

S2: E184: What Happened When I Left Social Media + How to be a "Quiet Powerhouse"

Hey there and welcome back to the Make Your Message a Movement podcast. This is your host, Tiffany Neuman, and I'm just going to get right to it today. We are talking about death—but not in the way that you might be thinking. We are talking about the death of personal branding as we know it.

Maybe you were never meant to become an influencer. Maybe the reason social media has felt increasingly exhausting is because, somewhere deep down, you know your work was never supposed to revolve around constant performance. I've been thinking about this so much lately because I believe the version of personal branding that dominated the internet for the last decade is beginning to completely collapse. I don't mean personal branding itself fully, but the performative version of it—the version built on constant visibility, constant output, access, and self-promotion. And you know what? I think many people are going to be deeply relieved.

I've been feeling this conversation building for a long time within me, but lately, it feels impossible to ignore. About two episodes ago, I started what I'm dubbing a new series here on the podcast, really talking about the future of thought leadership and the future of online business in the advent of AI. Something is really shifting in the way people relate to marketing, influence, visibility, and trust online.

It's actually quite exciting because, if I'm being transparent, I never had any desire to become an influencer or a guru. I never wanted to spend my life chasing algorithms or performing online all day long. I simply want to do the work I genuinely love, be deeply of service, create meaningful things, help brilliant people bring their ideas into the world, and make good money doing that.

If that resonates with you, I think you're going to love this episode. We are entering an era where depth is finally beginning to matter more than performance. For years, I've been saying something that many people didn't fully understand at the time: often, the people with the deepest expertise are hiding quietly behind the scenes. It's not because they lack brilliance or are incapable of leadership; it's because their focus has been on the work itself, not on becoming a great marketer.

Meanwhile, people with far less experience, depth, and wisdom were often dominating online spaces simply because they understood how to capture attention. For a long time, the internet rewarded that speed, visibility, volume, and constant noise. That season, in my humble opinion, is beginning to end. Because AI can generate content endlessly, when everything becomes optimized for attention, attention itself stops having credibility and starts losing value.

As I talked about last episode, the differentiator becomes being more human: unique perspectives, discernment, original thought, emotional resonance, depth, and trust. My prediction is that we are moving fully from the attention economy into a discernment economy. This is very good news for heart-centered or thoughtful people. For years, the online space felt like standing in the middle of Times Square screaming for attention—trying to be louder, post more, and feed the machine. For most of us, it didn't feel good, and most of us just didn't do it.

I left Facebook and Instagram a couple of years ago. The future really belongs to people building something deeper than visibility—people building roots. When you have a trusted body of work, a clear perspective, an ecosystem around meaningful ideas, and a space that feels grounding instead of overstimulating, that is going to be the key to success.

That is one of the biggest reasons why—whether I'm working with clients one-on-one, within Brand OS Pro, or in my mastermind—I'm letting people know that audiences don't need more content. They need stronger infrastructures around their ideas. They need clear messages, a trusted platform, a website that reflects the level of expertise they've grown into, long-form thought leadership, and a body of work that people can engage with over time. We don't need more crap, which is often what we've been told to produce: just post more, do more.

With all of my clients, I continue noticing the same pattern: the people creating the deepest impact are usually not the people trying the hardest to appear impressive. They are the people actually deeply connected to their work. There's a steadiness to them. Audiences are becoming more sensitive to this now, especially after years of overexposure online. They're becoming more discerning about who they trust, more intentional about where they're placing their attention, and way more thoughtful about who they learn from and invest in.

It is so healthy. Gone are the days of chasing every shiny object and spending money on things that aren't even remotely what you should be focusing on. That is shifting. In my own business, I've become much more interested in playing the long game—with my clients and my investments—rather than dealing with the constant volatility of trying to force immediate outcomes. Let's build things that are more sustainable, rooted, and that compound over time.

This approach creates much more stability. When you stop obsessing over instant attention, you begin focusing on trust and depth. Relationships are the way businesses have always been built, and it's time we come back to that truth. Trust compounds much more slowly than attention, but it lasts so much longer.

One of the most surprising things I experienced personally was taking a long step back from social media. As I said, I've been off Instagram and Facebook for a couple of years now. I actually just posted for the first time in a full year on Facebook just because people started asking if I was okay. Instead of hurting my business, it strengthened it. My thinking became clearer, my work felt more meaningful, my relationships became deeper, and my nervous system became a lot healthier without any scrolling.

Most importantly, I stopped building my business around constant visibility and started building it around my ecosystem: real relationships, referrals, thought leadership, and trust. People are craving that shift right now. You were never meant to be a content machine or a convincing marketer; maybe you were meant to be a thought leader. Your expertise deserves a deeper infrastructure than social media alone can provide.

Maybe the people who thrive moving forward will not be the ones chasing the fastest visibility, but the ones building the strongest ecosystems around ideas that genuinely make an impact—those of us willing to create depth instead of quick wins, play the long game, build true relationships, and create movements instead of just marketing.

This shift is going to be incredibly liberating, and we're already seeing it as people move off of TikTok and Instagram and into long-form blogs, podcasting, and other deep-dive content. This is especially for the quiet powerhouses—the people who spent years refining their craft behind the scenes with real wisdom and lived experience, and those who never wanted to perform in the first place. This is finally going to be your era.

If this conversation resonates with you, and if you're realizing business may be evolving into something more rooted and sustainable, I'd love to hear from you. Connect with me on LinkedIn, send me a message, or book a conversation through my website. These are the conversations I care most about right now: how to build meaningful work, ecosystems, and businesses that actually support the life you want to live. We can make an incredible impact and an incredible income without having to be on all the time.

We're only at the beginning of this exciting shift. This feels like the perfect spot to close today's episode, but I have much more to say about this new wave of thought leadership and what it means for you. Make sure to tune in next week when I talk about the five shifts reshaping thought leadership and how you can ride the wave of becoming a new thought leader in the advent of AI. We'll see you then.