

Thriving With Auditory Processing Challenges with Danielle J Harrison (she/her)

Who am I?

Hi, there. I'm Danielle. I'm an ick-free copywriter working with mostly coaches, course creators, and consultants.

When I say ick-free copywriter, what I basically mean is I don't subscribe to some of the sleazy, fake urgency, fear-mongering, pro-marketing tactics.

I prefer to take a more ethical and empathetic approach to marketing.

I've been working in the field for over 10 years.

Prior to that, I was a therapist, so I am pretty well acquainted with the psychology of buying.

Here's what we're talking about today

I have an auditory processing disorder, so today I want to share with you some of the ways that I have found to make my business more manageable despite those challenges. Hopefully, they work for you too.

We're going to cover:

- What is auditory processing and how does it affect your business?
- Setting the right boundaries to make auditory challenges more manageable
- My tech stack for limiting and simplifying calls
- Messaging that attracts and prequalifies soulmate clients before getting on a call
- 4 steps you can take right now to make your business more AP-friendly

Auditory processing difficulties

Who does it affect?

- Auditory processing disorder
- Autism spectrum disorder

- ADHD
- Other neurodivergents
- Hearing disorders

What is it?

When I was a kid, how I described it was, *I can hear, but I'm not taking all the information in.*

It's not necessarily hearing loss, although it can affect people who have had hearing loss. It's more like I've recently heard it described as auditory dyslexia. The sounds are coming in, but maybe they don't make total sense.

Some of the ways it affects people are:

- It can be hard to understand things when you're in loud environments
- It's hard to isolate sounds
- It can be difficult to comprehend fast speech, different accents, or different speech patterns that you're not used to
- You may need to rely more on other cues like context or nonverbal signals.

How does it affect your business?

One of the number one things is just comprehension on calls and taking all of the information in. Because it takes a lot more work to do that when you have auditory processing challenges

It's also going to affect your energy after the calls, which is why this information can be helpful for introverts as well.

And it really affects absorption of information in other audio formats like Voxer, voice memos, voice calls, or Zoom calls.

How to thrive with AP difficulties

- Limit overall calls
- Only get on calls when they support your goals (ie pre-qualify people beforehand, not getting on discovery calls with anyone who asks)
- Making the calls you have to get on easier by using other cues
- Using preferred channels of communication

How to thrive with boundaries

We're going to start with some boundaries.

Two things that have been really helpful for me are:

Having a Pre-Screening Form

I have a pre-screening form on my website, but I also send it to people if they reach out to me outside my website. I make sure they fill it out before hopping on a call, and it includes space for:

- Budget
- Goals/Challenges
- Values agreement

The idea is to really get a sense of who they are, and what they need.

First, you want to make sure you have similar budget goals so you are not wasting your time. There are a lot of ways you can do this. It really depends on your comfort level. Whether it's just stating, right there, "My packages start at blah, blah, blah," or if you have fixed rate packages, that's really helpful. Just ask them which package they're interested in.

Some people also like to just say, "What's your budget for this project or for this experience?" Again, it's what you're comfortable with and also what makes the most sense with the way your packages are structured.

From there, you want to go into their goals, their challenges, what they're looking for out of this relationship to make sure it's really the right fit for them. We don't want to get on a call if you can't help them or you don't believe you're the best person to help them.

Then a values agreement. This can also take a variety of different forms, and depending on the values of your business, may not be absolutely necessary.

For example, one I've seen that was really cool was I saw someone had a checkbox on their form that said, "I'm anti-racist or I'm pro-feminist," just to get an idea of their values before getting on a call and make sure they're the kind of person you would even want to work with.

Setting Expectations

I set expectations with a contract and What to Expect document.

Not everyone reads the contract, and if they do, they probably forget what's in there. So, I create a What to Expect document for any new clients. It outlines:

- My preferred modes of communication
- How often we'll have calls
- What's included in the contract versus what's extra so they know that upfront

- My general availability
- And one point of contact if working with a team

This might seem self-explanatory, but I know a lot of us really want to be polite and sometimes are afraid to set those boundaries.

How to thrive on calls

Ask them to come on camera

This can be super helpful in getting other visual cues, being able to look at body language, and even sometimes I find myself reading lips without even realizing it.

Even if using AI, take written notes

Written notes really help your understanding. I usually do a little spiel at the beginning of the call where I say, *"Hey, I'll be taking notes and may interrupt to clarify or ask you to repeat yourself."*

I find saying that is not just beneficial for them, but it's beneficial for me because if I say that upfront, I'm more likely to follow through with it and actually interrupt if I need to, versus I might be more afraid to do that if I haven't said that before and set that expectation.

Repeat back to them to make sure you understand

This is also just general good business practice. Repeat back to them what they're saying to make sure you understand, like *"I'm hearing you're saying this. Is that right?"*

Don't be afraid to ask them to slow down

Personally, I have a really hard time understanding people with different accents. Having them slow down really, really helps me understand.

Don't be afraid to ask to reschedule if they have a bad internet connection/choppy audio

Also, tech issues happen. Don't be afraid to ask them to reschedule if they have a bad internet connection or choppy audio. If it's bad enough that you're struggling, you're not going to be able to understand them on recording either. Definitely make sure to set that boundary.

The tech stack I use

Loom

I use Loom to limit calls with quick walkthroughs and answers to questions that are not as easy to just write in an email.

I find most clients still just answer with a quick email.

I also use Loom to record some initial thoughts and talk about my process right after someone submits my booking form. I find that really helpful. One, because it establishes rapport, but also they get a chance to see my personality and to hear my process in my own words.

I think this is another good pre-qualifier because they can opt out right then if they don't think I'm the right fit, and we don't even have to get on a call.

If they do think we're the right fit, then I don't have to go through all of this on the call again. By the time we get to the call, it's more of an informal conversation.

Slack

I find that having Slack for real-time conversations can help replace calls rather than waiting for emails and those long emails where you're trying to cover so much.

People often prefer to get on a call.

Slack is a good meet-in-the-middle solution. If the client does want to send a voice memo, it auto transcribes it for you and it's surprisingly accurate. Win-win there.

Fathom.ai

There are a lot of different softwares and different AIs for transcribing video calls.

Fathom.ai, in my experience, is the best.

It transcribes, summarizes, and timestamps. It's all pretty accurate and the timestamps are really helpful because if you remember talking about something, you can search it and it's pretty intuitive in finding the exact spot in the call where you talked about that.

Definitely highly recommend and it's free.

Calendly

With Calendly, I like to limit availability and set rules for booking.

I mentioned before, I do not get on same day and usually not even next day calls.

You can also take advantage of one-time call links. If you have any clients that aren't great at respecting boundaries, that can be a really helpful way.

You send them that call link, they book the call, but they can't use that for another call. They would have to reach out to you for another link.

Messaging

The fun part, messaging!

Why messaging can be so helpful in reducing calls, increasing quality, and overall attracting soulmate clients

Basically, if you have really strong messaging, they're already pre-sold and excited to work with you before you've even talked. You're also attracting the right people – the people you want to work with – and repelling the wrong people by establishing how you work, and what your values are.

You're not getting on the phone with time wasters or people who don't really understand or agree with the way you do things.

The right messaging that does all this is empathy-driven, credibility-building, and value-based.

Empathy-driven messaging

Common advice: agitate pain points

Traditionally, a lot of the more pro-marketing type people recommend agitating pain points. They say it again and again. It often ends up meaning fear-mongering. This results in clients who are buying out of fear, instead of buying out of a desire to work with you.

An example of messaging that I've seen that uses this piece of advice, and this is from a real audit I did of a burnout coach, the copy on their sales page was burnout can lead to high blood pressure, heart problems, and even cancer.

Can you see what's wrong with that?

It basically talks about all the long-term scary effects of what they're struggling with. There's two problems there. One, they already know this stuff and two, it sounds harsh.

If someone is buying off of that, then they're buying out of a scarcity mindset. They're going to be really annoying clients probably. They're going to be the kind that's like, "Oh, I need to get on a call right now." Just very needy because they're buying out of that mindset.

Better advice: empathize

Better advice is to empathize with those pain points. This results in clients who are buying out of a genuine feeling that you understand and can help them.

How I rewrote some of that copy for the client was, "I know what it's like to work rolling hours in a stressful job, to be on the brink of burnout, but feel like you have no other option but to continue on."

There are a few things we're doing here. One, obviously, showing that you understand what they're going through. You're on their level. You maybe have been through this before yourself.

Two, and I'll talk a little more about research in a minute, but we're using their exact language in this. This was exact language taken from their audience: "grueling hours, brink of burnout, feeling stuck."

Then lastly, it's telling them it's not their fault. This first one, it feels a little in your face, aggressive, almost like it's like, "Why are you burnt out? Don't you know that that can cause cancer?"

Versus this is very, to be on the brink of burnout, but feel like you have no other option to continue on. It shows that you understand why they're struggling, not just that they're struggling.

Like, "Hey, I know what it feels like to feel like you're stuck, like you have no other option." It has a very much a, I understand and it's not your fault mentality.

Audience Research

This is such a key part of messaging. Most people do research, but most people don't do enough in my experience.

There are a few reasons for that.

One, I think a lot of us *think* we know our audience because we were once in their shoes.

For example, if you are a health and wellness coach helping people lose weight and you have lost weight yourself in the past, you think, "*Well, I am my audience, I know my audience.*"

Maybe you think you know your audience because you talk to them all the time, you're on coaching calls, or group calls, or just talking to them through email.

The thing is – we're biased because we're so close to our brand and we've been working on it for so long.

Even if you were originally your audience, you're no longer your audience. You're working already from a bit of a hindsight bias.

Even if you talk to your audience all the time, you're talking to a small segment of your audience. You're not talking to other people that didn't buy.

It's really important to expand your research, like:

- Talk to people that didn't buy
- Talk to people on social media and in Facebook groups
- "Ethically stalk them" to see how they're talking about their pain points, and their desires, and any problems they've had with competitors

Another problem I see people making when it comes to audience research is going a little too surface-level.

I had a client who is a health coach for people with chronic pain.

Her messaging really focused on the physical pain, which is, obviously, a big concern for these people, but there's more to it.

When I dove a little bit deeper into the research, I found a common theme was that it wasn't just, "I'm in so much pain every day, I don't know what to do."

It was, "I can't do the things I love, I can't see my friends and family."

The biggest one was, "I feel lonely, I feel alone, I feel isolated because no one understands what I'm going through. They don't understand why I keep canceling plans. They just don't understand what it's like."

That's what we ultimately ended up focusing on.

There's almost always a deeper pain. Look for that.

There's almost always a deeper desire too.

People aren't looking to lose weight just to lose weight or just for a better body. Again, that could tie into isolation or overall confidence.

Then another big takeaway is to just use their exact words whenever possible.

Credibility-building messaging

You're probably well-versed on using social proof in your messaging. I find that credibility-building is much more than just credentials, testimonials, case studies, and other social proof.

In fact, I found the most powerful way to show you can help is by having a proven process, turning it into a framework, and making that a key part of your messaging.

I have found this more effective than social proof.

The reason is people are skeptical now. People have seen people using fake testimonials, and fake case studies.

If your process is your process, people don't just want to see that you have helped other people – maybe they want to know if you can help them and how.

A really important caveat here: this doesn't mean you can't offer customized experiences based on client needs – it just means you have a basic framework to get them results. You can still add, "This is my framework, but we will customize it based on your unique needs."

How do you do this?. Basically, you're going to list out the client-facing steps of your process, but leave out the boring housekeeping stuff like collecting invoices.

I would also advise leaving out the stuff that isn't exciting and feels like work.

For instance, when I work with clients, I have them fill out a homework assignment in the beginning. That's not part of my framework because it's not sexy. I like to focus on the exciting stuff.

Basically, write down every single step, look at it, and think about what would be exciting to someone who isn't as ingrained in what you do as you.

Has any client ever said, "Wow, this exercise was really helpful." Focus on those things.

You may even want to add some things to your process that you don't already have in there as a part of the reflection you do.

You want to name each step something memorable and name the entire framework. This is so important. There have been a ton of studies who have found that people remember and trust things with names.

Value-centric messaging

When we talk about values, this certainly can be deep things like anti-racism, pro-feminism, overall moral, ethical values, but it can also be industry-specific.

The first key thing that I find really helpful to standing out, especially if you're in a crowded market and really attracting people that want to work specifically with you is having controversial opinions.

Now, when I say controversial, I'm not talking like something that would get you censored on TV. I'm talking basically, what is common advice in your industry that you disagree with or what's a totally new take that you have?

For instance, if you're a business coach, a lot of business coaches are all about consistency, that's how you get results. Maybe you're saying you don't need to be consistent to be successful.

That would actually tie really great if you have a neurodivergent audience, who struggles with consistency, and you're saying, "Hey, you can be successful without it."

Something like that, where you're taking a different take.

Next, overall values of your business and the values you want your clients to have and respect.

Again, this can be industry-specific. I market myself as an ick-free copywriter to attract people that are over the sleeves of traditional marketing because that's who I want to work with. That's really the only people I can work with because I don't want to be fighting with you about how we're going to market your stuff.

That's designed not just to attract the right people, but to repel people who don't agree with that.

Then lastly, something so key is show, don't just tell. Really, embody those values throughout your messaging. For example, if you talk about transparency, talk about your failures, your mistakes, your slip ups in your business, in your life, whatever.

Share your story, the good and the bad so people can really see like, "Hey, this person stands by what they're saying."

Four key takeaways

1. Create (or add to) your call booking form and make sure it pre-qualifies the right people
2. Write out a What to Expect document for all new clients
3. Add your values to your messaging and make sure they're clearly communicated across channels
4. And if you need help creating messaging that attracts soulmate clients (without endless calls)... download my free [messaging workbook](#)!

The messaging workbook is an in-depth workbook that will help you create irresistible, *"Did we just become best friends?"* messaging that brings dream clients to you, even if you're in a crowded market.

You'll find out exactly what your people are thinking with an **audience research checklist** and a **step-by-step video tutorial** of your new secret weapon, which is a free website you may already be using and not know.

You'll also discover a simple way to define your messaging and create endless content with a three-line story of your brand.

I've also included some other video walkthroughs and real-life examples to make this super easy to implement.

I hope this was helpful, and that you have a great rest of your day. Thank you so much!