

S2: E203: 3 Strategic Moves to Future-Proof Your Expertise

Hey there, welcome back or welcome to the Make Your Message a Movement podcast. This is your host, Tiffany Neuman. Today I want to dive right in and ask you a question that might change how you look at your to-do list. 10 years from now, or if your brain has a little hard time thinking about 10 years from now, you could choose 5 years from now. 5 years from now.

What will you be glad you spent your time building today? And before your brain immediately starts calculating how old you will be, come back to me. We're not doing math right now. I'm talking about your work, your ideas, your relationships, and the business that you've been putting so much of yourself into. Which parts of it will still matter 5 to 10 years from now?

Because when you spend enough time looking at what's happening with AI technology, the way we work, it can sometimes feel like you need to completely reinvent yourself or your business every other week. You finally start figuring something out and then someone pops up to announce, oh, that's dead. Your industry is dead. Your content strategy is dead. Apparently everything is dead.

And sometimes And somehow there's always still a webinar about it. It's a little bit exhausting, right? And I want to offer you on this conversation today a different way to think about or to enter this conversation, because there is room to be thoughtful about the changes ahead and actually excited about what you might create within them. I feel like there's too much doomsday right now, and I can't say if that's going to happen or not, but why don't we look at the opportunity rather than the doom and gloom, and the possibility rather than what could go wrong? Because the truth is, you have experience, you have ideas, You have people you're here to help, and you also have the ability to learn something you don't know yet.

And that's a pretty amazing place to be.

And some of you may know that my background in the corporate world included trend prediction when I was a creative director, along with work involving emerging tech like virtual and augmented reality. So looking ahead has truly been part of my work for a very long time. And here's a question I always find much more useful than trying to guess which tool everyone will be using in 10 years, because God knows at this moment it's moving so quickly, right? What I like to ask is, what are people going to need and how might the ways we meet those needs evolve? Now, honestly, trend prediction has gotten a little more difficult over these past 5 years because things are moving so quickly.

But you don't need a trend prediction background to recognize that AI is going to change a great deal. We're already watching it change how people research, create, communicate, and get their work done. And we can pay attention to that without every dramatic headline dictating our next business decision. Some of the concerns are real. And some of the changes will be difficult.

I'm certainly not suggesting we close our eyes and sprinkle glitter on everything. But what I'm suggesting is that you spend time to slow down for a moment and give curiosity a seat at the table. And I know there's a lot of people on both camps right now, people who are like, I'm never going to touch AI, all the way to people who are like, I use AI every minute of every day. And that's not what this episode is about, but I can't help not talking about it. What I want you to think about is what could become easier, what could you finally have the capacity to create, and who might you be able to help in a way that wasn't possible before?

In the last couple of episodes, we've talked about envisioning your next chapter and allowing your positioning to expand. Expand with the depth of your work. Today, I want to bring that into the choices you're making right now, because building towards a 5 or 10-year vision requires room to grow along the way. So I want you to think about planning a long hike somewhere you've never been before. If you don't know, I love hiking.

I love the outdoors. I love backpacking and Kayaking and all of the things. And so hiking is really near and dear to me. I live in the woods. I love it.

So just think about— you choose the place you want to explore. You can study the terrain, pack thoughtfully if you're going on like a long hike, and get a sense of the route. But once you're there, you still of course have to pay attention because the weather might change. Maybe a trail is closed, or you might discover a beautiful overlook that wasn't on your original plan, or I don't know, a waterfall. You're allowed to adjust.

Imagine sitting down in the middle of a trail because the conditions don't match the map you printed, but meanwhile there's a perfectly good path a little farther over and you're having a very serious disagreement with your map, right? That's what can happen in business. We become so attached to how we planned something to get somewhere that we stop noticing other ways forward. And that's not the case for everyone, but so many of us do this, myself included, we get very Connected to a specific outcome happening a specific way.

And your purpose can actually give you direction while you continue to learn about the terrain. There can be real adventure in that. So what do you actually invest in when you know in

advance the terrain is going to keep changing? I want to walk you through 3 concepts today that I've been thinking a lot because we need to be more flexible than ever during these times. Last week I talked about we're leaving the influencer era and moving into what I have dubbed the authority era, right?

We're stepping into authority. So no longer is it about algorithms and vanity metrics and You know, performing. It's really a space where I believe the true experts are going to rise into thought leadership, and real humanity is going to take a further step forward with AI running in the background. That's not going anywhere.

But we don't think about again slowing down. To determine and make calculated steps to become part of the leadership in that authority era. So many times there's so many shiny objects, and especially entrepreneurs, and so many of us with ADHD, we have all those tabs open and we're trying a billion different things. Nothing actually gets moved forward. We look up 3 years later and wonder why these other people have gotten all these opportunities.

When they were right in front of us too, we just didn't plan our way or take the path or slow down to speed up. So what I want to stop thinking about is those tools, you know, WhisperFlow and Claude and all the shiny objects. Yes, they're useful. Yes, we want to use them. But I want to start with thinking about deepening as our first concept today.

What part of your work deserves to become more developed over the next 5 to 10 years? Maybe there's pieces of your business you're ready to bless and release, and you can think about that too. But I want you to think about maybe the problem you've helped people solve hundreds of times. But you've never really articulated the approach and framework behind it. Or maybe there's a question your industry keeps answering in a way you think is incomplete, and you want to bring the complete version to your audience.

Or maybe there's an idea that you keep thinking about, but it deserves a much bigger conversation, and maybe that's ready to become your new body of work. When I say deepen your work, I mean giving your experience enough attention that you can understand and explain what makes it useful. For example, imagine a leadership consultant who helps teams have difficult conversations. The tools those teams use will change. The structure of their organizations may change.

AI may handle more of their prep or help them rehearse what they want to say. Or just be a bigger infrastructure in their business. But there are still people who need to raise a concern, repair trust, or make a difficult decision as a team. That consultant can keep learning about the

human problem while evolving the way they help people work through it. And the method itself can evolve too.

A signature framework should have room for what you learn from using it, and I help all our clients create their signature frameworks, or if they have them, we decide if we want to keep them or bless and release them or refine them. And that's the beautiful thing, is they can grow and expand with you. That's really one of the huge opportunities I see for established experts right now, because you already have years of experience to draw from. You can ask better questions of it, and you're light years ahead of AI that can scrape the internet and give regurgitated answers, but they don't have the nuance that you do to be able to help people through actual deep problems. So thinking about where have you consistently helped people move forward, where do you notice that clients are at and tend to miss?

Like, what are those things that they miss that makes the biggest difference or the biggest needle mover? And maybe what have you changed your mind about because what you've seen in practice? Being willing to update your thinking is part of taking your work seriously. So here's something practical you can do this week. Choose one recurring problem your clients bring to you and And look back at three examples of helping someone through it.

What did you notice first? What did you ask that person or team? If you work with a team, you would say, "What did you ask those people? Where did they get stuck, and what helped them make progress?" This is going to help make your approach even more visible. And deepen.

So over time, it can inform you of a stronger method, maybe a signature talk, maybe that turns into a book, or simply a much clearer way of explaining how you help.

So again, are you looking at the ways you can deepen your work that will make you more creative, exclusive, and more of an expert and thought leader over the next 5 to 10 years.

Now, the second concept for today is to explore, and this is the space that we want to give ourselves permission to look at the shiny objects without getting taken away by them. I had a client that came to me recently for a VIP day, and they said, nothing in my business is working. I'm not sure, you know, what's— you know, if I need to change my offers. I don't know if I need to change my positioning or my messaging, or maybe I just need a new logo. Like, what is happening?

When we dug into it, I realized, yes, they could use some tweaks in all of those areas, which most people probably can. You can always make your branding, your positioning, messaging stronger to get better results.

Of course, when I work with clients, then we fix it, but that's besides the point. What we actually realized was this person was so in the weeds with all the shiny objects, they had not taken the time to properly promote their offers, to properly market their things. They were writing some articles on Substack and they were doing all this research and doing all this AI and not making connections, not running workshops. And it was very obvious to me, but they were so heads down, they didn't realize they had taken their foot off of actually running a business. Now, I know that's not the majority of people, but sometimes it's the combination of refocusing.

So why I give all that context is to say we don't want to not explore because it's important, and your ability to learn is something worth protecting. So part of my trend prediction is I do my own research, and I love research. I love scientific background. I love thinking about the ways our brains work and all the things. So I don't ever bring these predictions forward just, just by intuition.

I mean, I'm very intuitive too, and that always plays a part, but I always want there to be some actual proof behind it as well. So in this case, the World Economic Forum's 2025 Future of Jobs report surveyed employers around the world. They estimated that by 2030, about 39% of workers' existing skills would change or become outdated. Now, that's probably no news to us as entrepreneurs, as some of us are employers ourselves, right? But it doesn't mean necessarily that 39% of your personal expertise is about to evaporate.

But what's interesting is that alongside technology skills disappearing, employers also expected curiosity, lifelong learning, creative thinking, and flexibility to grow in importance, like massively. So there's this huge space of and place for people who are willing to stay curious. And I'm guessing if you're listening to this podcast, you are a curious person. Most of us as business owners are. However, why I want to bring this to the forefront today in this podcast is Established experts oftentimes need permission to be beginners again, because when you've spent years becoming what's like so good at what you do, it can feel uncomfortable to open a new tool and have absolutely no idea what you're looking at.

Maybe clicking around and thinking, oh my gosh, I used to lead an entire department in corporate and now I cannot find the right button. I don't know if you've been there. I certainly

have. And so you can be excellent at your work and inexperienced with a new way of doing it. Both can be true.

But what I also don't want us to get bogged down in is so into the weeds in these new tools, right? So the practical invitation here is to create a space for experimentation and be very mindful about it. What I like to do and what I suggest to my clients is to choose one thing each quarter that you want to learn, test, or implement. Keep it connected to a real need in your business because again, all these shiny objects can lead you down these massive rabbit holes, be massive time wasters, and you're not actually moving the needle in your business. And my favorite thing to do is help people get on those stages, get those book deals, get the clients, and fix their brand and positioning.

And that can't happen if you're scattered across all these different things. So maybe you want to see whether an AI tool can help you organize more effectively. Maybe you want to test a more interactive format for your workshop. Maybe you want to start on Substack. Maybe you want to install AI agents in your business.

Those are all great things. But before you begin, decide exactly what you want to learn and implement and really dial in to doing one thing and doing it well and doing it fully. And I'm saying this because I used to be there too, looking at all the shiny objects. But when I started this, that's 4 new things that you can implement in your business in one year. So for instance, this year I implemented utilizing AI and creating AI tools for my clients that have made massive impacts in not only my business but theirs.

Starting my Substack, which has sort of taken a back seat due to personal complications and the accident that I went through, but You know, you have to roll with the punches. And now we're on Q4 and we're implementing more, right? So I gave myself grace. I actually got 3 done this year because of everything that unfolded. But still, those are major gains.

If I was focusing on all these shiny objects, probably none of those would have really moved forward in a valuable way. So the other thing to think about is asking yourself ahead of time, what would make this useful? How much time am I willing to give it? And how will I know whether to keep using it? Then schedule it in, test, and look at what happened.

Now, for a lot of my clients, this is okay. I'm ready to dial in my brand, dial in my positioning. My website needs updating. This feels like a massive project. But when they come and work with us, we do most of the work.

I have done with you and done for you versions, so it kind of varies from person to person. But we can get that done in a quarter. It changes everything in their business, streamlines their marketing, and then it allows them to free up and implement the next AI tool that they want to use. So You need to plan on thinking about investing wisely and what are those outcomes going to be. And you may already be doing this.

However, what I found is the shiny objects are real and we oftentimes don't do this. So the next biggest thing that has helped me and my clients in business is to look at things as an experiment. Not as I have to or I should, but in an experiment will show you if something has value, even if you have to leave that particular method or tool behind, which if you do your homework up front, you that typically doesn't happen. But if you do not keep it for some reason, say you start stub stack and you're like, "Ooh, actually this is not for me." You can bless and release it knowing. That you tried it and not viewing yourself as a failure, right?

You gave it your all and move on to the next thing. But again, if you're trying 30 things at once and never— it's like pushing 30 boulders up the hill at once. You're never going to make any of them to the top.

So we'll go deeper into this in the next episode in a different way when we talk about a new concept I'm calling the curated expert. You're going to want to listen in because It's all new content and it's kind of stemming from the new authority era that I've been talking about, and it's going to be really juicy. So come back for that. But for now, I want you to remember that staying adaptable, adaptable can be a practice you build into your business, but it doesn't have to become a second full-time job. And I think that's how a lot of people that I've been encountering have been treating it as.

And then third concept for today is to connect. Now, of course, connection is nothing new. A lot of people are talking about this right now, but it's where I get especially excited because meaningful human connection will become even more valuable as part of our lives and work. And as technology becomes even more forefront day to day. So a 200— I'm sorry, 2025.

200, I don't know what I'm talking about. A 2025 Harris Poll study commissioned by the event company Freeman found that 95% of the attendees surveyed said they trusted brands more after participating in an in-person event. Now, mind you, an event company commissioned the research, so I am taking that at face value. We got to look at our research the right way, but think about that. 95% of people said they would trust brands more after an in-person event, right?

So it does point to something worth considering. Being in the room with someone can change how you experience their work. And in both ways, you can also find out that somebody is horrible and not who they say they are at an in-person event. That's actually happened a couple times to me, and I was like, okay, now I know I don't want to work with this person more. However, most of the time we realize, wow, this person is truly amazing.

I fall in love with them even more, and I want to continue the work with them, right? And so you can feel their energy and see how authentic they truly are. And as someone myself who hosts intimate gatherings and retreats, that human element is something I care so deeply about. And I think we're all getting caught up in the technology piece. A lot of people are talking about how important this human element will be, but there's so much opportunity here for speakers, authors, coaches, and consultants.

So I want you to think about today, what could bring you joy in bringing people together? How could you bring them together? So it could be an in-person workshop, a small client gathering, maybe a conversation or event around your book. Maybe you've been dreaming of creating a really big event.

You could also partner with a complementary business owner to host an event or organize a small local meetup alongside a conference that you're already attending. I did this last year when I spoke at Podfest. I decided to host an invite-only happy hour for clients that attended and other speakers, and it was a total hit. It wasn't difficult for me. I was already traveling And it made a massive impact in my business.

So start with something that fits your capacity that people actually want, and a meaningful gathering can begin with just 6 chairs, or it could be filled with 100 people. If your audience is spread around the world like mine and it's difficult maybe to get people in person, I still highly recommend figuring it out, but you can also think about bringing more attention and interaction into your virtual events and work. Maybe smaller conversations, thoughtful introductions, and time to participate for the people attending are all things you can design for. A lot of times people are still hosting webinars with absolutely no interaction. And people don't feel seen, heard, or that they're belonging.

So little tweaks like getting them involved can make a massive difference. So the question is, where in my business do people get to feel known, and how can I expand on that? Because connection, as we know, takes attention. It asks us to remember, to listen, to follow through, So these are simple investments of time that can make a massive impact to maintain and expand your business over the next 5 to 10 years. If you want to join up and be part of the next group of

thought leaders, which I believe are rising up right now— a lot of my clients, I'm so excited, they are definitely going to be the next realm of thought leaders, if you want to be part of this authority era, which if you're listening, I actually think you already are, these are the things that they seem so simple, they seem a little bit obvious, but if we take the time to do them right, it's back to the basics, back to the foundation.

We are going to slow down to speed up and be light years ahead of all the people who are scrambling and getting distracted by all the daily shiny objects. So let's bring this back to your next 90 days, because 10 or 5 years is a long vision to think about implementing. So let's get tactical for just a moment as we wrap up today. And if you have somewhere to write, Go ahead and capture these. Otherwise, you can always pause and come back, and don't forget to come back because this is the most important part.

We're going to kind of recap, but I want you to actually write down. So first, what will I deepen? Choose one part of your expertise that deserves more attention. A new idea, your methodology. A problem you want to solve in a new way.

Maybe the body of work that's been scattered for 20 years you want to bring into a brand ecosystem. Maybe it's what is the legacy I truly want to leave behind as I grow my business. So number one again is what will I deepen?

When you anchor in, that's how you become A thought leader in this new authority era. Second, what will I explore? Narrow it down to one experiment for this quarter, this final quarter of 2026, and as you get more ideas and more shiny objects come in, write them down, and you can start it in Q1 of 2027. What can you implement? That will be useful towards the future of your work.

So maybe that is an AI tool. Maybe that's Substack. Maybe that's working with me and my team on your brand and messaging and your website. Whatever that is, you need to decide what that is for you this quarter. And third, how will I connect?

This could be as simple as choosing a relationship to truly invest in in a deeper way that will create a massive opportunity. This might be hosting a small, intimate, local event, or it may be using this quarter to plan an epic retreat for next year.

Then think of one meaningful action in each area with room enough to follow through. What is the first step you can take Now that you've narrowed down these 3 ways to move your business forward without the overwhelm, and ask yourself, what needs less of my attention so I can

make space for these things? What are you ready to bless and release in this last quarter of 2026?

That's causing shiny object syndrome or causing you to feel scattered or just taking too much of your bandwidth that nothing is really moving the needle. And maybe you're making impactful strides and you're really growing in your business. Awesome. But we can always turn down the dial and bless and release what's no longer serving us. That could be a team member.

That could be going out on Friday nights. That could be certain food. I don't know, I'm just making stuff up as I go, but there's always things that we can bless and release to allow new things in. And investing in your future deserves a place on your calendar. So again, I know I'm harping on this a lot today, but I'm probably talking to myself as much as you.

I've gotten really good at this, but there's always those tweaks because it's so easy for those urgent parts of running a business to take the available hours. And you can feel incredibly productive and still keep postponing the work that you most want to do. So this is your invitation to to give this work time on the calendar. And when I think about what will still matter in 10 years, I think about useful ideas that keep developing, people who trust each other, the ability to continue to learn, the courage to make a contribution when the outcome isn't completely predictable. I think about someone using something you taught them years after you've forgotten the conversation.

A leader may be handling a difficult moment differently, a parent feeling more confident, or a business owner making a decision that gives them time back with their family. Whatever your business is, that's part of the legacy your work can create, and you have room to evolve as you create it. That, my friends, is a massive opposed to the daily grind. So stay informed, but I also urge you to give yourself permission to step away from the constant predictions of disaster. There is a real opportunity here for those of us who play the long game and adapt to all of the changes heading our way.

So if you'd like support figuring out what you should focus on in your brand and business to position yourself for success over the next 5 to 10 years, specifically around your brand, your messaging, your frameworks, maybe the way that you're delivering your content, where you want to be delivering your content, I'd love to support you in my next Authority Positioning Workshop at the end of the month. We'll explore how to bring your expertise into clearer positioning and a brand that supports where you want to go. You can find those details in the show notes, and I hope to see you there. For today, take those 3 questions with you. What will you deepen?

What will you explore? And how will you connect? You don't need every detail of the next decade figured out to take the next step. Just start with those small baby steps today. Thank you as always for being here, for the work that you're putting into the world.

I'm sending you so much love, and I'll see you here next week.