

Dear Reader,

For years I thought I wasn't cut out for this business and marketing thing. You've probably heard the saying, "It's not personal, it's business." In business, you have to be tough. And I was just too nice, too gentle. There have been countless times when I've lost track of my authenticity in order to fit in.

Now that I've taken that mask off, I'm reaching out to my fellow marketing misfits who feel like they don't fit in either.

My intuition tells me that if you picked up a book with words 'integrity and kindness' in the subtitle, you also often think of yourself as a black sheep, a misfit, or too soft for business. You value kindness, integrity, honesty, fairness, and equality. You're not interested in the hustle. You just want to do what you're good at and pursue marketing as a necessary part of running a business. You're looking for a better way to market your business in alignment with your values without getting lost in the "one-size-fits-all" formulas. Am I right so far?

I founded my first online business in 2007 and have grown up in the online marketing world. Having completed countless marketing programs myself, I know what's available to entrepreneurs, and most of these programs sell a cookie-cutter approach based on the founder's own recipe for success.

Over time, I realized that I no longer wanted to follow anyone else's model. I was ready to take the risk and give myself permission to do business and marketing my way, even if it meant that I'd fail the first few times. This realization inspired a yearning in me to create a global movement that encourages entrepreneurs and impact pioneers to bring more empathy and kindness to business and to empower them to be different. As the daughter of two hippie parents, leading this revolution feels like a kind of homecoming to me.

It started with a Gentle Business Revolution

A few years ago I had an epiphany that led me to reserve the domain name for "The Gentle Business Revolution." With all the nongentleness going on in the world, I knew it was the perfect term.

The domain name then inspired a manifesto, which then led to this book.

Marketing is where I needed to start

I see it as my mission to prove that you can be successful in business by being gentle, not tough, and by being personal, not "just business." Gentleness and human connection can be applied to every aspect of a business: marketing, sales, HR, operations, etc.

But when I had the Gentle Business Revolution epiphany, I immediately knew that I wanted to start by reinventing marketing. It's where I had spent the last twelve years.

I've talked to many entrepreneurs; I know that my story is not unique. I know of so many entrepreneurs and Marketing Impact Pioneers who are struggling with marketing because they want to share their gifts with the world and make the world a better place, but the only marketing strategy examples they see are loud, aggressive, and manipulative.

My purpose in writing this book is to help heart-centered leaders market their business with empathy and kindness, creating sustainability for themselves and helping make this world a better place by reducing the global level of anxiety and fear.

Doing vs. Being

Have you ever heard the parable about the man who was looking for his keys? It goes like this:

On a corner under a streetlight, a passerby sees a man on his hands and knees searching the ground. "What are you looking for?" the passerby asks. Hunched over on his hands and knees, the man replies, "I've lost my car keys." The kind passerby immediately joins him in his search. After a few minutes of searching without success, she asks the man whether he is sure he lost the keys there on the street corner. "No," he replies, pointing to the bushes. "I lost them over there." Indignant, the woman asks, "Then why are you looking for them here?" The man replies, "Because there's light here."

Do you see how this relates to marketing?

Most of us (me included) try to find solutions where it's easiest to look. In marketing, these easy-to-find solutions are focused on DOING more.

For example:

- How to fill your webinars
- How to get more clients on LinkedIn
- How to make money with Facebook ads

For over a decade I've been searching in the light for quick-fix marketing solutions, applying success recipes and easy-to-follow nine-step formulas. But the funny thing is, if you aren't also working on BEING, then more DOING will never get you where you want to go.

What this book isn't

If you picked up this book hoping to find a step-by-step list of how to achieve Humane Marketing or even a discussion of how Humane Marketing fixes all your problems, I have to disappoint you.

- Humane Marketing is not a quick fix. It's a movement for the brave souls who are ready to look under the bushes and maybe even do some digging to reveal solutions for their business.
- Humane Marketing is not another one-size-fits-all solution. The journey I'll take you on will be different for everyone. Yes, some of what I suggest is based on what works in marketing, but you'll learn that you can adapt everything to who you are and what matters most to you.
- This book isn't a crusade. Even though I use the word "revolution," please don't picture a military coup or anything violent like that. Remember, it is a HUMANE revolution. Just like Gandhi, Humane Marketers are questioning the current marketing paradigm and pleading for a change, but with empathy instead of violence.
- This book isn't intended to attack or shame marketers who use hype marketing. As you'll notice throughout my stories (look for the hashtag #vulnerabilityalert), I have often used those techniques myself because I wasn't aware that there was another way to do things. Even to this day, I sometimes catch myself using scarcity or another hype technique in an email headline.

What this book is

- This book is a guidebook of self-discovery for seekers who are ready to question assumptions about the way things have always been done in business and marketing.
- It is a blueprint for transformation that takes you to your center so you can market from within in a way that's aligned with your core principles.
- In a way, it's an *un*marketing guide to help you unlearn some old ways that are no longer working for you (or have never worked but you did them anyway because you thought you had to).
- It's a blend of personal development and very practical, pragmatic business and marketing applications. It's a dance between BEING and DOING.

Are you ready to shine your own light and look for those keys under the bushes?
 Are you ready to question all your marketing assumptions?
 Then you're ready to dive into this book.

Warmly,
 Sarah Santacroce
 Lausanne, Switzerland

Introduction to Humane Marketing

This is not your typical “how-to” marketing book for growing your business. A lot of good marketing books in that vein have already been written, and I include a few in the references section at the end of the book. Rather, *Marketing Like We’re Human* is a rallying cry for a marketing paradigm shift.

This humane revolution starts from the bottom up. It’s a revolution pushing up through the cracks of the conventional business world. It’s a people’s revolution, and its intention is to rally gentle and humane visionaries and mobilize their potential to change the way we do marketing.

This book—this invitation for change—is for you if:

1. You are a heart-centered entrepreneur.

- You’re looking to grow your business with integrity and authenticity.
- You have completed countless marketing programs with the hope of finding techniques that help you get more clients. But so far, you have found nothing.
- You always end up feeling like a “fake” when applying someone else’s prescribed version of how marketing should be done.
- You’re ready for a different, better approach to marketing that is in alignment with who YOU are!
- You’re not in business just to pay your bills or build your own wealth.
- You want to help others and make the world a better place.
- You care about people, nature, equality, and diversity.

2. You are a Marketing Impact Pioneer.

I borrow the term “Impact Pioneer” from my former client and friend Jacob, who uses it to refer to people who do business with the goal of creating positive social and/or environmental impact.

As a Marketing Impact Pioneer, you’re a forward-thinking CMO or other marketing professional working in a small or mid-sized company. You’re interested in “Business for Good,” and maybe your company has already received or applied for the B Corporation certification. It motivates you to build a company that balances purpose and profit, and you’re interested in creating trust-based relationships with your customers. You realize that businesses reflect the values of their leaders, and you’re open and curious to becoming a Humane Marketing leader and influencing your company’s ecosystem.

A personal story about getting lost in the online world

About five years ago, I turned forty and had my midlife awakening. I did some personal work with a therapist, and during one particular session, I told her, in tears, “It’s so darn hard to be different!”

If I had to summarize my experience in business in one word, “different” would be it. Out of fear of being different or being rejected, I changed who I was and tried to be like everyone else in order to fit in.

I started to wear a mask.

With that mask on, I was so adaptable, and I blindly followed the advice of all the big marketing gurus out there. I tried a bit of everything.

- They told me to sell online webinars, so that’s what I did, applying their advice of using urgency and the fear of missing out (feeling like such a fraud while reading their script).
- They told me they made millions on their latest launch, so I bought their “launch system” (but never implemented it because I couldn’t bring myself to schedule four “cart-closing” emails).
- They told me they made millions (different gurus, same message) with Facebook ads, so I hired a coach to help me with Facebook ads and created a funnel (I’ll let you figure out how that one ended...).
- They told me to scale, to hustle, to go big or go home.

And the only thing that kept me going was the protection and safety of hiding behind my mask. Because without it, I was completely lost. Without it, I felt a deep existential anxiety. The feeling gave me hot flashes and knots in my stomach and kept me up at night.

But in that moment when I was crying in the ugly leather armchair in my therapist’s office, a seed was planted.

I was ready to come full circle and do marketing my way.

Together we can reinvent marketing

Like my parents created an alternative way of living together and raising children in a community (more about that in Chapter 2), we can reinvent marketing together. How? By helping each other find our way back to human-centric marketing that makes us and our clients feel good.

I don’t have all the answers. In fact, I’m still and always will be learning along the way—and catching myself when using phrases that include FOMO (fear of missing out) or false emergency. More than ten years of the old marketing training does that to you. It messes with your brain.

I have changed though. And so has my marketing. I'm showing up fully, quirks and all. I'm being Sarah, whether people like it or not.

And guess what? My people like how I show up!

And it's not only in my business that I'm seeing the results of this transformation. I'm less stressed. I sleep better, and I make time for the things that truly matter to me, like yoga, nature walks, and time with my family.

But I'm getting ahead of myself.

Marketing is broken

"We need to move toward a human-centered marketing approach and stop doing stuff that people hate." — Mark W. Schaefer

"The true north, the method that works best, has flipped. Instead of selfish mass, effective marketing now relies on empathy and service." — Seth Godin

Right now, there's something very wrong happening in the world of online business and marketing. Never before have entrepreneurs had easier access to create a thriving business and make a positive impact in the world. And yet, instead of using this incredible platform that we call the internet to make the world a better place, it's being abused. Instead of helping consumers live better lives, serve clients, and connect people, it's contributing to an ever-growing feeling of isolation and anxiety—on a global scale.

- Have you noticed that the number of emails with a promise of achieving a six- or seven-figure business has drastically increased over the past few years?
- Do you ever wonder when it became a common marketing practice to use false urgency ("Last call, you'll never have this opportunity again"), manipulation ("Do this if you really want clients"), and wealth-signaling ("How I made \$1,456,235 with one webinar")?
- Have you ever doubted your own value and lacked the confidence to show up in your own authentic way because it made you feel less than, just another entrepreneur/coach/consultant/service provider with no interesting (or unique) value proposition?

Isn't it interesting that with all the technology we have access to today (automated emails, mass webinars, chatbots, etc.), we've lost touch with the human connection? And isn't it interesting that the internet was actually built to help foster this connection?

It's true. That was the initial mission. To bring people closer together and give power to the customers, no longer letting companies dictate what we should consume.

So what happened? Well, entrepreneurs became the new companies, using mass-media techniques similar to those the big names used in the '90s. Without being aware of what we were doing, we started using guilt, fear, false urgency, and manipulation in our marketing—maybe not in the same aggressive ways as the big internet marketing gurus, but certainly in subtle, almost unconscious ways to convince more clients to buy our products and services. We started talking **AT** our customers instead of **WITH** them.

So something got lost along the way.

It's true that it wasn't our fault. We didn't do it on purpose. We've been trained to believe that that's how it's done if we want a successful business. And everywhere we

looked, that's what we saw. So we complied. We used the templates, success recipes, and "persuasion hacks," and we gave up our authentic selves. We forgot that it's all about the human connection.

The truth is this: The current marketing paradigm is broken. Again.

In his book *Marketing Rebellion: The Most Human Company Wins*, Mark Schaefer explains that we are in fact at the beginning of the third, and perhaps final, consumer rebellion. Schaefer sums up this third rebellion as "The End of Control." Consumers want no more lies, no more secrets, and no more control. What they want instead are more human impressions. These observations are backed up by stats and research.

In 2015, the 4A's, a United States-based trade organization for advertising agencies, carried out a survey with Ipsos OTX that asked people what professions they trusted the most.

The results aren't surprising: only 4 percent of Americans think the marketing industry behaves with integrity.

So let's unpack some of the marketing approaches that are no longer working for the conscious client, and specifically for the heart-centered leader.

Overuse of the scarcity principle

It's scary how many posts a Google search turns up with advice on how to use scarcity in marketing. It's THE most common marketing technique that marketers have been using and teaching since what seems like forever.

The "scarcity principle" is an economic theory in which a limited supply of a good coupled with a high demand for that good results in a mismatch between the desired supply-and-demand equilibrium.

It's often explained with the cookie jar study. Psychologist Stephen Worchel offered two groups two nearly identical jars of cookies. The only difference was that one jar had ten cookies while the other jar only had two cookies. When asked which jar they preferred, participants preferred the jar with only two cookies in it! That's because, psychologically, people assume that if there is less of something, it must be in higher demand. Therefore, it must be of higher value.

It's not the principle itself that's wrong, it's how marketers present it that doesn't feel good. Consider two examples of a marketing headline that uses scarcity:

- a. "This is your only and last chance to be part of the go-getters. Tomorrow you'll have missed your shot at building a successful business with XYZ program."
- b. "Tomorrow is the last day to register for XYZ program. If you've been hesitating, please get in touch. We'd love to have you join us!"

Example (a) uses urgency, guilt, fear of missing out, and some manipulation to scare the recipient into buying.

Example (b) reminds the recipient that there is an element of urgency and tries to help her decide to join, should the program interest her.

Both examples use the scarcity principle to convey that the window of opportunity is closing, but they trigger different feelings in the recipient. The recipient of message (a) will either sign up or be left in a state of anxiety that he's missing out and probably will never have a successful business or join the "cool kids." And even if he signs up, he will come to the program with this scarcity energy. The recipient of message (b) feels at ease to decide when she's ready. She appreciates the offer to get in touch and have a personal interaction with the program host. When she signs up, she comes to the program with an energy of abundance, feeling like she'll be taken care of.

Which situation would you rather put your customers in?

The cookie-cutter and one-size-fits-all approach (templates and success recipes)

Do me a favor: over the next few days, pay attention to how many times you see a mention of a "Template for...", "Recipe for Success with..." (you'll find that one on my very own website on some older LinkedIn posts!), or any other "step-by-step promise of success" formula. They're everywhere.

Besides the scarcity principle, this is another thing they have taught us marketers: Come up with a formula about your technique and then sell it to everyone and their uncle. Again, there's nothing wrong with the formula itself, but I see two major problems with this approach:

- First, it assumes that the guru's formula works for everyone! The formula is built to sell a maximum number of seats, so there is as little personalization as possible. The purpose is to sell, not to get the buyer actual results.
- Second, the guru then often shares his templates and success recipes with his participants, which then leads to a viral infestation of unpersonalized, robot-like pitches via email, LinkedIn, and Facebook. For example, I found it funny when suddenly, in September 2019, I received several messages from LinkedIn members in Germany that all started with "I see that you are also in the coaching industry and I would love to connect." Ah, I thought, another LinkedIn guru shared his connection request template.

In a conversation on my Gentle Business Revolution podcast, well-known marketing consultant Chris Brogan shared this:

I have the unfortunate opportunity to receive a lot of incoming emails from people who bought some person's course and the same course has been sold for ten plus years. And so I get the template emails over and over and I say, look, thank God you've spent some money with Marie Forleo. She's a wonderful person and really smart. But Marie didn't want you to copy-paste

the template. She wanted you to write your own. Smart people don't copy and paste it.

Make people feel less than (wealth-signaling, exaggerated promises, too much focus on success)

Using six-figure headlines (as in "Follow these four easy steps to build your six-figure business") has become as common as sliced bread in the entrepreneurial marketing world. It feels like the online world has decided that a six-figure profit is everyone's goal, so referring to it repeatedly is an excellent technique.

But wealth-signaling and other exaggerated promises of success are no longer working for us heart-centered entrepreneurs. This technique implies that only six-figure business owners are successful and happy, and everyone else who's not there yet is essentially an amateur. The same thing goes for other exaggerated promises (also common in the wellness and fitness world) that make people feel not good enough in their current state and basically push them to buy out of fear.

Not only is that a marketing tactic that lacks integrity and contributes to an ever-growing feeling of anxiety, but it also doesn't work from a business-building perspective. When people buy out of fear, they're so stuck in that scarcity energy that they don't get the promised results. The marketer ends up with all these clients with very mediocre results and therefore has to keep hustling because clients who get no results won't refer their friends. It's a downward spiral that just keeps generating more anxiety and more unhappy clients, eventually leading to the marketer's failure.

One of my favorite examples is a business coach with an obnoxious ad on YouTube. I'm sure you've seen it, or at least a similar one. He shares how he went from the trenches to being a millionaire, gives you a tour of his office, shows off his fancy sportscar, and talks about his amazing lifestyle. What does he sell? A program to become a successful business coach like him. Selling what? It's not very clear ... something like him showing you exactly how he did it. Did what? Selling dreams (or illusions?) to people.

Overuse of technology

Never before have entrepreneurs had easier access to the tools needed to create a thriving business and make a positive impact in the world. The invention of the internet, and then all the technology that came with it, has given us entrepreneurs access to huge, almost unlimited opportunities.

The problem with no limits is that there's a risk for taking it too far and a risk for disconnection. And that's exactly what happened. We got so excited by technology that it became our main focus. Automated emails, ads, funnels, mass webinars, chatbots, retargeting ... the more automation the better, right? But we're coming to the end of that era. People don't want more automation. They want more personalization. They want a human connection to the company.

In my opinion, Kajabi, an all-in-one online business platform, is doing a superb job with this. When I signed up with them, someone from their headquarters in Irvine, California, (where we lived for four years!) reached out to me to schedule a thirty-minute chat. Imagine! They do that with every one of their customers! They also host regular Zoom calls for their customers and have a free Facebook group where they celebrate their clients, referred to as “Kajabi Heroes.” They have a cute reward system where different milestones are celebrated and Kajabi sends their heroes small tokens of appreciation (T-shirts, journals, mugs ... that kind of thing). There’s a genuine connection to the company, beyond the product.

Because in all honesty, the product is not even that amazing yet! They are great at course delivery, but their email marketing system and landing page functionalities aren’t as good as some of their competitors’ products. But people stick with Kajabi because they feel heard and seen. They trust the company to grow and adapt to their needs.

In his book *A Whole New Mind*, author Daniel H. Pink writes, “We’ve progressed from a society of farmers to a society of factory workers to a society of knowledge workers. And now we’re progressing yet again—to a society of creators and empathizers, of pattern recognizers and meaning makers.”

The fundamentals haven’t changed. What clients really want is:

- More purpose and meaning
- More human connection
- More community and belonging

Change is necessary

“Change is painful, but necessary sometimes for you to grow into the person you’re going to be.” — Elizabeth Gilbert.

“And the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom.” — Anaïs Nin

For many people, the status quo still works. To some degree.

“Sarah,” I was told, “if you want to challenge the status quo you need either more science or more results proving that the alternative approach you’re suggesting actually works better.” Left-brain thinking. Totally justified.

Before I share some signs that a paradigm shift is much needed, let me be very clear: If the current business and marketing model still works for you and you feel good about it, I suggest you put this book down for now. It’s not for you at this moment in time. Before substantial change can happen, things need to get really bad. We don’t change when things are going OK.

You're still reading? Great, that means you're ready for change, or at least you're curious about a different way. In fact, you may be thinking to yourself, "It's about time! Marketing has been a necessary evil for me for years, leaving me drained and feeling out of integrity. I'm excited to find out how to market my business in alignment with my values, sell with empathy, and contribute to making this world a better place."

So what are those signs that we're ready for a paradigm shift?

Signs on a societal level

I'm writing this book during the COVID-19 crisis. In the midst of this very intense time, many of us are wondering, "Can it get any worse?" and "Will we make it through this?" The news is full of stories that reflect divisions of countries and race and a frightening mix of hatred, blame, and fear. Everywhere you look there is uncertainty. And we're worried about what the future will bring. But that's exactly the beginning of a paradigm shift. A situation needs to get so bad that even those who thought it was still OK wake up and realize that they need a change. They're ready to wake up from a trance and make their voices heard. That's when change happens. And change is possible!

Take, for example, the 9/11 tragedy. Jeffrey Shaw, the host of the *The Self-Employed Life* podcast and author of *Lingo*, tells the story of how people's values all over the US changed after that day. As a photographer for wealthy New Yorkers, he felt this shift firsthand and had to pivot and adapt his "exclusive" photography business to resonate with a new set of values that focused on family, inclusion, and empathy. People no longer cared so much about exclusivity; they cared more about their loved ones and capturing those precious family moments for the long term.

I'm ready to bet that the COVID-19 pandemic has triggered a similar reflection. The interruption of business as usual forced people to reflect on their priorities and what truly matters to them. They also saw the many cracks in the patriarchal systems that they had previously trusted and relied on. This virus is exactly what humanity needed to give us time to pause, reflect, and return to our true values.

Signs on a leadership level

The old paradigm required "tough and resilient" leaders who were ready to "kill the competition." But today we're moving toward a new generation of leaders. Besides hard skills, these new leaders show up with vulnerability, bravery, and empathy.

Justine Bloome, a marketing and expansion coach, explains it like this:

The cult of hustle reached a peak in 2018-19. Hustle culture is steeped in masculine energy, it relies on a twenty-four-hour creative cycle, or as the memes so aptly put it: Eat, Sleep, Hustle, Repeat. At the same time, burnout was officially classified by the World Health Organization as an "occupational phenomenon," a syndrome resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. In contrast, or perhaps in response, we've seen

signs of a shift away from the masculine energy of striving, hustling, execution and data toward the feminine energy of flow, stillness, creativity, and intuition. This is present in the topics of books showing up in best-seller lists (e.g., *Quiet*, *Radical Candor*, *Do Less*, and *Dare to Lead*), mindfulness and meditation trends in the workplace, and in a post-#metoo era, a new blueprint for effective leadership is being born. Female leaders are feeling more free and empowered to lead in their own style, and male leaders are finding it necessary to adapt and relearn certain aspects of leadership that tap into these feminine energies of flow, stillness, space for creativity, and intuition.

Signs on a spiritual level

Since this is a business book for heart-centered leaders and entrepreneurs, I don't shy away from bringing in some spirituality now and then. Penney Peirce, a respected clairvoyant empath, visionary, and author of several books including *Frequency: The Power of Personal Vibration* and *The Intuitive Way: The Definitive Guide to Increasing Your Awareness*, thinks of the phase that we're in as a "perceptual shift."

Penney explains:

We are moving from one way of perceiving the world, which is very linear and left-brain oriented, to a new way which I call spherical and holographic, where everything—the past, future, other people, all potential realities, and even other dimensions—is being swallowed up by a vast present moment that's like a big reality ball around us. Right now, we are learning to pay attention in the moment to the deeper parts of ourselves which are no longer hidden "somewhere else"—but are immediately at hand. We are looking to discover who we really are and thus are in an intense process of clearing fear-based ideas and beliefs—what I call "clutter"—because we have a glimmer of another way to be and live that's much more elegant. So we're moving from the Information Age to the Intuition Age, learning to perceive with our whole brain and body.

Signs on a marketing level

This general rise in consciousness also applies to the marketing world. In his book *Marketing Rebellion*, Mark Schaefer shares that many of his clients—chief marketing officers of big corporations—express their frustration over a steady decline in marketing results. It's true that what worked ten years ago no longer works today. The client's needs are different, and tolerance level for pushy marketing has hit an all-time low.

Society at large is changing and will continue to change, and to paraphrase the title of Marshall Goldsmith's 2007 book, what got us here won't get us there.

And yet, whenever someone suggests change, there will be resistance based on different fears:

- **The fear to let go of the old:** We feel safe with what's familiar. For over a decade, we have become more and more accustomed to a certain way of marketing, which I refer to in this book as "traditional" or "hype." It's characterized by more automation, more distance, and less connection with our people. Stepping out from behind the scenes is scary, and many internet marketers have purposely built giant businesses with no human interaction. It's all based on volume and number of transactions. But even if that approach is still working to some extent now, it won't continue to work in the near future. The modern customer just won't be interested in that type of transaction anymore.
- **The fear of uncertainty:** In his book *Uncertainty: Turning Fear and Doubt into Fuel for Brilliance*, Jonathan Fields writes, "But that uncertainty can lead to fear, anxiety, paralysis, and destruction. It can gut creativity and stifle innovation. It can keep you from taking the risks necessary to do great work and craft a deeply rewarding life. Besides letting go of the old, embracing the unknown is a hard passage in any transformation. And there are usually no guarantees. So that's why the pain to continue with the old needs to be so big that one would rather deal with the fear of uncertainty."
- **The fear of survival:** Our society favors doing over being, so we keep doing. It's easy to focus on sending out more emails, getting more leads, making more sales calls, and running more ads. It makes us feel safe because at least we're doing something. Just like the man in the parable preferred to search for his keys in the light, where it was easy and felt safe. To let go of that hustling mode in order to just be—and be more gentle, at that—sounds absurd. It triggers a primal, deep fear of survival that's totally understandable. After all, we all need to pay our bills.

Embrace the fears and move forward anyway

I hope that this book provides you with the tools to navigate this transition, to embrace the fears and move forward anyway. I promise that it will be worth it! You'll finally feel whole again, like you can breathe after holding your breath for years. Imagine enjoying the marketing process again, attracting your ideal clients (those who get you and you get them), and making a difference for yourself, your clients, and the world.

It's possible. And if you've read this far, you know that the only way out is through.

The 7 Ps of marketing, improved

"A mandala is the psychological expression of the totality of the self." — Carl Jung

"Each person's life is like a mandala - a vast, limitless circle. We stand in the center of our own circle, and everything we see, hear, and think forms the mandala of our life." — Pema Chodron

After I had reserved the domain name TheGentleBusinessRevolution.com, I started to think about the differences between traditional marketing and my concept of Humane Marketing (back then still called Gentle Marketing). One day I came across a video that talked about the 7 Ps of marketing.

Of course this was not a new concept to me. I had seen and heard it many times before, and you probably have as well. Or maybe you've heard about the 4 Ps. There are different versions:

The traditional 4 Ps are:

Product
Place
Price
Promotion

The traditional 7 Ps are:

Product
Place
Price
Promotion
People
Processes
Physical Evidence

While watching this video, the image of a mandala came to me. My mum was sometimes coloring mandalas, but otherwise I didn't know much about them. So I did what you would do as well: I started Googling.

And here is what I learned: "Mandala" is Sanskrit for "circle," "essence," or "container." Any creative process that happens in a circle can be referred to as a mandala. It's a creative process that brings us closer to our center. Mandalas are cosmic diagrams— attempts to represent the essential elements of the macrocosm in an ordered, coherent manner.

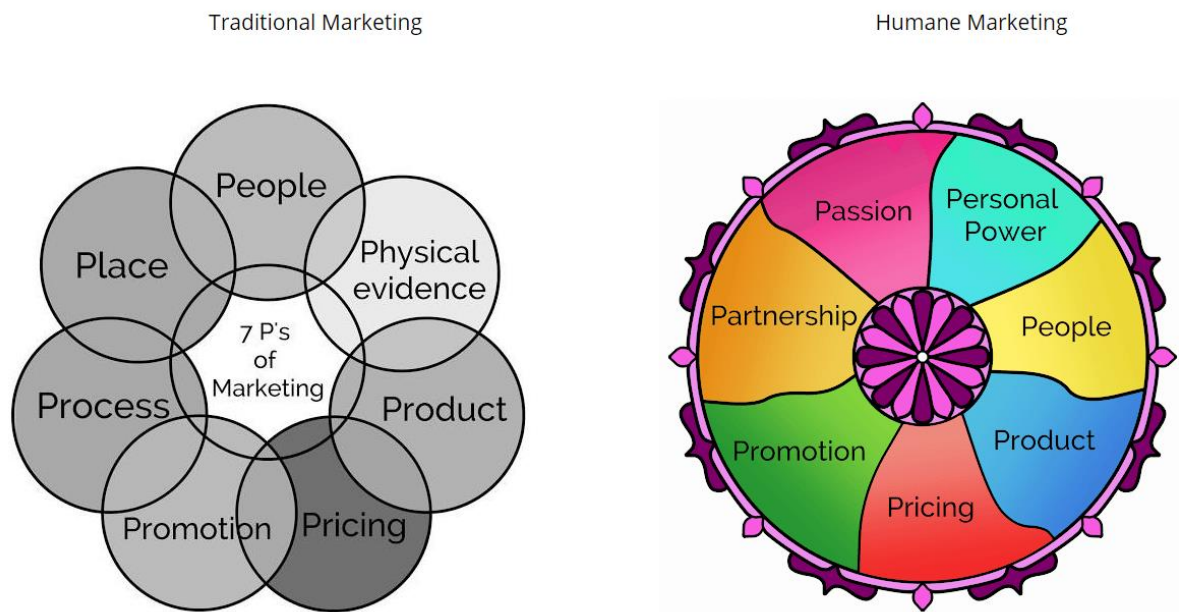
Psychoanalyst Carl Jung, in his exploration of his own interior life, began to make mandalas and discovered how beneficial the process was for helping him peel away the layers and get to his center. He used them in therapy to help others get to their center.

I was hooked. I even found an online course on mandalas (thank you, Heather Plett). It triggered my creative brain, and within a few days I had a first draft of a completely remodeled version of the 7 Ps of marketing represented in the form of a mandala.

How is the Humane Marketing Mandala different from the 7 Ps of marketing?

When comparing the two frameworks, you'll notice that there are certain Ps that remain the same (People, Product, Pricing, and Promotion). I found that those areas are essential in any kind of marketing, so I kept them. But I also kicked some out: Physical Evidence, Place, and Process. They were, in my opinion, less important than some of the

new aspects of Humane Marketing that I needed to bring in. The discarded Ps are also more related to brick-and-mortar companies (Place and Physical Evidence), so I took the liberty to replace them with Passion, Personal Power, and Partnership.



Here's a breakdown:

- Passion replaces Place. Physical location is no longer relevant in our global online marketplace. However, starting with your WHY, or your passion, is the key to marketing your business with joy!
- People are People. The need to reach and connect with your conscious customer is ever-present!
- Personal Power replaces Physical Evidence. Signage, packaging and brick-and-mortar locations are less visible online. Knowing yourself, your values, and what you stand for matters more in today's overcrowded online market.
- Product is still your unique Product or Service, but we focus on value creation for your conscious customer and the world.
- Pricing is key for any business, but in Humane Marketing we align value creation with fair pricing to create win-win-win situations. There's a win for the client, a win for you, and a win for the world, with no more undercharging or underearning. Your result is satisfied clients who always receive value for their investment.
- Promotion remains, but the promotion methods transform from fear-based and fake to conscious and authentic.
- Partnership replaces Process. Yes, processes have merit, but the real fuel for your business lies in the power of partnership and collaboration. Partnership also nixes the feeling of going it alone as a solopreneur.

Looking at my new Humane Marketing Mandala, it became clear that marketing is not just about doing! The first two Ps (Passion and Personal Power) are probably THE most

important ones, and they have nothing to do with marketing but everything to do with being.

I realized that in order to embrace Humane Marketing, I had gone on an inner journey of transformation that led me from a deep existential anxiety to a place of absolute freedom, serenity, and trust. And that's the journey I'd like to invite you on.

Humane Marketing in three phases

"The journey requires only one faithful step after another. Walk on." — Heather Plett

"The point of a maze is to find its center. The point of a labyrinth is to find your center." — Gailand MacQueen

As I mentioned earlier, this is not your typical how-to marketing book focused on growing your business. Rather, it's a guidebook for the journey of changing how you think about marketing. It helps you move from "necessary evil" to "joyful creative process" in order to resonate with your people.

At the same time as I was researching mandalas, I kept coming across the symbol of the labyrinth. In response to a post on LinkedIn asking if anyone knew a specialist in mandalas, I was introduced to Alison. In an email exchange, she wrote to me:

"Labyrinth" and "Mandala" are the same word in Sanskrit and both are sacred. I work with labyrinths as a pathway to the heart, the other side, higher self, etc. They are my passion and can also serve to solve problems and provide a very real non-left brain linear response to direct questions.

I loved the concept and image, but at the time it didn't fit my idea of wanting to represent the 7 Ps for Humane Marketing. So I stuck with the mandala.

Still, the labyrinth kept coming up—in a course I took, meditations I followed, and even a real stone labyrinth in a forest next to my sister's house. In the meantime, I had learned that the path of the labyrinth represents a journey to our own center and back again out into the world.

There are three stages when walking a labyrinth:

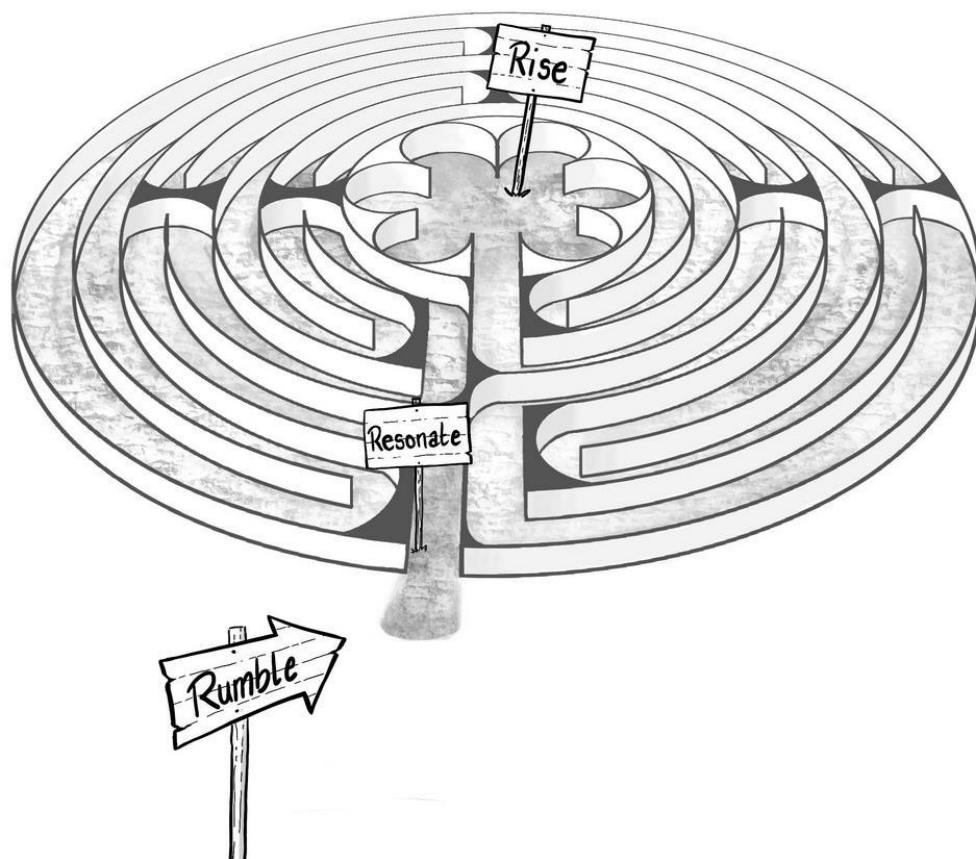
- Release: Walking toward the center, releasing and shedding what no longer belongs, finding your authentic self
- Receive: Reaching the center and pausing to receive whatever messages or insights come as a result of being there
- Return: Taking whatever you have learned and received back into the world

I continued thinking that labyrinths popping up in my life were just a coincidence until I was working with a book coach on this chapter and the clouds parted. I could see that

the three phases of the Humane Marketing journey were like the phases of the labyrinth journey. And the 7 Ps of Humane Marketing were landmarks along the path.

So I have structured this book around the three phases of transformation:

- Rumble
- Rise
- Resonate



The journey starts with going inwards to figure out who you are, then giving yourself permission to rise and shine in your unique way so that you resonate with and attract only those people you are meant to serve and truly enjoy serving.

RUMBLE: Forget your client's avatar. Start with yourself.

In traditional marketing, they brainwashed us with this idea of our client's avatar. The client is king, they told us. Know thy client. Every marketing course I ever took went on and on about how important it was to know your client's avatar or customer personas.

I thought I knew my client quite well. He wanted more: more leads, more clients, more money. He was some kind of consultant or executive coach working with corporate or B2B decision-makers. Thus, his clients were on LinkedIn. He made about \$150,000 to

\$250,000 per year, had a single detached house, and drove a Prius or a Lexus. He was in his fifties, married or divorced, experienced in his field, and a nice guy.

Sounds like I did my homework on my avatar, right?

Why, then, did it always feel like a Tinder date gone wrong?

Because I didn't start with MYSELF. I didn't know what I wanted.

I suggest we reverse the model and selfishly start with ourselves. In the process, we'll help our ideal client in a way that's better for them too. Figure out who YOU are and what YOU want so you attract ideal clients who are a good fit for YOU.

Picking up the labyrinth again, this is where you walk toward your center and release all the things that no longer belong. You rumble with your unique story, find out what matters to you, and release other people's expectations and "shoulds." Along the way, you will come across the landmarks of Passion and Personal Power and even Pricing. You will stop in front of them and reflect on your values, your unique design, your definition of success, and even your "enough."

RISE: Stop conforming. Be different and rise.

The second phase is your permission slip to stop conforming. You're different, and it's time to rise above the noise and the "shoulds."

Rising is about using your unique (and quirky) superpowers in your marketing, giving yourself permission to be different. It's about doing marketing your way—aligned with your worldview and values—while feeling good and having fun.

And remember, you're not alone: rising is more fun together, with like-minded partners who have the same intention of using business for good and making this world a better place.

Picture yourself standing in the middle of the labyrinth, receiving your very personal message to do marketing your way and have fun with it! In this center, your right brain (the creative brain) turns on and helps you see fresh ideas for Promotion and Partnership that are joyful and liberating! You're free!

RESONATE: Stop chasing after clients. Instead, attract those who are in harmony with your beliefs and guiding principles.

In traditional marketing, we started with a solution and then chased after a problem. We treated our clients as if they were problems.

In Humane Marketing, we create a solution that we're passionate about and that we know solves a specific problem, and then we communicate.

Marketing = Connection. Connection = Communication.

In this third phase we finally get curious about our clients. It's not only about who they are and where they live; we want to get into their brains and find out what they think and feel.

Going deep helps us really understand them and then apply empathy in our communication. Once we know who our clients are and what they're struggling with, we're ready to communicate.

Not only do we understand their problem, but we also have the same value system and a similar worldview. We think alike. We read the same books. We listen to the same podcasts. We "get" them. We just happen to also have a solution to their problem.

Resonating is about attracting, not chasing, and attracting starts with ourselves. To attract like-minded people, we need to give customer-centric marketing a rest and bring more of ourselves to our marketing. Not more of our product—more of our stories, our values, and our worldview. It's everything we discovered about ourselves in RUMBLE.

This is the returning phase of the labyrinth. You're now marketing from your heart, and on your way back you share this love with the world. By doing so and marketing with empathy and kindness, you attract your ideal clients because they resonate with you on a deep level. They're in harmony with your beliefs and guiding principles.

Too many concepts? Forget about the 7 Ps of Humane Marketing for now and let me guide you through the three phases of the labyrinth:

- Rumble
- Rise
- Resonate

How this book works

There are a few things to know about how I structured this book:

Thought-provoking questions

Besides the three phases—Rumble, Rise, Resonate—and the final part on integration, this book also includes a series of thought-provoking questions at the end of each chapter. The goal is to encourage you to reflect, raise your awareness, see the gaps, and finally apply the concepts to your own business. So grab a pencil and don't be afraid to use it! Alternatively, you can download the worksheets as well as other great resources at www.humane.marketing/book1.

Vulnerability stories

Along the way I share my own stories (just look for #vulnerabilityalert) and those of other Humane Marketers who have either switched to or have always used the Humane Marketing approach. All of them have thriving businesses according to their own definition of success.

Multicultural muses

Given my multicultural background, I sprinkle in teasers to invite you to think outside of geographical limitations and go on imaginary trips to different places (look for #multiculturalmuse). These cues may include references to my multicultural background, different habits and traditions, and different levels of advancement.

A bit of woo-woo

Since this book is really a hybrid of self-development and marketing, you'll find one more hashtag that I call #woowooprompts. These are invitations to go deeper into the spiritual realm of self-discovery and become the person who gives herself permission to do business and marketing her way. If that's not your cup of tea, just skip them.

A bit of fun!

You'll notice a bit of a sheep theme in this book. That's my way of weaving in some of my "sheepish" humor while writing. For some added fun while reading, count the sheep.

A note to Marketing Impact Pioneers

I wrote this book for individuals because, in my mind, a revolution starts with individuals, not companies. Having over a decade of experience in the online entrepreneurial world, I felt compelled to start there. But although the three phases are a personal transformation for individuals, the Humane Marketing Mandala can serve as a simple framework to present this fresh approach of marketing to your team. So while you read, jot down notes on how you could apply Humane Marketing in your organization. I'm so glad you're here! You're the maverick that the corporate world needs so desperately! P.S. There's a letter for you in Part IV.

OK, let's start this journey.

Still reading? That's great. I'm ready to bet that you'll enjoy the rest of the book 😊

Buy your copy on [this page](#).

'See you' in the book.

Sarah

About the Author

Sarah Santacroce is changing the current marketing and sales paradigm.

Twelve years of running a successful LinkedIn consulting business inspired a yearning in Sarah to create a global movement that encourages people to bring more empathy and kindness to business and marketing.

As a “Hippie Turned Business Coach,” Sarah hosts the Humane Marketing podcast and works with heart-centered entrepreneurs to question their assumptions when it comes to marketing and give them permission to market their business their way, the gentle way!

Thought of as an influencer in her field, Sarah is a frequent speaker at conferences and has been featured on many podcasts and radio shows. Some of the most prestigious universities and business schools in the world, including Rutgers University New Jersey, HEC Paris, IMD, and EPFL Lausanne hire Sarah to train their students for LinkedIn best practices.

Sarah shares a fresh perspective and doesn't shy away from calling things out that no longer work for many of us when it comes to the current marketing model. Her clients sometimes refer to her as “the female Seth Godin.”

When she's not working, she loves adventure and traveling, yoga and nature walks, and hanging out with her family.

Find out more about Sarah at www.sarahsantacroce.com and www.humane.marketing.

