

This Is Marketing: You Can't Be Seen Until You Learn to See by Seth Godin

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Chapter Eight – More of the Who: Seeking the Smallest Viable Market

- Your best customers become your new salespeople. Your work to change the culture thrives when the word spreads, and if you want the word to spread, you need to build something that works better when it gets spread.
- The conversation I'm motivated to have with my peers becomes the engine of growth. Growth creates more value, which leads to more growth.
- The dream is that with public relations, with hype, with promotion, with distribution, with ad buys, with influence marketing, with content marketing, and with a little bit of spam . . . the dream is that it will become the "it" thing, and everyone will want it. It will be popular precisely because it's popular. But you're not fooled by this.
- The alternative is to seek a path, not a miracle. And that path begins with customer traction.
- Who would miss it if it were gone?
- For the independent creator of intellectual property (a singer, perhaps, or a writer), it turns out that a thousand true fans might be sufficient to live a better-than-decent life.
- The challenge for most people who seek to make an impact isn't winning over the mass market. It's the micro market.
- While it might be comforting to dream of becoming a Kardashian, it's way more productive to matter to a few instead.
- Our hits aren't hits anymore, not like they used to be. Instead, they are meaningful for a few and invisible to the rest.
- Here are the key elements of the Dead's marketing success:
 - They appealed to a relatively tiny audience and focused all their energy on them.
 - They didn't use radio to spread their ideas to the masses. Instead, they relied on fans to share the word, hand to hand, by encouraging them to tape their shows.
 - Instead of hoping to encourage a large number of people to support them a little, they relied on a small number of true fans who supported them a lot.
 - They picked the extremes on the XY axis (live concerts vs. polished records, long jams for the fan family vs. short hits for the radio) and owned them both.
 - They gave the fans plenty to talk about and stand for. Insiders and outsiders.
- It took more than a decade before the Dead became an "overnight" success.
- In 1972, being obstinate, generous, and lucky was an accident that led to their surprising success. Today, though, in most industries (including the music business) this sort of success is not an accident. It's the best path to success, and in many ways, the most rewarding as well.
- Hits serve a useful purpose to our culture, but the essential lesson is this: someone is going to make hits, and it's probably not going to be you.
- For the rest of us, there's the other path: the path of connection, empathy, and change.
- What if, instead, we seek advice? Seek it like this: "I made something that I like, that I thought you'd like. How'd I do? What advice do you have for how I could make it fit your worldview more closely?" That's not criticism. Or feedback. That sort of helpful advice reveals a lot about the person you're engaging with. It helps us see his or her fears and dreams and wants. It's a clue on how to get even closer next time.

- It's worth the effort to insulate ourselves from a raw emotional onslaught and to tease out substantial useful direction instead.
- Why are the people who don't choose you correct in their decision to not choose you?
- Find the empathy to fill in this sentence: "For people who want what you want (____) and believe what you believe (____), your choice of ____ is exactly correct."
- If you're a career coach, then explain why people who don't hire a coach have made a smart decision. Or explain why people who are using someone else to coach them have done something that makes sense for them.
- When we find the empathy to say, "I'm sorry, this isn't for you, here's the phone number of my competitor," then we also find the freedom to do work that matters.

Chapter Nine – People Like Us Do Things Like This

- As marketers and agents of change, we almost always overrate our ability to make change happen. The reason is simple. Everyone always acts in accordance with their internal narratives. You can't get someone to do something that they don't want to do, and most of the time, what people want to do is take action (or not take action) that reinforces their internal narratives.
- Some people have an internal narrative that makes them open to changing their behavior (e.g., Quincy Jones likes many kinds of music), while others begin the process with great resistance.
- For most of us, though, changing our behavior is driven by our desire to fit in (people like us do things like this) and our perception of our status (affiliation and dominance). Since both these forces often push us to stay as we are, it takes tension to change them.
- For most of us, from the first day we are able to remember until the last day we breathe, our actions are primarily driven by one question: "Do people like me do things like this?"
- The smallest viable market makes sense because it maximizes your chances of changing a culture. The core of your market, enriched and connected by the change you seek to make, organically shares the word with the next layer of the market. And so on. This is people like us.
- Marketers don't make average stuff for average people. Marketers make change. And they do it by normalizing new behaviors.
- "I'd like to teach the world to sing" and the commercialization of the entire world happened faster and more deeply than most people expected.
- We've gone from all of us being everyone to all of us being no one. But that's okay, because the long tail of culture and the media and change doesn't need everyone any longer. It's happy with enough.
- When we're comfortable realizing that our work is to change "a culture," then we can begin to do two bits of hard work:
 1. Map and understand the worldview of the culture we seek to change.
 2. Focus all our energy on this group. Ignore everyone else. Instead, focus on building and living a story that will resonate with the culture we are seeking to change.
- Everything in our culture is part of a hierarchy between yesterday, today, and tomorrow. We don't get to jump all the way ahead.
- The essence of political change is almost always cultural change, and the culture changes horizontally. Person to person. Us to us.
- Elite is an external measure. Does the world you care about respect this badge?
- Exclusive is an internal measure. It's us versus them, insiders versus outsiders. The Hell's Angels aren't elite, but they're exclusive.
- It's exclusive institutions that change things. We have no control over our elite status, and it can be taken away in an instant. But exclusive organizations thrive as long as their members wish to belong, and that work is something we can control.

- In order to change a culture, we begin with an exclusive cohort. That's where we can offer the most tension and create the most useful connections.
- Your work is a tree. The roots live in the soil of dreams and desires. Not the dreams and desires of everyone, simply those you seek to serve.
- It's a mistake to show up with an acorn and expect a crowd. Work that matters for people who care is the shortest, most direct route to making a difference.

Chapter Ten – Trust and Tension Create Forward Motion

- The pattern match is business as usual. When the offering you bring matches the story we tell ourselves, the way we tell it, the pace we're used to, the expense and the risk . . . it's an easy choice to add you to the mix.
- A pattern interrupt, on the other hand, requires some sort of jolt. Tension is created, and energy is diverted to consider this new input. Is it something worth considering?
- If you want someone who has never hired a gardener to hire you to be their gardener, you're asking for a pattern interrupt. If you are trying to secure a five thousand-dollar donation from a wealthy person who habitually makes hundred-dollar donations to charity, you face the same challenge. The pattern requires undoing before you can earn forward motion.
- **NOTE:** How do we interrupt patterns for our players in coaching relationships?
- When life interferes, new patterns are established. This is why it's so profitable to market to new dads, engaged women, and people who have recently moved.
- Tension can change patterns If you're going to market a pattern interrupt, it will require you to provide the kind of tension that can only be released by being willing to change an ingrained pattern.
- We create tension when we ask someone to contribute to the bake sale or join our book club. We're using one force (in this case, social engagement) to overcome another force (the status quo).
- What are you breaking?
- Launch a new project and, in addition to serving your audience, you'll be breaking something. The very existence of an alternative causes something else to no longer be true.
- This is what tension feels like. The tension of being left behind. And marketers who cause change cause tension.
- Tension is not the same as fear
- If you feel like you're coercing people, manipulating them or causing them to be afraid, you're probably doing it wrong. But tension is different. Tension is something we can do precisely because we care about those we seek to serve. Fear's a dream killer. It puts people into suspended animation, holding their breath, paralyzed and unable to move forward.
- The tension we face any time we're about to cross a threshold. The tension of this might work versus this might not work. The tension of, "If I learn this, will I like who I become?"
- Fear will paralyze us if we haven't been taught that forward motion is possible. Once we see a way out, the tension can be the tool that moves us.
- **NOTE:** INNER FREEDOM, BABY!
- We don't want to feel left out, left behind, uninformed, or impotent. We want to get ahead. We want to be in sync. We want to do what people like us are doing. None of those feelings existed before a marketer showed up with something that caused them—if there weren't a new album, you wouldn't feel left out if you hadn't heard it yet. We intentionally create these gaps, these little canyons of tension that people find themselves leaping over. And the reason is status. Where do we stand? What does the tribe think of us? Who's up, and who's down?
- You can be an agent of change, someone who creates tension and then relieves it.

- When you arrive on the scene with your story, with the solution you have in mind, do you also create tension? If you don't, the status quo is likely to survive.
- If all it took to upend the status quo was the truth, we would have changed a long time ago.
- **NOTE:** Ha! :)