So I'm curious perhaps you've been feeling a quiet but persistent sense that something needs to change not in a dramatic way, not in a burn it all down way but in a deeper harder to name way.

If that's the case this episode is for you and even if you're like I don't know what you're talking about Tiffany, stay with me because I feel very very strongly about this and the people that I've shared this with in the past week or so before I'm recording this podcast they all were like wow, Tiffany yes yes I'm feeling this yes this is it.

So I hope that you feel the same way and I'm trusting that the people that are called to this episode it's meant for you.

So what I'm seeing again across clients peers and really the broader industry is not a motivation problem a strategy gap or anything in the normal sense where we need to be shifting, right?

It's really more of an identity shift that maybe hasn't fully landed for a lot of us now this is actually a shift that I've been talking about for years and I feel like this is the year that if we don't step into this shift we will be left behind and I don't mean that in a dramatic sense of like you're no longer going to have a business.

But I don't think that you will have as profitable or as successful of a business as if you do step into this shift.

So before I reveal what the shift is I want to talk about what it isn't, it is not anything around doing more content adding another platform changing your niche, forcing a new bold persona because most thought leaders I work with already have experience results credibility and a body of work that they're proud of and yet something still feels slightly misaligned.

Maybe the words don't land the way they used to or strategies that you've been using feel heavier or maybe your brand and business doesn't quite reflect the leader that you've become and are becoming.

And this is the shift that no one's naming but I think everyone is feeling on some level and this is that we're being called to move from simply experts, using our expertise into truly becoming a guide and you've probably heard this language before guiding people right we're no longer just teaching training being the expert we're being called to guide.

So what does this mean well experts explain guides orient the way, experts teach what guides help people navigate the how and the why experts simply deliver information and guides help people make decisions especially in uncertain times. So this shift requires a different kind of brand presence it's not about being louder or broader but clearer and steadier and you may be saying yeah Tiffany I've been showing up as a guide in my business for years I'm a coach that's what I do or I'm a thought leader and a speaker and I love to guide people.

That's amazing I've been guiding people for a long time too and oftentimes as we guide others we need guides ourselves right. But this is where I really want to encourage you I do think that you're here for a reason if you're listening today, this shift is more important and so even if you've been showing up as a guide I want you to fully lock that in this year.

Because we're living in an era where information is abundant, AI can generate answers instantly content is everywhere all the time but what's scarce is discernment grounded leadership, a clear perspective and trust.

People are no longer looking for someone who knows more than they do, they're looking for someone who can help them orient themselves and who can say, here's what matters now and this is what needs to be implemented now.

That's the role of a guide and that role requires a different kind of brand architecture as well and where most people I sense are getting this wrong right now is yes your brand needs to reflect who you've already become we've talked a little bit about this in the last episode but I really want to make sure that yes being the guide is one thing but we also need to be designing our brand and our businesses for who we are becoming next.

Because you can't guide unless you know where you're going and you're oriented yourself to get there.

So one of my core philosophies and the way I work with all my one-on-one clients is I don't brand people for where they're at right now that's the number one mistake that I see most entrepreneurs making like okay it's time to shift things let's rebrand this is where I'm at.

We want to actually brand for where you're going to be three five ten years out and then we reverse engineer the brand and the business from there because when you brand for where you're at now maybe even where you were last year and you're not intentional about this. your brand and your business will always lag behind your growth and it's going to feel muddier and heavier to get ahead faster.

However if you brand for where you want to go you're actually going to manifest it 10 times faster and this is why so many brilliant leaders feel like they're consistently and constantly outgrowing their messaging and their brand and their business their offers their positioning and ended up thinking they

need to reinvent all the time because the real issue isn't reinvention, it's that the brand was never built for expansion in the first place and again when you're guiding other people you need to be ahead of yourself as the guide.

So branding for the future changes everything when you brand for where you're heading, your decisions get simpler your confidence deepens your offers align more easily and your brand starts to pull you forward, literally and figuratively.

I say this all the time not only with myself but with my clients and people ask me, how do you just pivot so easily and make it seem so elegant and clean and it just makes sense, this is why instead of constantly needing to be dragged along, this is also why something interesting happens with my clients.

Very often the vision they thought was five years away or even 10 years away starts happening in one or two not because of hustle and working harder because brand clarity accelerates alignment, the energetics happen so much easier.

I recently had one of my clients Nina write the most incredible LinkedIn review thank you Nina, completely unexpected and unprompted sharing her experience after doing this work with me and she talked about how she was able to double her income last year, working less creating offers that felt not only deeply aligned to her but so aligned to clients that they signed up easily and effortlessly and she finally had the brand, the business, the offers that she genuinely adored she's been in business for 20 years.

She said the offers now sell themselves not because of pressure but because everything finally makes sense and that's the point when your brand is built for your future self. everything starts to flow.

When you show up as the guide not only for your audience but for yourself, that's where the magic happens. And this is also why a brand operating system which is my trademarked process is no longer optional without a system you end up reacting instead of leading, hustling instead of flowing and consistently and constantly adjusting and spending, expanding and growing.

A Brand OS allows you to evolve without constantly reinventing, grow without burning out and lead without constantly questioning yourself.

It's how your brand starts working for you instead of demanding more from you, so as always I want to offer you a few questions.

You may want to pause and write these down otherwise just answer them as we go along.

First, I want you to ask yourself is my brand built for where I am now or where I'm going?

Second, does my messaging reflect my future vision or my past identity?

Next, where am I still reacting instead of intentionally designing my brand and business?

And last am I showing up as a guide or an expert to my audience and clients and how can I show up more as a guide to myself?

No judgment here just gathering information because 2026 isn't a year for proving ourselves, it's a year for positioning ourselves.

For letting your brand signal your leadership so you don't have to perform it

For building something that grows with you, not something you constantly outgrow.

This exact shift from branding for the present to branding for the future is what the brand clarity workshop series that's coming up soon is designed to support.

Not by giving you more to do but by helping you clarify the vision you're growing into the leadership you're stepping into, how you're showing up as a guide and the structure that will support you long term into your next evolution.

Last episode kind of opened the door to these ideas, this is the episode that helps you see why walking through that door matters.

So, if this speaks to you if you're ready to show up as a guide if you're ready to evolve your brand without the hustle and with more flow. Go ahead and check out the show notes, you can step into the brand clarity workshop series at the end of the month for only \$7 because you're a loyal listener i'm giving you \$90 OFF the normal cost and investment for the series and if you've joined the brand clarity workshop series in the past, this is an all new series with new exercises, new strategies all made specifically for 2026 and this era of thought leadership we're stepping into.

I've spent a lot of time at the end of 2025 creating this new methodology for you and as we close, if there's one thing i want you to take away from this episode it's this, you don't need to hustle harder, you simply need a brand and a business that can hold your future. When you have that everything else begins to flow.

We'll see you next week, in next week's episode and I'm wishing you so much love and light as we enter this week take care until then.