



20 mins with Seth Godin

An Instagram live chat with Peace Itimi



Intro



The birth of this conversation started a couple of months ago when Peace Itimi started reading Seth's book called - All Marketers Tell Stories. These caught her attention:

Go tell a story, if it doesn't resonate, tell a different story. When you find a story that works, live that story. Make it true, authentic, subjected to scrutiny. All marketers are storytellers and all losers are liars.

A great story is true because it is consistent and authentic. Great stories are trusted. No marketer succeeds in telling a story unless he has earned the credibility to tell that story.

This conversation is a follow-through with the book to discuss the art of telling authentic stories beyond "storytelling" as a buzzword.

How do brands leverage authenticity to build a thriving business?

Seth:

Authenticity is a crock, it's a myth. Authenticity is not important. People are trapped by authenticity. We need to get the language right.

Authentic now means "do whatever you like", "do whatever is in your heart", "just say it". No one wants an authentic Doctor, No one wants an authentic lawyer. No one wants an authentic friend.

We want someone who is consistent. We want someone who is going to do their best even if they don't feel like it. We want someone who is going to make a promise and keep it. That is how we tell the stories that actually matter.

If you say "Oh! I was just being authentic", what you are trying to do, is give us an excuse for why you were being selfish. Don't be selfish.

What it means to be generous, is to be consistent. And so the idea of telling a story is to make a promise, one that you can keep. It gets so tempting in this busy world to make a

promise that you can't keep because everyone is hustling. But the thing is, no one wants to be hustled.

Have you ever met someone in the world who said "I wish someone would hustle me?" We don't want hustlers. Don't hustle people. Show up in a way you're willing to be consistent.

The last time you were authentic was when you were three months old in diapers. Ever since then, you've been doing stuff on purpose. Doing it, because you hope it'll work. Do it on purpose in your profession.



earn trust and attention,
between and among the
people you are interacting with.

What really is the hack for creating a great story?

As content creators, we are always trying to create a great story and sometimes we get stuck. What really is the hack for creating a great story? How do you know that the content you've created will resonate and be loved by people?

Seth:

My friend, Bernadette Jiwa, wrote a story about this at storyskills.com and she's running a workshop with us at thestroyskillsworkshop.com.

The first thing to know is - Story skills are skills just like ice skating skills or juggling skills or surfing skills. They are skills and you can get better at it. You can learn.

The second thing to know, the biggest one is - You can't tell a story to everyone. You have to tell a story to someone. You have to be specific. The idea is, the smallest viable audience. Not the biggest possible audience, but the smallest audience you can thrive with.

Peace has got 10,000 people following her on Instagram but not all of those 10,000 people are waking up this morning saying - "should I look at Kim Kardashian or should I go check out what Peace is up to".

You pick your people and your people pick you.

Social media has made us feel jealous that our numbers aren't enough. That's how they make money. These people who are following you aren't really following you.

These people who are supposed to be your friends, aren't really your friends. These people who are giving you likes, don't really like you. They are all just little metrics. Metrics they are putting in place to get us hooked.

The alternative is to say, who exactly am I here to serve? Who am I trying to help? How can I make a promise to them that resonates in their own language.

There's a Zulu term - SAOBANA which means "I SEE YOU"

It doesn't just mean I see your face. It means I see your parents and your grandparents before you. It means I see your dreams, your hopes and your fears. It means I see who you are trying to become.

If you can see the other person truly, then telling them a story isn't that hard because you know how they are listening. What we have to find is the empathy to show up for someone we care about and be willing to ignore everybody else.

Peace:

It's not about trying to create a perfect story. It is about finding that one person you care about and creating a story for them that will actually connect and resonate with them and solve their problems. If you have one person you care about and create content for them, then they'll pick you and people like them will pick you.

What are your thoughts on community building?

Community Building is becoming a trend. There's a lot of pressure to build a community, who would be loyal to us, to build a sustainable business. What are your thoughts on this?

Seth:

I wrote a book about it called "Tribes". They are not your community. You don't get to own anyone. We don't get to own any community. We don't get to own any community. They are already a community. They'll probably be connected even if you weren't there.

What we get to do is show up for a while and lead them. What we get to do is connect them even more deeply but they will not follow us to wherever we want to go, they'll follow us wherever they want to go.

The idea of amplifying and creating community is this. This isn't television. This isn't broadcast. It is - How do I give people a chance to talk about something. Because you are in the world, Peace... the 500+ people watching this live are

all talking to each other in the comment. They won't be having that conversation if it weren't for you. That doesn't mean you can turn around and say, send me money. That's not the deal. The deal is, you are able to establish a connection and earn trust and attention, between and among the people you are interacting with.

If you bring them a new opportunity, some of them who like to go first will jump at it and say "yes I'm in. I'd like that ability to do it". It's not about manipulation. It's about opening doors and turning on lights.



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When change happens, how do you take your audience along?

People grow, People change and People evolve. If you are trying to build a personal brand, you'll experience evolution. Your stories, your journey and more will experience change. When that change happens, how do you take your audience along with that change as you switch niche? Do you take them along or you abandon them?

Seth:

Authenticity is make-belief. Your personal brand is a promise you made. It is who you said you'll be when they liaise with you. A brand is what we expect.

If you don't want to keep making a promise, make a different promise. You know Joni Mitchell, an American Pop singer from back in the old days? From the 70s. Her personal brand was selling songs that you could sing around a campfire. Songs that reminded you of people you went to high school with. She was

underrated. Then one day she said, "I don't want to make music like that, I want to make music like this." A whole bunch of her fans said, we don't like that music and she said, "Okay! You have my old records, listen to my old records. My new records aren't for you."

That's what we have to do if we are going to truly do our work. We have to figure out, where do we seek to go? Who do we seek to connect? Where do we seek to lead? Maybe people will come with us, maybe they won't. You have to have the guts to do that or else you are a fraud. There's a difference between being consistent and being a fraud.

You don't want to be a fraud because you are willingly doing something you know isn't right. That's not what I am arguing for, I am arguing for being consistent in pursuit of the change you actually need to make.

What would your advice be for a starter?

If you are just starting your journey as a marketer, what would your advice be for that person?

Seth:

Marketing is not about advertising or hype. Marketing is about making a change happen. That's what we do, we make change happen. Change is hard when it doesn't work because you tried to do something and it didn't work, and change is hard when it does work because when the world changes, it doesn't always come out the way we expect.

So, if you care, then you should make things better. The best way to make things better is by changing them.

If you care, you are willing to fail. You're willing to fail in service of making things better.



The best way to make things better is by changing them.

What is your favourite failure story and why?

Seth:

I have failed more than most people on purpose. I have failed financially, professionally. I have failed with products that didn't work. My biggest failures are the things I didn't have the guts to try.

I am really proud of the things I launched that didn't work because I did it with good intent and I did it with care. The people I didn't find the energy to help, the doors I didn't open, the lights I didn't turn on - I can't get that chance again. That's what gets me out of bed in the morning. How do I show up today without missing that opportunity. I've walked away and made mistakes that cost billions of dollars. It's not the money. It's what we do with all the privilege we have. Are we going to spend all our time watching YouTube videos and cat emojis? I think we could do something better.



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One advice you have for entrepreneurs, content creators and marketers?

If our readers forget everything you have said in this book, what is one advice you have for entrepreneurs, content creators and marketers?

Seth:

Don't listen to advice. We learn by doing things. The reason that I launched the workshop is because people like you and others are out there doing the work. In 1992, I said the World Wide Web was stupid and it wasn't going to work but here we are. Don't listen to advice, just do good work and do it again.



We learn by
doing things

Seth, What will be of value to you right now?

This last question is by my friend. She says,
Seth, What will be of value to you right now?

Seth:

That's easy! That's why I'm here right now.
Because, there are hundreds of people who can
make things better. If hundreds of people
reading this right now all made things better,
that'll be so much more efficient than me trying
to make things better. What I need from the
people I teach is to teach other people. The
way we are going to change the world isn't by
some world leader putting out a proclamation.
It'll be by hundred people like you, making
things better.



What I need
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other people.

**Keep doing
good work!**

**Do good
work and
showcase it
with Disha**



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