

**How to Embrace Your Unique
Voice as an Artist**

Toolbox Teleclass Transcription

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Professional Program

Track 4: Be Seen: Promotion, Marketing & Sales



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to How to Embrace Your Unique Voice, the toolbox teleclass for September of 2011. Has anyone joined since I went off to turn on the recording? Okay. I am expecting a couple of people but I'm just going to dive in.

Okay, so how to embrace your unique voice, and by unique voice, I don't necessarily mean you as a singer, and I don't even necessarily mean you as an artist, because some of you are not performing artist or not visual artist.

Some of you are business owners, who are in the support aspects, and I think this is just a key critical piece to being successful in whatever you're working in, okay? But since this is the artists' marketing and business academy, I am going to be framing this in terms of how to embrace your unique voice as an artist, and just know that honestly, you can apply this content, this concept, and this practice to all areas of your lives.

See, we have been raised in our society to embrace sameness. If you saw my newsletter that went out yesterday, the...for those of you who are listening at some point in the future, feel free to go to the articles page on the main website that that newsletter will be listed.

You know, we're living in a society that relishes sameness--that encourages sameness. We were taught by parents, peers, siblings, teachers to not stand out too much, and some of us had stronger lessons in that than others.

Personally, I was beaten up every day for about two years in middle school because I would speak up and give my opinion and answer the questions and be smart and be funny and you know too bad if they didn't like it.

And it was not a fun time, but you know, I came as an adult to recognize first of all that it made me very much stronger than I would have been otherwise, but also that there's a reason for that response from people and it's evolutionary.

Humans evolved as herd animals. We talk a lot in this day and age of social media of your tribe. You know, your group, your herd, your family, the group that you are part of, and if you think I'm not part of any groups, take another look, because I'm betting you are just like to think that you're not.

I think that we are all part of groups, unless we are, you know, living in a cave or a log cabin out in the middle of nowhere. Most of us are...sit inside those groups with more or less comfort, but there is a fair amount of peer pressure to stay within the group, because in a herd in nature, someone who stands out in the group is not only more likely to be eaten, but



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is also more likely to bring danger upon the group. And so there is this kind of evolutionary press to conform to merge and blend with your environment.

Except, we don't live in that time anymore! We don't live in those circumstances anymore and I think really the thing that is going to most empower us as a society is if we as individuals learn to speak with our unique voice in everything that we do.

But as artists, really, I see you guys...and one of the reasons why I took on coaching artists is I see you guys as the agents of change in the society, and in order to be an agent of change, you must stand out. You must have your voice heard and draw attention to things that people don't necessarily want to look at.

WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT YOU?

So the first thing you need to understand is, you know, what is unique about you?

IF IT'S ALL BEEN SAID AND DONE BEFORE – WHAT'S LEFT FOR YOU?

You know, if it's all been said and done before, and many people say that it has all been said and done before, what's left for you? Well, what I argue is that it's not so much that the message is different than other messages. I mean, there are a million love songs right? There even a million protest songs. There are million pieces of art that are true to landscape, that are completely abstract, right?

It's these mediums have been well explored, but what makes the message different is because it comes from you, and all that is uniquely you: your talents, your skills, your experiences, your history, your parentage, your environment, your taste, your opinions, your thoughts, your beliefs, all filter the thought that you're expressing through your art, and as a result, it is unique to you.

4 STEPS:

Now I want to give you 4 steps for really empowering yourself and embracing your unique voice as an artist and as a human being.

So, let me go over the first four steps and then I'm going to a bit more detail with each, and by the way, I did layout these steps in the article, but I didn't actually, you know, go into detail on them.



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LEARN, PRACTICE AND MASTER THE SKILLS NECESSARY TO EXPRESS YOUR UNIQUE SELF

So the first step is to learn, practice, and master the skills necessary to express your unique self.

POLISH YOUR COURAGE, YOUR TEMERITY AND TAKE THE LEAP INTO FULL EXPRESSION

The second is to polish your courage, your temerity, and take that leap into full self-expression.

USE ALL OF THE SKILLS AND TOOLS AVAILABLE TO YOU TO PACKAGE YOUR EXPRESSION IN A WAY THAT YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE REALLY GETS.

The third is to use all of the skills and tools available to you to package your expression in a way that your target audience really gets it and relates to it and connects and engages with it.

REPEAT STEPS 1-3 OVER AND OVER WITH CONSISTENCY, CONSTANTLY LEARNING, GROWING AND EXPANDING YOUR SKILLS AND GETTING THE HELP AND SUPPORT YOU NEED TO FULLY EMBODY EACH STEP TO THE BEST OF YOUR TALENT, ABILITY AND SKILL.

And the fourth step is to repeat steps 1-3 over and over with consistency, constantly learning and developing and growing, expanding your skills, getting the help and support you need to fully embody each step to the best of your talent, ability, and skill.

And the more you do it with consistency, the better you're going to get at it, the easier, more natural, it becomes and the more authentic and true your voice will become. So let's develop these concepts a bit.

STEP 1 – MASTER THE SKILLS:

First of all, master the skills. Step 1 - master the skills.

LEARN THE RULES WELL SO YOU KNOW HOW TO BREAK THEM PROPERLY. ([DALAI LAMA](#))

There's a quote, which I could not find the fullness of, but it's by Picasso, which has to do with, you know, "*First I learned the rules, and then I broke them.*" Mostly, I found the part of the quote that is about him breaking the rules, but in order...and what Dalai Lama says, "*Learn the rules so well you know how to break them properly.*"

THE QUALITY OF THE CREATIVITY IS ALWAYS GOING TO BE SUBJECT TO THE LEVEL OF YOUR SKILL IN TRANSLATING WHAT YOU HAVE IN YOUR MIND INTO WHAT YOU PRODUCE IN THE WORLD

There's two aspects to this. The quality of your creativity is always going to be subject to the level of your skill in translating what you have in your mind into what you produce in the



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world. You know, I've heard a lot of artists say this, but that what they picture or what they hear in their mind, the biggest challenge, the hardest part is to reproduce it in the world. And that's where all of your skill becomes.

I know that some singer/songwriters, and I think I was a victim of this as well when I first started out in the arts...are afraid that if they get really polished in skill, it will polish the uniqueness right out of them, and that's only true if you decide it's true, because your uniqueness has nothing to do with your skills. What your skills do is give you the power and the range to express it.

You know, if without training you've got a vocal range of a single octave, but with training you can actually reach to three or four octaves, then you're going to have much broader ability to express. If you can master your instruments and play many different styles, you can choose the style that best suits what you're trying to communicate.

You know if the medium, I mean, one of the things I love about Picasso is he went into all kinds of mediums. He did oil painting. He did sculpture, and he designed dishes for god-sake! He tried out all kinds of mediums in order to fully express what he was trying to say. He's kind of a fascinating guy if you read about him.

Now once part of learning the skill is practice, and I believe I share this in other classes but I'm going to share it here because I think it's really appropo to this issue.

There are actually 4 steps in learning any skills. The first step is unconscious incompetence. You don't know what you don't know. You know, if we're talking about learning to drive and you're...a kid sitting in the backseat, I mean it looks really easy. You don't know what you don't know.

The second step is conscious incompetence. You become painfully aware of what you don't know. It becomes overwhelmingly clear that you haven't the faintest clue how to do what you want to do.

Then there's a transition to conscious competence. Yes, you know how to drive. You know the rules of the road, but you really need to think about it all the time. You know, you think to think about signaling, and you need to think about adjusting your mirrors and you need to think about watching your speed, and you need to think about how you merge and how you park the car and blah-blah-blah. You know what to do, but you really have to pay close attention to it.

The fourth step is unconscious competence. That's when you get behind the wheel and you just go and maybe you even arrived at your destination without ever once thinking about how you're getting there or how you're driving. It's just automatic, it's muscle memory, it's built in and as a result of it you can kind of dance with it. I you've ever learned to dance, there's that moment when you shift from having to look at your feet and think about what comes next to being able to completely let go and dance with it and just enjoy the experience.



WORK SO HARD IN PRACTICE, GET THE MUSCLE MEMORY, SO THAT WHEN IT COMES TIME TO PLAY – YOU CAN ACTUALLY PLAY – HAVE FUN

But you don't get there without a lot of practice because you need to build a muscle memory in and with art...as an artist, no matter honestly what medium you're working in there is a level of that muscle memory that you need to build in order to be able to fully express your creativity, okay?

So you need to practice and practice, really hard and consistently, to get yourself to that level of unconscious competence, so that your creativity can flow and be free, and you're not constantly being held up by your technical issue, by not quite knowing how to go from this chord to that chord, not quite knowing how to get that particular shade of blue, not quite knowing what words are going to capture the sense of what you're trying to communicate-- the emotion of it, the experience.

And the more you work at it, the more you do it, the easier that stuff flows, so that you can really focus on what is it you're trying to give to your audience, what experience you are trying to give them, what information, what context are you trying to give them, and what transformation. So, step 1 is master the skills, and by the way, step 1 is a lifetime, actually all of these steps, are a lifetime commitment, because there's always more skills to learn. There's always deeper and further you can go with your skill mastering. You know there's always new tools to add to your toolbox.

STEP 2 – MASTER YOURSELF

Step 2 is master yourself. Just taking a drink of water. It's allergy season here, and I am suffering just a bit. You could probably hear it in my voice from hay fever. So, step 2 is master yourself.

BEING/SHOWING YOURSELF IS AN ACTIVE OF COURAGE

Being able to express your unique voice means you need to know what you want to say. You need to know who you are on an organic and authentic level, and I know the word authentic has been...it's kind of been bandied about. It's almost a cliché, but it became a cliché because it's trying to capture something that is...that we all kind of know what it is. We know it when we see it, but it's a little bit hard to describe in language, because it's so much deeper than what language is, okay?

See, being yourself, showing yourself, allowing people to see your true voice, to hear your true voice, to engage with your true voice is, in and of itself, an act of courage, because like I said, as children we are punished for it very often in one way or another. Maybe not horribly punished, but it was frowned upon. It was discouraged, and so to break out of that early training requires effort, commitment, and courage.



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COURAGE COMES FROM YOUR BELIEFS ABOUT YOURSELF – YOUR WORLD AND YOUR PLACE IN THE WORLD

The courage comes from your beliefs about yourself, your world, and your place in the world. So, if you feel that you lack courage, examine your beliefs about these things and shift them, so that you have beliefs that empower you taking courageous steps, and by the way, it's scary. You wouldn't need courage if it wasn't scary, and I don't care how strong you are within yourself. I'm not a pretty strong, assertive person; it's scary all the time.

The only difference between people who look to you like they have no problem with this stuff, and perhaps how you're holding yourself, is that they're willing to be uncomfortable, they're willing to be scared, and they're willing to take the risk.

You know, when I first delving into the [multiple streams](#) world, and for those of you who've been with me for a while, you know that the [multiple streams](#) is the business model that I teach, and that I have embraced for my own business.

SHARE ANDREA'S WORDS – THERE IS SOMEONE OUT THERE WHO CAN ONLY HEAR IT FROM YOU – YOUR WORDS, YOUR WAY –

My teacher of this concept, if you will, Andrea J. Lee, I saw her speak at a weekend conference called Multiple Streams of Coaching Income. That's how I was introduced to this concept, and she was talking about establishing yourself as an expert, and I was really clear that that was something I needed to do in order to take my business to the next level. It was not new to me.

But I had hesitated about writing, I have hemmed and hawed about being a speaker, not because I had stage fright, because, you know, I have an BSA in theater training. I've been on stage, you know. I've been on film and television, so you know that wasn't stage fright.

For me, it had to do with knowing that I had something of value to say, because for god's sake, it's all been said before, so what do I have that's new to offer?

And she said something in her discussion about this that so deeply impacted me. I want to share it with you, because I think it really addresses this issue head on. And what she said is when you're in front of a room and you are expressing a concept that a million other people have expressed before you, there is someone in the audience who may have heard it a million times before, but for some reason on this day, in this moment, because it's coming from you, they get it in a way they've never gotten it before.

And if you can just trust that, then you can go out there and express what you have to express, and that completely free thing and so I get up in front of the room all the time and I teach concepts that are not new, that a million other people are teaching and I see it over and over again, that there is someone in the audience for whom they may have heard it a million times, but at this moment, at this time in this place, from me, speaking in my



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authentic voice from my experience, they get it in a way they never gotten it before and I see it all the time. So you as an artist need to trust that whatever the image is that you're painting, whatever the emotion is that you're looking to convey in a song, whatever the argument, the impassioned information that you have that you're putting out in your blog or your book or whatever the plot line in your screenplay, and whatever the song...the content in your song, there is something, there's someone out there who will be receiving what you were saying as if they'd never heard it before, because it came from you in your authentic voice in this moment at this time.

So that's about you speaking your truth and you're using and finding and embracing your unique voice, but in order to do that you need to get to know yourself, and that's really what I need by master yourself. You need to allow yourself to investigate who you really are.

UNCOVERING AND PEELING AWAY THE WALLS YOU'VE BUILT TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM BEING HURT WILL ALLOW YOU TO KNOW YOUR OWN VOICE

Uncovering and peeling away the walls you've built to protect yourself from being hurt, the walls that perhaps contributed to your survival to this date. As an adult now, uncovering and peeling away those walls will allow you to know your own voice and will allow you the freedom to begin to express it in a way you never expressed it before, and this also takes courage.

This also takes the willingness to be damned uncomfortable, because if it were easy, if it were comfortable, everybody would be doing it and they're not. I want to encourage you to get to know yourself, to be willing to uncover and peel away your walls, so that you can know your unique voice well enough to speak it.

KNOWING AND BELIEVING YOUR OWN VALUE, THE VALUE OF YOUR VOICE WILL EMPOWER YOU TO SPEAK YOUR MESSAGE CLEARLY

And the last piece of mastering yourself you have to do, and it kind of goes back to what I was saying before from Andrea, it has to do with knowing and believing your value--the value of your voice.

Knowing that you have the opportunity and the responsibility to be an agent of change as an artist. You have the opportunity and the responsibility to make a difference to this world as an artist.

And I don't mean you need to be out on the front line you know protesting in Wall Street, unless that's really what you want to do, and if you do, go for it, but in whatever way you are here to make an impact to the world, because I believe it all creative beings and I believe by the way, that we are all creative being, but I believe that all creative being are on this planet in this life, in this bodies, in this reality to make a difference, to make an impact.



Knowing and believing that you, not only have the responsibility, but that you have the ability and your words is innate in who you are, that's going to ensure you to speak your message clearly and use your unique voice, okay?

STEP 3 – PACKAGING AND PROMOTING

The third piece, the third step...so we've covered step 1 master your skills, step 2 master yourself. Step 3 is packaging and promoting.

BOTTOM LINE – IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM WITH SALES AND MARKETING IT WILL LIMIT THE IMPACT OF YOUR VOICE. IT'S NOT ABOUT THE MONEY AND IT'S NOT ABOUT MANIPULATING PEOPLE. IT'S ABOUT FINDING THE AUDIENCE WHO WANTS WHAT YOU UNIQUELY DO – AND GIVING THEM THE OPPORTUNITY TO PLAY WITH YOU.

Now I have a lot of classes at the Artists' Marketing and Business Academy. I mean, after all, it is the Marketing and Business Academy. I have a lot of classes about marketing yourself, about making... you know...engaging and connecting and building your audience and all of that stuff. A lot of classes about that.

But here's the thing, if you go with me on this journey and take on the assumptions I'm making, which is that you as a creative being are here to make a difference, that you as an artist are an agent of change.

Bottom line, if you have a problem or issues with sales and marketing it is going to limit the impact of your voice. It's not about the money. It's not about manipulating people. It's about finding the audience who wants what you uniquely do and giving them the opportunity to play with you and giving yourself the opportunity to impact them.

GET OVER IT.

I'm giving your work, your purpose--the opportunity to be fulfilled. So, if you have a problem with sales and marketing, if you think that sales and marketing are icky and you hate it when people promote themselves and you've got stuff around promoting yourself, get over it. It's in the way.

And I'm not talking it being in the way of you making money or being "successful" or getting that Grammy award or whatever. I mean, it's true. It is in the way of all that stuff, but that's not what this call is about.

This call is about you embracing your unique voice and making an impact in the world with it. It's in the way of you doing that--those issues that you have about sales and marketing. It's in the way. Get over it.



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So the 3 steps that I've covered so far: Master the Skills, step 2 - Master Yourself, step 3 - Packaging and Promoting. So let's talk a little bit more about that now that I've read you the riot act. I'll cut down off my soap box.

When I talk about packaging and promoting, I am not talking about twisting and molding, and you know, abusing your unique voice, so that it sells. I'm talking about taking your unique voice in all of its beauty and value and gorgeous uniqueness.

And finding a target market, which I talked about a [Niche Marketing](#), that already wants and needs what you have to offer, and once you've found them and you've got to know them and you've done your research and you've learned who they are and how they talk about themselves and what they're looking for, then you design the packaging so that when they see your stuff, they recognize it. "Ugh! That's it! That's exactly what I've been looking for."

And if you're listening to that call, I am betting that at some point in your relationship with me that you had that experience. "Ugh! That's it! That's exactly what I was looking for. This is what I need."

Now this information wasn't designed because it was what you wanted and needed. It was designed because it was what I have to offer. It was package in language, formatted in a physical way, so that when you saw it, when you got it, you got it! "Yes, this is what I want and need." You get that?

So I'm really-really not telling you to twist yourself into somebody else's idea of success. I am telling you to absolutely embrace your wonderful uniqueness. Make it as high-quality as you can possibly make it, meaning that the product is the best product, that your skills are mad skills, and take your packaging in terms of what your audience wants and needs.

And I talk a lot more about how to do that very specifically through the [Multiple Streams of Art Income class](#), all of the classes that are included at the multiple streams level, as well as...if you're a musician, the [multiple streams of music income self-study course](#).

So you know, I'm not going to go back into it here, but I want you to kind of see how what I'm talking about in this class fits into everything else.

The truth is, the more unique your voice is the more power you have, but also the more unique your voice is the more your skills at promoting your voice need to be--the better you need to be, because to some degree you may need to educate your audience that this really is what they're looking for.

And you may need to do a lot of sifting and sorting to find your audience, but once you find it, it will take off. I mean, let's think about some of the greatest artists of our time.

Let's think about Picasso, who by the way, if you see his earlier work; his earlier work is absolutely classic, classic realism. He became extremely extraordinarily skilled, and then he broke all the rules, because he had something he needed to say that he couldn't say within that medium.



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And he needed to be an amazing promoter in order to get people to want what he was doing, because they didn't know that they did. They didn't know that they wanted what he was doing when he first started doing it. They thought he was crazy. They thought it was, "This is art? This isn't art." Until he found his audience, and his audience expanded it itself, okay?

When you think about Steve Jobs, who I think is one of the most amazing creative geniuses of our time, we didn't know we needed an iPhone. We didn't know we needed an iMac until he told us we did, but he told us we did in a way that we got, and once he found his audience, it expanded exponentially.

But he didn't change the design because people were like, "I'm not sure how to do this." He designed what he designed, and then he found his audience. You guys get that?

I think of cutting edge bands who broke the mold of what would work. Nirvana, Coldplay, older than that. You know, The Grateful Dead for god's sake. The Beatles, they saw what the market was, and they found a way to package their unique voice and find their audience and expanded it from there.

So, doing step 1 and step 2 without step 3 is a rip-off. It's not just a rip-off of you and your own unique voice, it's a rip-off of us, because we, as your audience, don't get to hear you, okay? So step 3 is packaging and promoting.

RINSE, REPEAT!

Step 4 is rinse and repeat. In other words, do step 1, do step 2, do step 3, do step 1, do step 2, do step 3 for the rest of your life. Always be learning and growing and practicing your craft. Always be learning and growing as a human being. Always be un-peeling and uncovering, not un-peeling, but peeling and uncovering your unique voice. Getting to know yourself better so that you can express that which is important to you, that which you are passionate about in a way that is your unique voice.

And you know don't Bogart that, man! Share it with us! Promote, package, package it in a way we can receive it, and promote the heck out of it! Blow your own horn, because your value is precious, and your voice is precious. Don't withhold it from people. Share it with us.

And if what you get at first is uncomfortable or feels critical or makes you feel like you want to shut down, first listen to [How to Use Feedback and Criticism Constructively](#), because that will really help, and go back and polish your skills, because my bet is that what you're really trying to communicate is somehow getting lost because of a lack of skills.

And also, if you feel the skill is there and you're getting enough feedback that the skill is there, but you're still getting negative criticism, they ain't your target market. Go find your



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target market. Your target market is going to see you, hear you, and love you. So just keep looking. You'll find them.

Be willing, you know, be willing to be uncomfortable through this process, because if it were easy, if it were comfortable, everybody'd be doing it! So, I want to encourage you to not only embrace your unique voice, but embrace the initial discomfort at stepping out and speaking it. It will feel hard, at least it did for me. At the same time, you'll know it's real.

You'll know it. You'll get that chill down your back. You'll see it in people's faces when they really get the impact of what you have to give them, and that, my friends, is magic beyond anything. Trust me. It's brilliant and magical, okay?

I look forward to hearing your unique voices as comments on this class, and you know, let me know how you're doing with the process. Have a wonderful night and we'll see you next time.