

**Cassie Paton:** Hello and welcome to *Brand Messaging Dopamine Hit: How to talk about your business in a way that feels good*. I'm so excited to dive into this with you today. There's a lot to cover, so I'll get right into it, but first, a brief intro for those of you I haven't yet had the pleasure to meet. My name is Cassie Paton. I am a copywriter and a creator behind Mettle & Tonic, and I write potent copy for Gutsy Entrepreneur. I'm based in the Baltimore, Maryland area. My latest hobbies and interests are learning to play piano and calligraphy, and my go-to karaoke song is *Wanted Dead or Alive* by Bon Jovi, fan since the year 2000.

I'd love to meet you. I'm here in the chat with you, so tell me who you are, what you do, where you're from, and if you have any current hobbies or favorite karaoke songs, please let me know that too. Let's talk about what we're covering today. We've got a lot.

First up, what brand messaging is, how it makes marketing easier and more fun for our neurodiverse brands, because if it doesn't make things easier, better, more fun, or all of the above, we don't want it. That's what we're talking about. We're going to talk about how messaging is really foundational to the way you do business more broadly as well. If you feel like you don't need another strategy right now, I get it, and this might change your outlook on looking at a strategy as not something that adds layers of complication, but really actually helps you simplify your business and how you approach things.

I'll also be sharing some actionable ideas and prompts so you can start to create your own dopamine-inducing messaging around your business. My goal is for you to walk away from this presentation feeling inspired and empowered to go and start this on your own, and along the way, I'll be answering some common questions that come up around this, but if you have any other questions, please put them in chat and I'll answer them for you.

While we're in the chat, let me know if any one of these things resonates with you. You are probably here for one, if not more of these reasons. The first being you just want to show up boldly and consistently in your marketing without sounding like everyone else. By consistently, I don't just mean you're posting five times a week. Consistency is one of those things that can be really, really challenging for us, and so for me, it's not about how often you're showing up, but it's the consistency in your messaging itself, and in the energy you have behind that.

You may also feel a lot of blank-page syndrome when it does come time to market your business. Creating content is one of those energy-draining things, potentially, when you don't have a system or framework for doing that, and you're constantly second-guessing the things that you're writing or saying. This is, again, about preserving your energy, not drumming up new and complicated things for you to do. It's having that go-to language, which just helps you know how to talk about your business in general in any context, and in a way that feels really aligned with who you are and what you stand for, so you're not fumbling for your words when you're introducing yourself, you're not relying on the same worn-out messages that we tend to see in online spaces.

You're probably also here because you want to attract more perfect-fit prospects, people who value your unique perspective, strength, brain. We all bring strengths with our neurodiverse brains here, and so when you find the people that are really aligned with what you can do for them, it's an ideal match. It's not about fitting into a bro, marketer-approved standard to attract anybody and everybody into your business. It's about having the effect on your audience that the people you follow and whose content you eat up. Like having that same effect on your people.

Of course, you probably want to make more money. Who doesn't? It's not just about more for the sake of more, it's helping you reach more people so you can have the kind of impact you want to make, create the kind of life you want to have, and not necessarily have to work harder to do it. You may have a cause that's really important to you, or a community that you want to contribute to, and when you have potent messaging, you're able to do that because you just have more and more aligned opportunities.

I think it's worth noting that you probably want to have a good time doing it. I know I do. That is what potent brand messaging helps you do. Let's get a little bit of clarity on what brand messaging actually is, because there is a whole lot of jargon in branding and marketing in general, and people really love to over-complicate this stuff. Let's break it down.

The non-jargony definition of brand messaging is how you talk about what you do. It's ultimately that simple. It's really just a framework that gives you consistent language so you're never at a loss for words when it comes time to not only market your business, but to also connect with your audience in a way that feels really aligned with you and really alluring to them.

I think it's just as important to talk about what brand messaging is not because there are a lot of misconceptions around all of this that I think holds a lot of us back from crossing that next threshold in your business, whatever that means to you. It could be a money goal, but it could also just be an energy goal, time goal, impact goal, whatever is important to you.

Brand messaging is not a restrictive, boilerplate way of talking about your business that doesn't leave room for creativity. I know a lot of us here are multi-passionate, we have a lot of ideas, we get enthusiastic about those ideas, and we don't want to be boxed in. That's not what messaging does. It really helps you clarify and distill your message. That also leaves room for complexity and creativity.

It's also not a fancy, beautiful, but impractical PDF document that has a ton of jargon and never sees the light of day outside of Google Drive. It can be, but that's not the way I like to do it. Messaging is something really that you do every day. It's something you use every day. For me, I have a go-to place, and it does live in Google Drive, but I use it and refer back to it every time I'm marketing something or creating content around something, or getting ideas about something. It's structured enough that I can navigate

it, but it's flexible enough that I can add to it, and it's a place where I go to look for inspiration, not where I don't really know what to do with it.

This is also not about doing a really tedious exercise of defining every single little detail about your ICA and their Starbucks order, their toothpaste brand, whatever. Those types of data points are not really helpful to small business owners like you and me. It's a waste of time, in my opinion. I do a lot of voice of customer research in my own projects, but I don't go down an endless rabbit hole of research, and you don't have to either.

This is also not just for larger companies or brands with these big marketing budgets and teams. Messaging strategy is something you have that gets you to a certain revenue point, not something you have when you hit a certain revenue point, and greater clarity is what leads to greater profit, not the other way around. In my opinion, the sooner you make this type of investment in yourself, the better.

It's also not something set in stone that can never evolve. Your business is going to grow, you're going to grow. All of this stuff evolves, and so does your messaging. It's not a one-and-done thing.

It's also not only relevant just to marketing, it's infused into every part of your business, actually. Thinking bigger about why this is so important, your messaging ties together so many of the things that are these big, non-negotiable aspects of a profitable business. That includes your offers or products. How you name them, how you talk about them, how you decide to even add to that offer suite. It shows up in your sales conversations. How are you sharing your process and results in a way that empowers people to make a confident, educated, enthusiastic decision to work with you or buy from you?

It also shows up in your client experience, and how you deliver on your promise. How do you create an experience that's consistent and memorable, and even delightful after your clients have hit that buy button? Obviously, that's in the work itself, but it's also in your messaging at every step of the way.

Thinking bigger picture, whether you are looking to build a team or just collaborate with people outside of your business at some point, you're going to need to get them on the same page with you quickly so you can reach your goals together, and this is a way of doing that, because ultimately your brand messaging really is a key ingredient for building the kind of business that you love to run. To me, having messaging is about freedom because it's about honoring my energetic boundaries, and actually living out my values.

What goes into a messaging strategy? I could rattle off some jargony terms for you, like your UVP, your elevator pitch, your key differentiators, your content pillars, all that stuff, yes, is a part of it, but ultimately, if we take the jargon out of it, what it is, is it's a framework or document that gives you this go-to language for things like telling people what you do, who you do it for, your unique or superior way of doing it, and why that matters.

It also gives you the go-to language for communicating your values, your vision, your beliefs that inspires loyalty from the people that you are most looking to connect with and work with.

It also gives you the language that helps you deeply empathize with your audience by showing them that you understand their current lived experience, what they want, what they're frustrated by, what their hangups might be, that you can help educate them to make that informed decision.

It also helps you offer a more nuanced and interesting look at how you work, how you deliver on your promise. Whether that's your process, your perspective, your approach, energy, and of course the results that you provide.

It helps you describe the long-term outcomes and bigger-picture benefits of what you do, because what you do isn't just what you do. It's the results that you achieve beyond that final, whether it's deliverable end date, whatever container you're working within. It helps you do that on any stage, in any context, having sales conversations, creating content, and all of this makes up for a more powerful, potent strategy without ever having to add value or differentiate your business with lots of extra features and add-ons, race to the bottom pricing and discounts, offering solutions for everything and to everyone, and anything that feels like a values or energy mismatch. These are unkind ways of treating our neurodiverse selves, and they all lead to burnout.

If you take nothing else away from this presentation, I want it to be this right here. If your current messaging is super feature focused, if you're constantly discounting your services or products, if you're stressing yourself out, making promises to all kinds of people that really just lead to burnout, or are in any other way not aligned with who you are and what you do and what you value, I want you to commit right now to not going down that path. If you are committed to that, give me a cheers to that in the chat. Let's make the promise right here and right now.

Let's start stirring up some ideas here. Now that I've hopefully got you thinking bigger picture about what messaging can do for your business and life, get ready to start jotting down some ideas. Grab a notebook or your favorite app. I'll be sharing lots of prompts with you here. This is obviously not a live workshop, so I want you to focus on whatever stands out to you as something that inspires an idea. You can take screenshots, so you can spend more time on this later, but if anything comes to mind right away, I want you to capture it while you're in the moment.

By the way, if you already have lots of ideas and you're like, "Cassie, I don't need more ideas, I need clarity and simplification," don't worry, this exercise is going to help you with that too.

First, let's kind of look at it at in these three main categories that I've defined for you here. There are kind of these three overarching ingredients just to simplify here. The first is confidence in and awareness of what you bring to the table. You can articulate what makes your business the obvious choice for your perfect fit prospect. This is kind

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of getting into differentiators territory, but we don't have to identify those differentiators right away. We're just exploring right now.

The other main ingredient is having a deep understanding of what your audience wants and what they need to hear. You already know a lot about your audience. Voice of customer research is obviously very, very helpful, but you can rely on your own knowledge too, and challenge yourself to get specific without having to go down a rabbit hole of research just yet. We're just trying to have fun at this stage.

It also really helps to have a specific vision of what is possible based on those values you share with your audience. This is where I'm going to push you to think big beyond the thing that you deliver or do. This can be as far into the future as you can wrap your head around. You don't have to decide what's possible right now, just what is motivating to you.

I'm going to share some specific examples of each of these first, and then some prompts to get you thinking deeply about each of them. Number one, what you bring to the table. You bring things like your background, your origin story, your experience. You bring your unique perspective, approach, style, or energy. Just the way you show up is worth noting and paying attention to.

You might have a method, a process, a framework of some kind that guides your work that maybe you do a little bit differently than other people do. You create an experience for your clients. What kind of experience? Like when we say, oh, I'm a big fan of customer service, well, what kind of customer service? Everyone's definition of good customer service is different. Of course, you offer a specific transformation through the results you help your clients or customers achieve.

One example, just to give you a more specific idea, for one of my recent clients, she is a leadership coach, and she had all this experience in social work and the nonprofit world, and she kind of wears these two hats of executive coaching, and a little bit more life coaching, and she couldn't figure out how to bridge the two and felt like she had to keep them separate, and I'm like, no, that's what informs your work. You've got all this amazing experience, and right now it's just kind of this asterisk hidden away in your About page. Let's make that really a highlight, a focus of your messaging, and that changes everything, right?

Here are some prompts to get you thinking about this a little bit more specifically. This is helpful to, again, take a screenshot, or if you see anything that you want to think about, jot it down really quickly. What are your core values? I challenge you to drill it down to three to five. We all value lots of things, but by narrowing this down to just a few, you get really, really clear on not only what you like or think is nice, or what you aspire to, but what you're actually living and practicing, and what you hold up above all else, especially as it relates to your work. That one's I think the most important, and something I spend a lot of time doing. If nothing else here, hopefully today you can kind

of write down what are some of your values, and then just kind of distill it down from there.

Why do you do what you do? What matters to you? What gets you out of bed every day? What do you enjoy doing the most?

More specifically, where are you noticing your energy turning on? What are you typically doing when you're in a healthy flow state? What experience or knowledge are you regularly pulling from to help your clients? What process or framework might you have buried underneath these everyday things you do that you might take for granted? That's why I call out routines or rituals. I have a ritual of writing my client's names down on my whiteboard when I'm starting a project, and I'll write down a few things about them that I really like or respect, or admire about them because it helps me center the person, and I realize that actually has a lot to do with some other aspects of my messaging. Things like that can be helpful to pay attention to.

What are you complimented on? What are the compliments that you tend to deflect or say, eh, no big deal? That's actually a big deal. How are you caring for your clients? What kinds of results do you typically achieve?

If you don't know, ask your audience. Knowing what your audience wants and needs to hear, that's part two here. We want to connect what you bring to the table with what your audience wants. You can do that by looking at your shared values, and by looking at the language that they use to describe their experience. Things like their short-term needs versus their long-term desires. A short-term need example, in my case, is a client who comes to me saying, "I just want to stop fiddling with my sales page copy." Cool, we can do that, but if that's the promise I made to them, they wouldn't feel terribly inspired. It's one benefit, and we want to talk about it, but then how can we dig deeper? Why do they want to stop fiddling with their website copy? It's because what they really want is to feel confident in the way they show up and sell because they know that that's the real path to impact in their clients' lives.

Oh, okay, that's more interesting to me. Short-term needs, long-term desires, challenges and frustrations, and I sometimes like to break that down because we can describe these things very generically or broadly. I break it down into facts, feelings, and possible failed attempts at solutions. We're saying like, okay, here's everything you've felt experienced and tried.

What they value about the process or experience of working with you, that's where you can pay attention to your current clients and what they're sharing with you, as well as what they say about the results and the big-picture benefits they derive from that work or experience. You're using the language they use so they know that your business is the right one for them, and it makes them excited to buy from you.

You can pay close attention to the language they use in all of these scenarios. Discovery calls, sales calls, Instagram conversations, Facebook group conversations, Slack conversations, any one-on-one conversation as well, whether you're a coach or

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you do consulting or kickoff calls, and of course, there are things like feedback surveys and interviews you can use to find out what people have to say.

Some prompts for you. I think a big challenge for a lot of folks is they serve multiple audiences, and so they have a hard time talking to all those audiences at once. What is the common thread that connects them? Can you find one common goal or desire or challenge that they have that you help them achieve or overcome? Assuming they are a fit, assuming they can afford you right now, we're not trying to convince anyone who legitimately cannot afford you or is going through something in their life that makes it not the right time, so assuming all the circumstances are ideal, how can you respectfully address any skepticism or fears that they might have, because we don't want to write off somebody who doesn't see the value in what we do. We have to show them the value in what we do.

What do you know is possible for them that they might not yet see? Sometimes people think they want one thing or they say they want one thing, and they do, but it's for a bigger reason that they haven't really explored yet. What is that core motivation driving that desire? Without shaming or shutting anyone out, who would you happily turn away? This is important too. You have to know who you're not for. Misalignment in values is obviously a very big one. We're not here to attract anyone who is racist, sexist, ableist, et cetera. It's about that, absolutely, number one, no-brainer, but think even deeper on maybe it's more subtle values that are just misaligned, maybe they're not ready for your offer, and instead of trying to fit your business and what you do into their needs, maybe you can just send them elsewhere or give them the resources they need to go out on their own and figure it out and then come back when they're ready. It's really empowering to think about that too.

By exploring these prompts and really thinking about the language your audience uses, you're centering their perspective with an empathetic approach that treats them like complicated people. You are respecting skeptics who are rightfully so, maybe they've been burned in the past, and so you're really helping them make a more informed decision, and you're finding the common thread in all the various unique individuals in your audience, and getting really specific in describing that.

The third thing is having a specific vision of what's possible. This is where I really want you to think big. Once you spend time defining what makes you different, special, or better, and exploring what your audience wants, both short-term and long-term, now let's think big, like why are we doing this? Explore things like what you already do, or I should say that this could be what you already do but on a grander scale, envisioning what's possible here. What you hope to be doing a year, 5 years, or 10 years from now? You don't have to decide for certain right now. It's not about making this declaration that you can never change, but where do you hope you are going to be, because that can be a really powerful way of deciding how can I start doing that now and building that into my messaging now so I can get there even sooner.

What's the long-term impact you want to make through your work, and what is something that you'll always keep fighting for, advocating for? What's the hill you're willing to die on regardless of how much money you make?

It's a really good place to start with thinking about this, and to take it a little bit deeper here, some prompts for you. If you could only offer your audience one impactful option, what would it be and why? Messaging is mine. That is what I have distilled it down to. There are lots of other things I can do and do do, but messaging is at the core of it all. That's my message. Maybe you have one too.

How does your work make the world better? It does. Doesn't matter what you do or sell, it makes the world better in some way. If you stretch your imagination a little bit further, how else does it make the world better? I really challenge you to just keep asking why like an exhaustible toddler. Why, and why does it matter to you? What do you hope people say about you when you're gone, and how can you run your business in a way to ensure that they do? How can you start doing that right now? Deep thoughts.

This is the beginning of a repeatable repurposable messaging strategy that lights up your brain and your heart. How powerful is that? It's the beginning, and it's a really, really strong place to begin from.

What do you do from here? Next steps. Oops. Here are your next steps. Write it out, talk it out. Continue to explore this.

Catch your inspiration while you have it, come back to it later, explore these prompts more deeply. Maybe write a manifesto if you feel inspired to, write whatever moves you, but just keep exploring. Look at your current messaging. Unless your business is brand new, you already have messaging. Now you have this new lens of looking really critically at it, and the language you've been using. What feels good? What feels a little misaligned? What can you strip away? Where can I add clarity? How can I get more specific? Where am I leaning on language that I see others using, and how can I flip that on its head or look at it from a new angle? How can I get away from things like feature-focused or a one size fits all type of messaging?

Document and share it. Keep this all in one place, ideally. You've got your notes right now, but put it somewhere where you're going to find it again. I like something searchable, like the Notes app or Google Drive, but refer back to it and add to it when you need inspiration or have inspiration. If you have a team, they can also use this as a North Star too. That's why it's worth documenting and sharing.

Play, experiment, refine. This is not a one-and-done thing. There are no rigid rules when it comes to messaging. Use what works for you, and have fun with it.

If this presentation has turned on a light bulb for you, and you want to explore it even more deeply, my private podcast, *The Bland Brand Antidote* is my short six or so episodes series that helps you find your brand's secret ingredient, stand out from the sea of same-old online, and confidently market your business.

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A few highlights for you. Things like the five key ingredients of a potent messaging strategy. I share a lot of questions and prompts that I use with my copywriting clients to help them find their brand's secret ingredient. I'm sharing insights from my messaging framework for pulling out fresh language to craft more potent copy. I also share some simple voice-of-customer research ideas, if that's something you're interested in, to help you better understand your audience. Some ideas for naming your offers and products in a way that strengthens your brand messaging and recognition and sounds exciting.

When you sign up, you will receive an email from me with a link to add it to your podcast player. All you have to do is visit that link, check your email for the link and add it to your podcast player, and follow the prompts to tune in, because it is private, it's not searchable. This is the way to get access. If you give it a listen, I'd love to know what you think, and I'd love to hear from you.

You've got this, share your message, find your people. Ultimately, messaging comes from you when your enthusiasm is palpable and you're confident in your message. That energy is contagious, and I really appreciate you joining me today. I hope you'll stay in touch, and let me know how it goes. Take care.

**[00:33:37] [END OF AUDIO]**