

Business For Superheroes Podcast Transcription: Episode One Hundred And Ninety One: Asking The Right Questions



This is a podcast about one woman's mission to help entrepreneurs and business owners write better business books. Each week, we tackle your writing excuses because they're our excuses too, and help you beat the blank page of doom so that you can write the book that will grow your life and your business. Now here's your host, Vicky Fraser...

Vicky: Hello, and welcome to the 1000 Authors Show! I'm Vicky Fraser, and I'm ill . And this is my husband, Joe.

Joe: Hello!

Vicky: Hello! Today we are testing out our new lights, so if we're doing this a lot if you're looking at the video, we're squinting a lot, it's because we've got a very bright light. We've decided to try and be professional video makers,

Joe: Super professional.

Vicky: which clearly we are not . This is the first experiment. I don't think the light's in the right place. What do you think?

Joe: I think it's, ah, mmmm. Yeah.

Vicky: Yeah.

Joe: It's pretty bright.

Vicky: I need to apologize in advance for my voice and for the fact that I'm probably going to be a bit more rambling than usual because I've spent the last three days on the sofa underneath a blanket feeling really, really poorly. I've not had a good weekend, have I?

Joe: No.

Vicky: It's not good.

Joe: Sadly you got the cold that I had last week.

Vicky: I think I got a combination of yours and Ed's colds.

Joe: Hmmmm.

Vicky: And they merged together into a single super cold that has basically destroyed my weekend. I hate being ill. It's such a waste of time. Such a waste of time. Anyway, Hi!

Joe: Hi!

Vicky: Welcome to the 1000 Authors Show! I'm Vicky Fraser, and I'm drinking a non-alcoholic beer.

Joe: I am drinking an alcoholic beer.

Vicky: Cheers! So we're testing out our new lights, but we are also, oh, we should also, by the way, we should thank Harriet's fiance, Ricard for--

Joe: Hi Ricard!

Vicky: the recommendation, hi Ricard! He is probably going to get in touch now and be, like, what are you doing?

Joe: Why did you put the light there?

Vicky: Which, feel free because we need to know how to do this stuff. So yeah. So this week we are talking about, we're on podcast 191, by the way.

Joe: That is ridiculous. We're gonna have a party at 200.

Vicky: Probably not because I'll probably forget. Yes!

Joe: Right.

Vicky: Yes! I think we should.

Joe: I think we should.

Vicky: I think we should.

Joe: It's only nine weeks away.

Vicky: Yeah.

Joe: So that would be, that would be like--

Vicky: Christmas. We can double-up with Christmas.

Joe: Yeah.

Vicky: So yeah. We are, we're asking the right questions today.

Joe: Are we?

Vicky: We are. Well, we're gonna try.

Joe: OK.

Vicky: So, basically I put this, you see this is my head full of cotton wool.

Joe: Head full of cotton wool, cold, night nurse, ibuprofen. Are going to have to blow your nose?

Vicky: I'm not going to blow my nose. I'm going to duck out and I'm just going to do that and then I'm going to come back again.

Joe: Nice. Nobody noticed.

Vicky: Send me sympathy, people. So yeah. I hear a lot reasons for people not writing about shush, it's seamless. I hear a lot of reasons for people not writing a book, but one really common one is that people don't know what to focus on, and they don't know what story to tell. And sometimes I hear that

they, you know, they would love to come and work with me but they're not ready yet because they don't know quite what to write about. And I think that people think that they need to have all of that stuff worked out before they ask for any help at all.

Joe: Uh-huh.

Vicky: Actually, that it not how it works because I think that is often the hardest part. Knowing exactly what you want to write about can be harder than any of the other stuff 'cause it's that first step that you have to get over.

Joe: Sure.

Vicky: Before you can even start writing. And it's the part that you should ask for help with because I don't expect when business owners come to me to help them write their books or to teach them to write their books, or whatever, I don't expect them to come to me with, like, perfect clarity.

Joe: Here is this fully-formed plan, and here's my breakdown, and this is why I'm doing it, here's my audience, and here's all of this stuff that, you know. Here's my message and .

Vicky: Yeah. I expect them to have a vague idea, and I expect them to think oh, you know, I'd like to write a book because of this, that and the other and, you know, and I think I could write about this or I think could write about that. But I don't expect them to turn up with, like like this is my super-focused idea and this is exactly what I'm going to write about and, you know, all of. Yeah. that kind of thing. That's the kind of thing that I can help people with. And I'm very, very good

Joe: Uh-huh. at helping people with. And so if you're trying to do this on your own, it's really difficult to do it on your own. Hmm. Sorry, mouth full of beer there.

Vicky: That's okay. Why were you laughing at me a minute ago?

Joe: What?

Vicky: I feel like you were laughing at me.

Joe: No.

Vicky: I'm just going to duck over here again for a second.

Joe: Okay.

Vicky: Talk amongst yourselves.

Joe: Talk amongst yourselves. So we've skipped straight on and missed out step one, which was the, well, we've got a Dingle update? Have we got a Dingle update?

Vicky: No.

Joe: We did nothing. We did nothing this weekend.

Vicky: I've been very ill.

Joe: Vicky was ill, we did nothing.

Vicky: We haven't skipped step one, it's fine. I'm feeling so ill that I don't want to put extra fluff into the podcast this week.

Joe: Okay, so just short, sharp and get it done.

Vicky: Just gonna get it done, yeah.

Joe: Whew!

Vicky: So yeah, anyway, figuring out exactly what you're gonna write about exactly what your book's gonna be about is really difficult to do on your own because you are really super close to your business and you know what you do and you often have, if you're anything like me, you often have like a whole ba, a whole boach?

Joe: A whole bunch?

Vicky: Bunch, bunch. That was a combination of bunch and host.

Joe: Ah. I think it was going to be bellowed.

Vicky: Oh, it could have been. Bunchlowed. Bunchowed. Let's stop. So yeah, you'll have loads of ideas and you'll want to put all of them into the same book, and that's not gonna work. It's,

Joe: Yeah.

Vicky: it's just that, that way lies a bad book. So what you need to do, really, is bounce your ideas off other people and see what they think and you also need to ask the right questions which is what this particular episode of the podcast is all about.

Joe: Who are you asking these questions of?

Vicky: Yourself.

Joe: Uh-huh, okay.

Vicky: Yeah, it's questions that you need to ask yourself. Because, yeah, what most people need help with right at the start is the questions that they need to ask because not only do they not ask questions they don't know that they need to ask questions and so you end of kind of floundering in bewilderment and trying to write this book about all of this stuff and you ramble and you waffle and you never really know what the point of the book is and it ends up being a bad book and I don't want that to happen to you, dear listener, because that sucks. There's no reason for there to be a bad book or book that's difficult to read. I want you to have more than a vague idea of what you want to write about and I want you to put a lot of thought into it and I want you to, I want you to have I want your book to have a purpose and a point and for you to be able to go from start to finish on a journey, take the reader on a journey.

Joe: And achieve that purpose.

Vicky: And achieve that purpose. And to do that you've got to start by asking loads and loads of questions but there are three particular questions that I want you to start with because I think these three questions are the ones that are going to give you the most direction and will, they'll lead to more questions, and that's fine, but these three will give you the most direction to start with, I think.

Joe: Okay.

Vicky: So, question number one. Oh, by the way, if you're really struggling with this, you can book a big idea call with me You can borrow my brain. And if you'd like to do that then you can email me vicky@vickyfraser.com and we'll book, book you in and it's worth its weight in cheese, is that call.

Joe: Hm-mm.

Vicky: So, okay. Question number one, Joe.

Joe: Question number one. Why do you want to write a book at all?

Vicky: Really important question, this one, because if this is just another tick-box marketing exercise to you or a glorified business card, I would argue that you shouldn't bother writing a book at all.

Joe: Yeah, if this is, you know, the seventh item on your to-do in your first year of business, you know, set up a website, get a P.O. box, print some business cards.

Vicky: Write book.

Joe: Write book.

Vicky: And done. And that's it. Yeah, I would argue that you shouldn't bother. If, however, you want to write a book, and this is why I want you to ask the question of yourself because if you've just been told by some online marketing guru that you should, the next thing that you need to do is write a book and you've just thought oh, okay, I'll do that, but haven't really given it any thought.

Joe: Uh-huh.

Vicky: Then you need to start thinking about this. You know, why? What deeper purpose can your book solve for you? What could it do for you? What could it do for your clients? How can you link it to your business in your longer-term plans?

Joe: Uh-huh.

Vicky: What, where does your book fit in with everything else that you do? And one of my clients, Kenda, put this beautifully.

Joe: Hi Kenda!

Vicky: Hi Kenda! That a book can become, and should become, I would argue, the beating heart of your business. It's, the book that you write can be what you build everything else around, which is exactly what I'm doing what I've done with my new book, which is coming out very, very soon. It's at the printers right now.

Joe: Actually exists.

Vicky: Actually exists. It's at the printers right now. And it will be officially launched on November 19th. There you go, I said that out loud now.

Joe: Uh-huh.

Vicky: But yeah. Why do you want to write your book? Really think about this. Think about why, you know, and it could be, it doesn't have to be just, oh, I want to change the world blah, blah, blah. We all want to make an impact on the world. But it could be, you know, I want, I've always wanted to be a published author. I feel like I have a message to put out there. I want to build my confidence. I want to help more people, you know, reach more people.

Joe: Yep, I've run out of time in my week. By writing a book I can reach more people.

Vicky: Yeah. Or perhaps you want to build a Kindle publishing empire or something. That's really cool as well. But I want you to really think about your reason for writing a book is because until you really know you're really going to struggle to, you're gonna struggle to get started.

Joe: So if somebody says, well, if I sell 5,000 copies of my book and I sell it at 20 quid then that's gonna give me, you know, 10,000 pounds. No it's not. It's gonna give me 100,000 pounds. I mean, is that a business? Is that a valid reason?

Vicky: I, it's a risky reason. I mean, you can try and build a business just based on publishing books and people have done it. It's a risky reason. I think a better reason to do it, we've talked about this many times in the podcast before, is for your book to support and help you grow your business.

Joe: Uh-huh.

Vicky: So for me, I'm not expecting my book to make me an awful lot of profit because I'm gonna give it away to people. There's all sorts of things I'm gonna do with it. But it's just the start.

Joe: You can't give it away yet.

Vicky: No, I can't give it away yet. But it's just the start of a long, a very long tale

Joe: Yeah.

Vicky: --of you know, products and services that I'm gonna provide that start with people reading my book.

Joe: Okay.

Vicky: So it's a really good way to bring, I mean, we've talked about this many times before, but it's a good way to bring people into your business and build relationships quite quickly.

Joe: Yeah.

Vicky: So, so yeah. Question number one, why do you want to write a book at all? Really think about that. You will struggle to be motivated if your reason for writing it is unclear.

Joe: Yeah. If you can't convince yourself you've got a damned good reason, you're probably not gonna get very far in the sitting down and writing the thing.

Vicky: Yeah, And just having it as another marketing, tick box exercise isn't gonna get it done, because writing a book is really hard regardless of what certain sections of the internet will tell you. It is not easy to write a book. It's not as difficult as you might think, but it is not easy, and you are gonna need to be really motivated. So question number two.

Joe: Question number two. What can you do better or more easily than anyone else?

Vicky: So this is a really good question to think about because, I think, often people look at only the surface of this and they're like oh well, I'm a dog walker or I'm a copy writer or I make wellies, or, you know.

Joe: Uh-huh. I percolate the best gins in southern Shropshire.

Vicky: Yeah, and that's a fine place to start. You know, what's your core skill? What's your core service? But what is it about what you do that makes you better or different from other people who do what you do? Because you're not going to be the only person who does it.

Joe: No.

Vicky: There are, you know there's more than one plumber in the world. There's more than one person like me in the world. And so, for instance, parts of what makes me different from other people who teach, who work in the self-publishing industry, is that I have a background, a really strong background, in direct marketing.

Joe: Mm hmm.

Vicky: I understand really deeply how to sell stuff to people. How to, you know, how to make money from words. And, you know, some people do but they haven't come from the background that I've come from and I've got a foot in both of these worlds. So something really alarming just happened. My eardrum just made an audible explosion sound, didn't it?

Joe: Yeah. I heard that from over here.

Vicky: Yeah, sorry. What you didn't hear then was me nearly dying of a coughing fit and nearly having my sinuses explode. You probably don't need to know this. I don't care, it was really awful. And then my eardrum made this horrible noise, and it was I don't know, anyway, I'm back, hi. So yeah, really think about the problem that you solve for people and how what you do is a little bit different from what other people do.

Joe: Sure.

Vicky: And the background that you've got and why people choose you. Really important that you think really deeply about this. Go below the surface because anybody can write about plumbing but what people want is your story. Hm. and your experience of what you do. Does that make sense?

Joe: It does, it does.

Vicky: Cool, question number three.

Joe: Question number three. What do you want people to be able to do, or be, or have when they've finished reading your book? So what change are you going to affect in the reader?

Vicky: Yeah. Yeah, and that's again a really important question to consider. You've got to think about what your reader's gonna get out of your book here. And that's gonna help keep you on track, by the way, when you're really stuck for how to get started and when you get stuck halfway through and a third of the way through and you're thinking oh, gosh, does this go here? Where does that go? So always come back to what do you want your reader to be able to be, do, and have when they're finished reading?

Joe: Hm.

Vicky: How will someone change after they've read your book? How do you want people to change after they've read your book? How do you, why is this important to you, as well. You know, how do you think that you can help people? And how, what do you, what do you want people to do once they're finished in terms of where do they go next in your business. Because all of this is gonna really help you to narrow down the focus of what your book's gonna be about.

Joe: Like in "Business for Superheroes", your first book.

Vicky: Oh, yeah.

Joe: I think that was, that was, which you can still buy, was really cool on that because it did two things, it gave business startups and, you know, young businesses a lot of advice and help and, you know, pitfalls to avoid. And secondly it trained people who were going to come into your business. It trained your future customers into how you were gonna behave, how they were gonna behave and how it was all gonna work from now on.

Vicky: Yes.

Joe: And it built the relationship between you, didn't it?

Vicky: It did.

Joe: A lot of people entered your business having read your book thinking I know this is good, I know this is how this is gonna work.

Vicky: Yeah.

Joe: And it made, you know, it was like, it pre-qualified lots of beautiful customers.

Vicky: Yeah, it was. And that is what your book can do for you. So, yeah. So that's it really. That's the podcast, the three questions. The three questions

will lead you to more specific questions, and they are ones that will help you narrow down your big idea into something worth writing about.

Joe: Yeah.

Vicky: So you're not gonna, these three questions I know are not gonna give you everything you need to, kind of, nail down your big idea. But they are gonna get you started, and they will give you, you know, they will give you perhaps a broader idea but that will lead to more questions. You can go talk to your customers, you can ask more questions of other people, you can ask questions of yourself and decide what aspect of your business, you know, what problem do you want to solve with this book?

Joe: I think it also helps as well when you've sat there thinking well, should I include this anecdote about, you know, the exploding toilet or whatever, you can say, well, does it satisfy why I'm writing this book and does it, you know, does it do anything for the reader? Does it change how they'll behave? Does it teach them anything? Does it modify, you know, do they get anything out of this other than, you know, a disgusting story about your exploding toilet. So, you can use it to, kind of, self regulate yourself.

Vicky: Yeah. Exactly.

Joe: Hm.

Vicky: Well said. Cool. And I think we should probably stop there because I'm really struggling to breathe right now.

Joe: Yeah.

Vicky: And also I'm really hungry and my forehead might explode.

Joe: That would be a helluva podcast. I reckon we'd get loads of subscribers if the front of your face actually exploded.

Vicky: It could go viral quite literally.

Joe: Quite literally.

Vicky: So yeah. What's the takeaway this week, Joe?

Joe: Start asking questions. They will for sure lead you to more questions. But that's fine. That's the process. The more questions you ask and answer the closer you'll get to your big idea, the closer you'll get to writing a book that actually makes a difference to somebody and means something, and matters rather, than just a whole bunch of words in a cover that you can say look, I've written a book.

Vicky: Yes. And I think that's really important.

Joe: Yeah.

Vicky: That's why I do this. Cool. So, go write your book. And if you need help with it, then buy my book, which is available now from www.moxiebooks.co.uk/buythebook or if you want to wait until the 19th of November you can go onto Amazon and buy it on Kindle or print from Amazon. And, when you buy the book, by the way, you also get free membership of, well, free membership of the moxie, what have I called it? The Moxie Bugle.

Joe: The Moxie Bugle .

Vicky: Yeah! It's a free newsletter that will hit your doorstep once a month, and it's full of hints and tips and advice and stories from other business owners just like you who are writing books. So if you buy your book from me then I will have your address so I can send you the newsletter.

Joe: Uh-huh.

Vicky: If you buy your book from Amazon, you'd need to drop me an email vicky@vickyfraser.com and just send me the receipt for the book and let me know your postal address and I will add you to the list and you can get that newsletter too.

Joe: Cool.

Vicky: There will be competitions in there. There will be all sorts of stuff in there, be really cool.

Joe: Nice.

Vicky: Yeah, I'm pretty excited about it. So, yeah, next week we'll be back. Same time next week. We'll be talking about how to beat writer's block with the ultimate guide to writing an outline.

Joe: All right. Outlining.

Vicky: Outlining. And if you have, by the way, listened to every single episode of this please email me with your postal address and I will send you a special superfan gift.

Joe: I mean, you're nuts. I haven't listed to every oh, crackers. Only loopy people need to apply.

Vicky: And if you're enjoying it, please go on rate us and review us.

Joe: Five stars.

Vicky: Five stars on iTunes, that would be great. Thank you. Right, we're gonna go. Be back same time next week. Thank you very much.

Joe: Bye!

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