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## SPEAKERS

Robyn Graham, Britney Gardner

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**B** Britney Gardner 00:05  
Hello, Robin. Welcome to The Know, Like, and Trust Show.

**R** Robyn Graham 00:08  
Britney, thank you for having me. I'm so excited to be here. When we connected by email originally, I was just excited to even become aware of who you are because we have an interesting connection in terms of our career paths, so I'm super excited to be here.

**B** Britney Gardner 00:28  
It's always funny to me how you're doing your thing. You're out there, you're working, you're with clients, and then you find out that someone's doing something so similar to you. And you're like, "How did I not know that this person existed? Like, shouldn't I be aware of that?" But I think that's kind of one of the cool things about about online business in general is that there's there's room for so many people. And there's need for so many people, even if you do similarly aligned things. I think that's that's pretty cool. But how similarly our careers have aligned is kind of crazy.

**R** Robyn Graham 01:00  
Yeah, it really is. It really is.

**B** Britney Gardner 01:03  
So I know that, obviously, you're going to be talking about branding, and all of that. And I have in the past on the show talked quite a bit about it. But not nearly as much over the last year or so. So I'm excited to kind of dive into what I and you probably would consider basics. But I think that our audiences both need

like a really good reminder about. But I'd also like to hear a little bit from you how you ended up in the world of branding in the first place, because I know this was not the first thing that you were doing.

R

Robyn Graham 01:36

No. So just to kind of wrap my life up in a nutshell, I actually went to college and got a doctorate in pharmacy. But I never did traditional pharmacy. I either worked in a hospital on a clinical team or I was in the managed care sector. So I did a lot of marketing. I worked with the marketing departments and helped them actually sell the pharmacy benefits to their clients, and bring them in as our clients. And so I loved that atmosphere. But it wasn't until many years into my career that I decided based on our family life and complete chaos with my husband's travel schedule, me traveling, and three kids and travel sports and everything that I was going to step away from that and I was going to follow my passion and become a professional photographer. That's what we have in common, too. And so over the years, I was doing photography, but what I realized from the get go was that branding photography, which 10 years ago wasn't really a thing. It was website, photography, maybe a CD cover, but it wasn't truly branding photography. But that's what I loved. And I very quickly discovered that's where I wanted to be. I wanted to be working with professionals. I still needed that strategic component going in my mind, I still needed to have that intellectual component going, not just the creative side. And so as I was working with headshot clients, working with branding clients, I realized that there was this real need for understanding brand strategy and building a solid foundation for a business not just going out and saying, "Okay, here, I do this," and then marketing yourself, but really creating that personal brand and being present so people could not only get to know, like, and trust you, but also, you know, form those relationships with you that are going to easily convert, so you can sell without selling. And so that's how I got into the strategy component -- just really, completely for free and accidentally, helping my clients with building their personal brands. And then, you know, deciding, "Hey, I'm doing this. I'm going to charge for it." But of course, you know, all of that being said, this is what, you know, I had to learn for myself. And so the more I learned for myself, and then took certification classes, the more I realized how much I could help and serve other people who were starting a business so that they didn't have to go down that rabbit hole of what do I buy? Who do I listen to online? How do I put myself out there and what funnel is best, or what email provider is best? You know, all those questions that people have and spend a fortune on learning not to get anywhere.

B

Britney Gardner 04:08

You know, I think that one of the things that you said in particular that I'd like to touch on, you know, you said people were coming to you and almost by accident you fell into to brand strategy because you were able to provide, you know, a piece of it, you know, the visual photographic piece. And this is something that I kind of could just sign my name to as well. People were getting the photographs and they're looking at them and they're like, "This is great. I look great. I love how this makes me feel. I'm hoping that it will help my clients feel the same way, but what do I do with it?" And and you mentioned the intellectual point, as well as the creative for yourself. And I think for me it's always been the same, right? I love making something beautiful. I very much value beauty as a part of my life. But I also want it to do something. I want it to have some depth and meaning to it. And branding as a whole is a piece that anyone in this field has to constantly educate everyone else around. But I think that the way you kind of came at it just to me makes so much sense. But to the outside world, they hear how you and I each kind of fell into brand strategy, and they're like, "But how?" You know?

R

Robyn Graham 05:30

R

Robyn Granam 05:30

Yeah, well, it is funny, and you hit the nail on the head, because nobody knows what to do with these pictures. And it's really quite simple. You want them to attract your ideal audience, you want them to be the gateway into your heart and soul so they can get to know a little bit about you and really form that emotional connection with you. But once you start placing those pictures, there's still so much more to being able to, you as a content creator, get this more than anyone, being able to tell your story and communicate how you can best serve other people through your life experiences. And, you know, the the images are a start, but people would have them and they'd be gorgeous. And they would think, "Oh, this is wonderful. I never looked so good." But they had no idea what depth those images could provide their business. And so it started with the images and then built on that foundation of okay, here's how you use the images, but it goes so much farther than just putting an image up on social media or putting an image up as a headshot. So yeah, I know you agree. And we're totally on the same page on that front.

B

Britney Gardner 06:34

One of the things I said in a talk I gave -- it's been a couple years ago now -- but I said something along the lines of, "Yes, a picture is worth 1000 words. But the right words are worth all the pictures." And I think that kind of relationship between words and pictures kind of really accurately describes how we talked about brand strategy and content strategy in my world, at least, as it relates to online businesses like ours and like the audience's and everything. Because, yes, you need these pictures, you need them to speak to your best client, you need them to elicit that kind of emotional connection that you're talking about. And those pictures do such a fantastic job at hooking people in and gaining that attention. But, you know, you can yell "fire" in a crowded room and get attention. But you're not going to be able to keep it unless you've got some substance behind it. And to me, that's where the strategy really comes in. Right? Like you need strategy. Yes, use these gorgeous visuals, hook people in, get their attention on you, but then back it up with the substance of what your brand, actually is, which obviously you and I both agree on is so much more than your color palette and your font choice and whatnot.

R

Robyn Graham 07:51

Yes, 100%. And I like to describe it as, and this is something that I learned from studying under Marty Neumeier, if anyone is familiar with him, but he always says that your brand is that gut feeling people have of you when they first meet you. And I like to say your personal brand is what other people think, say, and feel about you. And that's whether you're there with them or not in the room with them. But it really, truly is that perception other people have of you. And your branding to me is how you communicate, your story that differentiates you from all other people in your space. And as you do that, telling people what makes you unique? Why are you the perfect fit for them versus somebody else who does the exact same thing? And I think for you especially, you get it because of the content creation strategies that you put in place for your clients. And you have to have that strategy with telling that story so that it can effectively impact the thoughts that other people have of you. And that perception, they hold of you. Because let's face it, at the end of the day, I'm not for everyone. You're not for everyone. No one is, right? So we have to make sure that we're connecting with those people that we're truly called to serve and to serve them the best way possible.

B

Britney Gardner 09:13

So I know that you're a big fan of making sure that your branding is incorporating your your passions and your values, and how are you helping guide your clients with that?

R

Robyn Graham 09:25

So a lot of times people come to me and they don't have clarity. And I love to dig into that and help them discover that, right? And one of the ways that I do that is to have my clients take a look and list out their values, their visions, and their passions. And if you think of a Venn diagram, at some point on those lists, they're all three going to overlap. And in my opinion, I believe that that is where your purpose is. You call it a niche, call it a purpose, but that's where you're going to be the most fulfilled and that's where you can best serve your audience. And so it helps you not only figure out what you're meant to be doing or where you're going to be the most fueled, but also who you're meant to be working with. Who are those people that need you to solve a problem that your skill set your passions, your vision, your values, where those can align with what those people you want to serve actually need.

B

Britney Gardner 10:22

So, I like that you kind of give the visual of the Venn diagram, right, because, you know, the overlapping aspect is really important here. And I also like that there's three categories that we're looking at, right? So values, visions, and passions. These are different things for everybody, but the vision portion I have not heard anybody else in branding talk about. So would you mind diving into that a little bit deeper?

R

Robyn Graham 10:52

So I like to think of it as you know, when you're a child, you have dreams of what you want to be when you grow up? And you can actually see yourself... Those of us who thought, "Oh, I want to be a photographer, I want to be an artist. I want to be a teacher. I want to be a doctor." You can actually envision yourself being whatever that is. Right? Like, I mean, as a child, you have these daydreams and even going through college and studying whatever you're studying -- I knew I was going to be a pharmacist, I knew that I had visions of myself being with patients. It was never like a completely clear vision. But I had that vision. And I think so many of us have those childhood dreams, those aspirations, but they get pushed aside. They don't come to fruition because other people are telling us what we should do or how we should live our life or how we should pursue our dreams. And so a lot of times those things that we think that we want to do, and we can really visualize ourselves doing and the people that we can visualize ourselves helping or serving, they get pushed to the wayside. My audience is primarily women who are in their second phase. And so they're transitioning from corporate to entrepreneurship or stay at home mom to entrepreneurship. And so, if they're lacking clarity, it's where do you see yourself? Where do you see yourself working? Where do you see yourself presenting? Where do you see yourself working with your clients? What do you see yourself doing to help your clients and tapping into those inside visions that we all have, we just don't pay attention to. Does that make sense?

B

Britney Gardner 12:36

It makes perfect sense. And I like the way that you look back to childhood things. And I was thinking about this recently, I've not shared this on the show yet, but I definitely watched the name of the show *The Adventures of Lois and Clark*. You know, 25-30 years ago, right? I watched Teri Hatcher as Lois Lane on there, and I was like, "I want to be a journalist." And my dad was like, "No, you don't. They don't make any money." And, you know, like, it was always kind of in the back of my head. And then, you know, eventually I went to school, I had a microbiology major. I dropped out. I became a photographer. And I was always

like, "Yeah, this is no reality based on anything I said I was going to do as a kid." And then, you know, eventually photography became branding photography, branding photography became more brand strategy. And now further into content strategy, where I'm mostly writing for a living. And it's not quite journalism, let's be honest. Copywriting and journalism are not the same thing. Most of the time, at least. But it does kind of circle back there. And that's a kind of an interesting realization that I've thought about here and there in the back of my head a couple times over the last year or two, but I haven't really put into words yet. And I love that you described it that way, and just kind of brought it up for me.

R

Robyn Graham 13:53

Yeah, that's cool. And I love that. And really, if you think about it, copywriting is similar to journalism, just because you are digging in and having to discover all those facts and all the information and do your research as you're creating, right?

B

Britney Gardner 14:08

The research part is definitely similar.

R

Robyn Graham 14:17

You're connecting with people, and you're educating and you're sharing and all those. So it's a little bit similar. But yeah, that's really cool. I love that.

B

Britney Gardner 14:26

So that's visions. And then we have values and passions. And when I talk about values, I'm usually talking about core values. Are you in the same realm? Or do you look at it differently?

R

Robyn Graham 14:35

Those things that really make you who you are and that have to align with your clients as well. Like you can't have clients who have values at the complete opposite spectrum of yours because you're not going to be able to serve them. And they're not gonna be able to accept your guidance as well. So it's really important to understand where you're coming from as a person from your values perspective.

B

Britney Gardner 15:07

Yes, 100%. And then passions. And I'm assuming the way you're talking about passions, like things that you genuinely love doing, where your your enthusiasm for what you're doing cannot help but spillover into the work.

R

Robyn Graham 15:22

Absolutely. I like to describe it when you do something, and you get almost like the butterflies in your

stomach. Where your whole body just feels kind of lit up, and I don't mean like a woowoo way. I mean you really feel it in your heart and soul that this is what I meant to be doing. Or this is what I really, really love. And if I can do this, I can help so many people. But it really excites you. It just lights you up and moves you into action. So once your client has a little more clarity, once they've looked at these three areas, they've found that overlap -- and this is probably a question you get a lot, it's a question I certainly got a lot at one point in time -- it was like okay, so this is what my brand means. But how do I put that into effect with my work? How do I actually apply that to my business?

B

Britney Gardner 16:20

So you know, you've got your clarity on your values, your passions, your visions, you've found the overlapping area, you've got that kind of direction. Most people I have found, at that point, they're like, "Okay, this is what my brand is. I have words that I can use to describe my brand. But now what do I do with it?"

R

Robyn Graham 16:46

Oh, well, now you've got to start telling everyone. But really, what I like to say is once that's identified, clarity doesn't stop there. Because you've really got to fine tune who your ideal audience is as well. Like, who are those people that you want to serve? So you've got to do a little bit more work when it comes to that. But then you've got to start creating your content. And you have to have a platform to put that content. I am a firm believer in having a website. I just feel like it takes the level of professionalism up 100 notches and makes you look like somebody that people want to hire. I am not a fan of businesses running their business off of Facebook or another platform because they don't own those platforms. At any given time those can go away. I just really believe that you need a home for your business or a foundation for your business. And I think your website is that because you can run so many things straight away from that. But that website has to be set up so that people can readily get to know who you are. And from there, they're going to start to trust you. But that's what your website is for. And then of course, directing traffic there and being that place where people can hire you from. So once you know what you're going to be doing, where your values, visions, and passions align, and then who the audience is that you're going to serve, you can start creating that content. And that content should tell the story of how you can serve your clients and what differentiates you from anyone else in your space and what you can do to help your clients and how you're going to help them. And what your why is. Why are you doing what you're doing? Why does it matter to them? And why should they care about what you can do for them? So really communicating all of those things. And I personally think it's important to to share what your values, visions, and passions are, maybe not necessarily the visions as much, but definitely incorporate in your content, at least your copy on your website, your values and your passions. Because that lets people know like more about that why and more about your personality to see if they're going to truly resonate and connect with you. And then from there, once the website is finished, then you can start with your social media platforms. I believe that they all have to be cohesive and consistent. And so, you know, when we talk about brand identity, which is your logo, your color palette, your typography, all of those things need to be consistent across all of your platforms, because they help you become more recognizable and more memorable. And we know that when we're more recognizable and more memorable, we're not only going to gain the confidence of our audience, they're going to start to trust us more, but we're also going to be more shareable because they just know us better. And so, you know, everything has to be, like I said, cohesive so that the foundation for trust can start to build and then messaging content, you know this, you know that comes into place so importantly whenever everything is consistent, because your messaging has to be consistent. You don't want to have on your website that you do XYZ but then on social media you're posting about completely different things. So It all ties back in together. But that's why clarity is so

important. Because once you have that clarity, then you're going to feel more confident with yourself. And when you feel more confident with yourself, your audience is going to feel more confident with you. And when you're more confident with yourself, you're going to trust yourself more, and then your audience is going to trust you more.

B

Britney Gardner 20:20

I cannot agree with you more on that part that, you know, the more confident you are, the easier it is for people to continue following you. They may have happened upon you, by accident, they may have been referred over to you. And you know, I've heard so many different places and sources talk about how the sales lifecycle is growing longer right now. And, you know, the days of someone finding you and booking you the following week are pretty much over. You know, you might get a random one that does that, right? But the lifecycle of a sales process is lengthening. And as a result, you know, you need to keep the consistency up so people have a reason to continually follow you. But also that confidence piece that you were mentioning. I love talking about this because I have found that people who really struggle to show up consistently, they almost kneecap themselves, right? So if you're not showing up consistently, let's say you show up, you know, once this week and twice next week, and then the following week, not at all, you know that lack of consistency on your own part not only decreases your confidence in yourself, it decreases people's ability to follow you and engage with you, so you aren't getting feedback, which lowers your confidence even further. Whereas, you know, even if you can only consistently show up once a week, if people know what to expect from you, they know to go find it, they know to go look for it. And when it pops up for them, whether on social media, if it just happens upon their feed, due to the algorithm or whatever, they're more willing to, at that point, continually look for it and continually follow because they're confident that little micro-commitment of searching your name on Instagram or looking up your podcast is going to result in them actually finding something new to engage with. I don't know about you, Robyn, but one of my biggest pet peeves is a podcast that I have grown to like, and I open my podcast app when I'm driving to the gym and there's nothing from that new person in like two weeks. And it's not like they said, "Oh, hey, we're at the end of the season." You know what I mean? There's just nothing there. It's been two weeks, and then all the sudden you're like, "I haven't seen anything from them since May. Are they done done? Are they just taking a break?" And, you know, for me, as someone who's on the go, if I look up someone and there's nothing there for me, I'm not going to look them up again. I just don't have that much attention span, I don't have that much time on my hands to engage with other content. So if I don't see it there, you've probably lost me.

R

Robyn Graham 22:57

Yeah, I agree. And it's disappointing. And I think anytime someone feels that sense of disappointment, they're gone. Because then they're not going to believe you're going to be for them and be there for them when they truly need you to be. And I think the other thing, you know, related to confidence, because we live in such an online digital world, and we're all trying to build our personal brands online so that we can be visible, imposter syndrome creeps in so easily. And if we don't have confidence, we're going to get sucked into that. And then once that comparison-itis, so to speak, and you know, the lack of confidence because of that creeps in and fear sets in. And then we stay in a place of procrastination and inaction. And so we have to put ourselves in the position to be consistent straight from the beginning, and then just stick with it. And I always say, if you can't commit to posting on social media five times a week, or posting a blog once a week, or four times a month or whatever, then don't put those restrictions or demands on yourself. Commit to three times a week. Your audience may not grow as fast, but as long as you're being

consistent with the audience you have and you're even growing slowly, you're going to have opportunities to build a warm audience and connect with people that can potentially hire you, but not showing up at all is never going to be the win

B

Britney Gardner 24:25

100%. And the beauty of having that brand clarity that you've been talking about is even if you don't have something planned -- and obviously from a content strategy point of view, please have something planned -- but let's be honest, we've all had those times where either the thing we did have planned suddenly isn't appropriate because of what's happening in the world. Or, hey, you know, you meant to have two things scheduled for this week, but, look, I only had one. And, oh, I should probably do something, right? Like we're all going to have those situations and when you have the brand clarity that you've been talking about, it is really easy to do something kind of ad hoc. You've got that filter, that brand filter kind of set up. These are my values. Let's just talk about how this value applied to a client experience. Let's talk about how this passion of mine was able to be lived out in this business offering. And you've always got something to talk about when you've kind of done that upfront work on what your brand means to your business and how you're going to use that going forward.

R

Robyn Graham 25:23

Yeah, I agree. And, you know, really with technology the way it is, for those instances, I have a notes file/folder on my phone, and if I have not planned out my content for the week, or I've had something come up that just isn't the message I want to send out today, because like you said, we all have those moments in time. So I can pull something from those notes. And maybe they're a quote from somebody else. Maybe it's just something I saw that's inspirational. Or maybe it's something that I just wrote down because I thought or putting those notes because I thought someday I want to refer back to that because I definitely need to share it. And so you can pull from those resources so that you don't feel stressed and overwhelmed with trying to come up with something to say.

B

Britney Gardner 26:12

Yep, absolutely. I think that's a really great place for us to close up this discussion. I love what you were saying about incorporating the creative aspects and the intellectual aspects into what you wanted to do with business, and from my perspective, brand strategy is such a great way to do both. You know, a lot of people think of branding as a creative process, but there's a lot of thought, and sometimes a lot of research that goes into it. And I like the way you kind of marry those two in what you're doing. So if someone is interested in kind of gaining that insight and guidance for their business, how can they find you?

R

Robyn Graham 26:50

The best way to find me is I'm therobyngraham with a Y everywhere. So my website is therobyngraham.com and I'm @therobyngraham on Instagram, Pinterest, Twitter, LinkedIn everywhere. I love to connect with people. I also have a Facebook group called the Female Entrepreneur Insider, and I would welcome people there as well but I'm pretty easy to find so just therobyngraham.



Britney Gardner 27:15

Perfect. Robin, thank you so much.



Robyn Graham 27:17

Thank you. It was an honor to be here.