

Angela Kelly Smith

How to Narrow Your Focus as a Multi-Passionate Entrepreneur

The Marketing Chat Podcast ep. 035

Podcast Transcript

Welcome to the Marketing Chat Podcast!

What would you say if I just met you and asked, "So, what do you do?"

If you're like I was for years, you'd struggle to answer. You'd dread people asking you that question. You'd constantly be working on an answer. And you'd be changing it all the time.

That's what multi-passionate entrepreneurs go through regularly.

If you're not familiar with the term, a multi-passionate entrepreneur is someone who has many skills and talents, a bunch of things they love doing, many choices of directions to go in their business. They have a difficult time picking that *one* thing to focus on.

They have a hard time picking a niche because they can't articulate what they do, and they think that *everyone* can use their services. They're afraid that narrowing their focus will make them bored and miss out on opportunities. They're also afraid that leaving out any of their passions will be killing a key part of themselves that will be screaming to come back out.

And there is a truth to this. When you're a multi-passionate entrepreneur, you're fueled by all of your passions. You are energized by all of your passions. They light you up and inspire you.

But here's the thing. Having so many passions can also keep you stuck when you're an entrepreneur. They can stop you from taking action. They can keep you from getting clients. They can even prevent you from identifying your ideal client.

When you're passionate about so many different things, it's totally understandable that you don't want to pick just one thing to focus on. I've never wanted to! The only time I've ever focused on just one thing was over 20 years ago when I was a marketing consultant for businesses that did more traditional marketing than online marketing.

People weren't podcasting then. YouTube didn't exist then. Lots of businesses didn't even have a website. So, we were using mailers, billboards, flyers, brochures, cold calling, in-person presentations, and training employees on brand messaging.

And that's all I did. It was simple and easy.

A few years later, I moved into graphic design, copywriting, copyediting, and even a little ghostwriting. But I became dissatisfied and wanted to help people on a deeper scale. So, I started a new business in life coaching.

My clients tended to be solo entrepreneurs. And as soon as they saw that I had been a marketing consultant, they wanted coaching on their marketing. So, I did some marketing coaching, but I really wanted to stick with life coaching. I ended up missing marketing. So, I tried to do both. But that ended up confusing potential clients.

I was also hearing from clients that they were having spiritual crises. And they'd want coaching on spiritual issues. Basically, I ended up coaching them on anything they wanted coaching on. That was pretty draining. So, I switched my focus again and tried to do just spiritual coaching.

That worked for a few years. But I got burned out. And... I missed marketing.

During that time, I had a blog. I was teaching classes and doing group coaching. I hosted a live podcast for a while. And I was podcasting at Geek Girl Soup.

Other than the podcasting at Geek Girl Soup—which has always been so much fun and energizing—I felt drained. I didn't have a clear message. I never wanted people to ask me, "So, what do you do." I rarely had an easy or good answer to that.

So, I closed my coaching business after 8 years.

Can you relate?

I was in the middle of a divorce and had to do something. Again, I missed marketing. I was good at it, and I love it. The basic tenets of it don't really change. You know, the psychology behind it. But, with online marketing, many things *had* changed since I was a marketing consultant starting in 1999.

So, I got a master's degree in communication, focusing on marketing and branding, from Johns Hopkins University. Because of the divorce, I actually thought I'd just get a job after getting my degree. But, from the very first class I took, I was already designing my own marketing business again, discussing ideas with two of my professors.

When I finished the degree, I thought that getting a job would be the more "reasonable" thing to do, the more "stable" thing to do. So, I applied to a bunch jobs. But, at my age and with no full-time work experience (employees don't seem to like to hire entrepreneurs!), I wasn't getting many interviews.

And my heart kept pulling me toward entrepreneurship.

Then the pandemic hit. I put everything on hold. And I was itching to do something.

I had just made a new website for Geek Girl Soup. As a result of that, a few entrepreneur friends asked me to do websites for them. And I did a website for a former Pittsburgh Steelers football player. I had been doing my own websites for 20 years, and some for clients during that time. So, I started a new business as a Squarespace website designer.

But the marketing. See, as a multi-passionate entrepreneur, how could I leave out the marketing?

Well, websites are *the* key part of online marketing. So, I made online marketing my overarching theme. I added in marketing strategy as a part of website design. I believe that you can't design an effective website without a strategy that takes into consideration the full brand or your business goals. So, I made my website-design service a full-service package.

Doing this really satisfies my passion for marketing and my passion for creating websites. I've always loved creating websites. In the early days of my businesses, I had someone create a website for me twice: Once for my coaching business and once for my artist website, that one in the early 2000s. I wasn't happy with either of them. I ended up redoing soon after. It always so much fun to do!

Then various clients over the years would ask me to do theirs. I never advertised website design as a service. I just did it for some clients who asked. It satisfies this creative drive in me, combining my artistic side and my strategic side.

So, I finally feel that I have created a business that combines my many passions into one cohesive whole in online marketing—a business where I can articulate a message that attracts clients.

Now, yes, I have expanded into helping people start a podcast. How does this fit in? Does it really fit?

Yes, it does.

I teach podcasting as a marketing tool. My podcasting clients are entrepreneurs who want to start a podcast to help them attract more of their ideal clients. That's a big reason why I started this podcast.

Podcasting is one piece of marketing strategy. So, it fits in perfectly with my overarching theme of online marketing.

Within my overarching theme of online marketing, the three things I do are marketing strategy, website design, and teaching how to start a podcast.

Let's look at three other women as examples.

I interviewed Dr. Zarya Rubin recently. [Link to that episode in the show notes](#). Zarya does functional-medicine health coaching, clean-beauty skincare and makeup through Beautycounter, and environmental-wellness advocacy. Her overarching theme is holistic wellness.

Amy Porterfield teaches list building, creating online training courses, and online marketing strategy. Her overarching theme is online marketing.

Marie Forleo teaches starting a business, online marketing, and copywriting. Her overarching theme is business building.

You see, all of us do more than one thing in our businesses. But we have an overarching theme in our businesses that ties it all together into a cohesive whole so that the individual pieces make sense.

So, where do you start when you're multi-passionate and trying to narrow your focus?

Now, that phrase, "narrow your focus," can make you bristle. It sure did me! It can make you imagine tossing out things that you're passionate about. And I am *not* going to ask you to do that.

I'm going to share 5 steps that will help you hone your passions into something that's a workable business. And I'm not going to ask you to stop doing anything you love doing.

But here's something that [Beth Caldwell](#), my friend, business coach, and founder of Pittsburgh Professional Women, says. She says that we *can* do everything. We just can't do everything at once.

This has been really helpful for me to remember over the years because I'm always wanting to do everything, and I'm always wanting to do it *now*!

But that leads to being scattered and burning out. And it confuses potential clients.

So, let's start with figuring out your goals. These don't have to be just your business goals. You should also take your personal goals into consideration.

Write down what the overall purpose of your business is. What is the vision of your business? What is your big goal for achieving this vision? Your big goal is something more than just making money. It has something to do with helping your customers or clients solve a problem or achieve *their* goals.

I'm going to use Dr. Zarya Rubin as an example for a minute. In addition to being a functional-medicine health coach, she's also a trained opera singer. Taking this from her bio, her big business goal is to "help women in midlife get to the root cause of their chronic health issues so that they can reduce symptoms, heal from the inside out, and truly thrive." While she is passionate about opera singing, that wouldn't help her achieve this business goal.

My big business goal is to help solo entrepreneurs blaze their own trails by giving them tools that make online marketing more simple and more fun. I'm also a professional artist, and I just did some work as an assistant editor on a documentary film. But those things don't contribute to my clients' success.

I'll come back to Zarya's singing and my art and film work in a bit.

So, write down what your big business goal is. This one step alone is going to help you see which of your passions will really contribute to your business.

The second thing you're going to do is write down what you're both passionate about *and* really great at doing. Sometimes we're passionate about something, but we're not necessarily good at doing it. I'm passionate about evolutionary biology and biology in general. I even have a bachelor's degree in biological anthropology and a master's in biology. But I haven't worked in a lab in nearly 30 years. I don't "do" science anymore.

Some things that I'm both passionate about and good at are marketing, website design, podcasting, writing, editing audio and video, and abstract painting. Within these categories, I can dig deeper and identify specific areas where I excel.

So, write down everything you feel really passionate about. Then identify the things that you're really good at. Go ahead and identify passions that you're good at that don't necessarily fit into a business right now. We're not editing, censoring, or eliminating at this point.

Next is you're going to look at what you're passionate about that makes a positive impact on other people's lives. Your passions already make a positive impact on your life. And you're trying to figure out how best to incorporate your passions meaningfully into your business. So, you'll need to figure out which ones have the greatest impact on other people—specifically on your ideal client.

If you aren't clear yet on how your ideal client is, then you can listen to my episode called "[How to Identify and Attract Your Ideal Client](#)." Link in the show notes. In this episode, I walk you through identifying the essential features your need to know about your ideal and then creating a client persona—or ideal client avatar.

So, when looking at my passions that make an impact on other people, marketing certainly does since it helps other entrepreneurs attract more of their ideal clients. Website design makes an impact because it helps my clients have a beautiful and strategic online presence. And podcasting—or teaching podcasting—makes an impact because I get to share my tips to a bigger audience and teach other people how to use podcasting in their businesses.

Now, my art also has a big impact on people. I have gotten comments that sharing my work has inspired other people to start creating again or to create in a different way. So, you see how I've been torn over the years. We'll get to that in a bit!

Two more steps.

Next you're going to look at what you've got now and identify your overarching theme. So, look at what you're passionate about that you're good and that makes an impact on other people. See what theme you can develop from these passions.

Remember the examples I gave of Zarya's theme of holistic wellness, Amy Porterfield's theme of online marketing, and Marie Forleo's theme of business building.

What do you notice when you look at your refined list of passions?

Do you see a theme naturally emerging? I'll bet you do.

Work with this refined list of passions to develop a theme.

Notice that this theme is essentially the beginning of your niche! And the individual passions are the "what you do" within your niche. How cool is that?!

Now, the last step. You're obviously not using all of your passions in your business. Zarya doesn't sing opera in her wellness business. I don't paint or create experimental film in my marketing business or when teaching podcasting. Marie Forleo doesn't dance professionally anymore. Though she dances at her events and in some of her videos!

Did we give up these passions? Am I telling you that *you* have to give up some of your passions?

Absolutely not!

Reiterating what my friend Beth Caldwell says about being able to do everything, just not all at once: You can do all of your passions, just not at the same time or for the same purpose.

You're taking your refined list of passions and pulling out what works for your business. You're creating an overarching theme for those that becomes the start of your niche.

You're still doing everything else. You're just doing them at a different time—on the side, as a hobby, or as a side job.

I have a website for my art. I still create when the spirit moves me. I had a flurry of activity a few years ago, before starting this business, and even had a couple of solo shows.

Zarya still sings opera on the side. Marie Forleo dances every chance she gets.

So, my suggestion is to take your refined list of passions and pull out the ones that will specifically work well together for a business. Then take the rest and do those on the side for sheer joy. Shoot, you can do them for pay! I do sell the occasional piece of art. But I decided that my marketing efforts wouldn't be on my art. They would be on my marketing business.

It's possible to market yourself in more than one area. But it's hard, especially if you're doing it on your own. And if you're in the early stages of your business, it's even harder. So, it's ideal if you have one overarching theme under which a few passions fit.

After you go through these steps and figure out which passions to focus on for your business and which ones to do for sheer joy, I think you'll feel less confused, less overwhelmed, less scattered, *and* more satisfied.

You'll see that you don't have to abandon any passions. You can do them all. You just need to be strategic about which ones you do when and to what ends.

And when I say that you'll be figuring out which ones are for business and which ones are for joy, let me be clear that the passions that I do for business also bring me joy! So, it's not as if there's some delineation where I stop feeling passionate about the business ones. You don't start living in some "Severance"-type of world. You know, the awesome Apple TV+ show "Severance." Watch it if you haven't yet.

Well, that's it for today! You can leave comments on this episode's page on my website. Link in the show notes. Wherever you're listening to this, I'd love it if you'd leave a positive review and subscribe!

I'll see you next time on the Marketing Chat Podcast!

Links mentioned in the episode:

[Beth Caldwell](#)

MCP 005 "[How to Identify and Attract Your Ideal Client](#)"

[MCP 033 Dr. Zarya Rubin](#)

[Link to this episode](#)



Angela Kelly Smith is a marketing strategist, Squarespace website designer, and the founder of the [Women Podcasters Academy](#). Her mission is to help women entrepreneurs create the successful business of their dreams through strategic marketing that establishes them as authorities in their field and helps them attract more of their ideal clients.