

Andrew: This session is about how to understand your target market so you can grow your community and it's led by Stephanie Burns. She is the founder of Chic CEO, a site which helps women build businesses. I'll help facilitate. My name is Andrew Warner. I am the founder of Mixergy, where proven founders, like Stephanie, teach. Stephanie, we're going to talk about the success you've had with Chic CEO and how much help you've given other entrepreneurs. But it's important to start off by talking about the time when you had a challenge getting traction. What was that period like for you?

Stephanie: Well, Andrew, truly Chic CEO started from zero.

Andrew: Mm-hmm.

Stephanie: I had no money, no marketing budgets. I worked in marketing, but I had no resources really to market Chic CEO and grow my community. So for a long time there, it was really just a very small list, maybe two to three hundred people that were friends of mine that I'd grown throughout my network here, living in San Diego for some time.

Andrew: Mm-hmm.

Stephanie: And now we're up to 60,000. But I had no money to do anything like that. So I really had to start getting scrappy and it was rough.

Andrew: And this is the way the site looked back then when you were just getting going.

Stephanie: That's the very first site. That was our very first advertiser there on the left. Yeah . . .

Andrew: Shoebox, that was the advertiser.

Stephanie: My very first advertiser I got, yup.

Andrew: And at the time you didn't know how to get inside people's heads. As you look at this page, what makes you say, "Mm, I'm off because I didn't fully get the customer back then, the community member?"

Stephanie: If you notice, there is no way on that homepage for me to capture an email address. There was a join button but it's in the main now but it's really buried. And there was really no way for me to engage with my consumer. It was more of me just talking at them, hoping that they got the information. But I was getting zero feedback. I was getting no . . . my list wasn't really growing. It was a pretty rough period.

I wanted to create a resource that women could use and understand and it would be helpful, but my mistake was that there was no feedback loop. There was no way for me to engage with them and bring them onboard.

Andrew: Ah, I see, okay. Not even basics of email and all the stuff that we're going

to talk about obviously wasn't there yet, either. Today you are very good at it. How many people did you say were in the community?

Stephanie: About 60,000.

Andrew: And this is one way that you do that, that you engage people. What are you doing on Facebook?

Stephanie: We do a lot on Facebook. We have about 14,000 followers now and this program here is an old program that we used to have . . .

Andrew: Mm-hmm.

Stephanie: . . . called the Chic Siren Membership Program. And it took me a long time to put together a membership program. I didn't want to put any information behind a cash curtain. We finally opened it up. We only had 8,000 people on our list at that point when I launched that, and that was the first time that we really dug in deeper with our consumer and asked them what they wanted. And from then on is when we really started growing a whole lot more.

Andrew: I'm looking here at my notes and now you have the private group where people get to talk to you, you have the monthly mixers where people get to talk to you, you have lots of different ways as we'll see here for people to talk to you so you can understand them, and that's what you use to speak to future members of your community, by showing them, "Hey, I understand what you're thinking."

And the way you understand it is by getting inside people's heads. Let's talk about how you do that. I've got a big board here. Let me bring it up to show the audience. These are the different tactics that we're going to be talking about when we get as specific as possible. And the first thing that you say is, "Do not assume that you know what people want." And you did that here. What are we looking at here?

Stephanie: Well, one of the big things that we kept hearing was our community didn't have access to funding.

Andrew: Mm-hmm.

Stephanie: They were frustrated. They couldn't grow because they didn't have any money. And it was a really interesting time for us and crowd funding was really big. And if you're in the startup community, you know what crowd funding is.

Andrew: Yeah.

Stephanie: You understand what that means. Our community did not understand what that meant. We moved forward building our own crowd funding platform without asking them if that's something that they wanted. We just assumed that they would want their own crowd funding portal and we launched it to Crickets.

Andrew: I see.

Stephanie: We had a few people on there but truly, nobody understood what a crowd funding platform was. They had heard of Kickstarter but they had no idea what it meant to crowd fund. And they expected us to be doing the promotion for them with the crowd funding platform, and as you know and what most people know now a year later is that crowd funding is really about your own crowd. So if you don't have a crowd you need to build one in order to have a successful crowd funding campaign.

Andrew: I see.

Stephanie: It tanked, it tanked.

Andrew: I'm looking at the date here. This is from early 2013, and as you said at the time many people outside the tech community didn't know what crowd funding was. And I can understand that people would say, "Oh Stephanie needs crowd funding. Oh terrific. I'll post my project up there. I'll post my business up there, and she'll get a crowd to fund me. Life will be good."

Got it. So that's what they thought and the other thing that you noticed was that they didn't even want it. You didn't check in with them and say, "Is this something that you want? Is this something that you're looking for for us to do? As a result, not just crickets. You try to find it today. It's not up on the site any more, is it?"

Stephanie: It's not. We took it down a long time ago. The one thing that we did do that was smart was we white labeled a crowd funding platform. So that we didn't put a ton of upfront cost in building our own before we tested it, but we had so many resources, so much time and effort into building it. And it just tanked. Nobody wanted it. Nobody understood it. And we just finally took it down and decided to revisit it, and we might revisit it at some point when it makes sense. But we'll be definitely asking our community first if it's something they want.

Andrew: I see. And so I was going to ask you, what would you today if you wanted to launch it to make sure that it was useful to make sure that it was something that people wanted. And actually it occurred to me that it's the wrong question to ask. You wouldn't say, "I'm going to launch crowd funding. How do I make it useful?" You would start off with not the idea but with the conversation with people and then if that drives the idea, that's when you investigate ways of doing crowd funding. But you would say, "I want to do crowd funding. Hey, guys, how do I do it right for you?"

Stephanie: Exactly. I would first start with the question, you know, if you're having trouble with funding what are you looking into now? What is working for you? What isn't working for you? How can we help you? And we do that in a lot of different ways with our networking events that we do, with our social media surveys, our email newsletter to reach out and really try to get in touch with our consumers and talk to them about what they want.

Andrew: Okay. Let's look at another way that you do that. Back to the big board here, you say get face time with people to make sure that even the way you're communicating even your elevator pitch is understood. And you had a situation where you were pitching investors and customers and what happened when you

got face time with them? What did you see on their faces?

Stephanie: We did a mock scrub, like a mock pitch to investors, and the room, they just did not get it. They didn't understand it at all. There was actually somebody in the room that had actually been a subscriber of ours for a long time who didn't quite understand what we do. And that was back when our old . . . we had our old side issues what you should, and it had our old tag line which said . . . Our tag line was entrepreneurs with style.

Andrew: Let's bring it up right now here. I'll zoom in on the tag line from before, entrepreneurs with style.

Stephanie: Yeah, entrepreneurs with style.

Andrew: And when you showed it to people, you look at their face and you can tell that what? What did they understand from that?

Stephanie: They thought we were a fashion brand for entrepreneurs.

Andrew: Got it.

Stephanie: [laughs]

Andrew: Clothes for entrepreneurs.

Stephanie: Yeah.

Andrew: I see. And today because you saw that in their face, because you noticed that's what they thought, this is what the tag line is now. What does it say there?

Stephanie: It says empowering savvy entrepreneurs.

Andrew: Got it. And so how do you know now actually that empowering, what empowering means to people? Is it . . .

Stephanie: Where is the focus group we have?

Andrew: I see.

Stephanie: We had some face time for sure.

Andrew: Okay. So now you know that they understand empowering to mean what? Courses. It means community. What else? What does it mean?

Stephanie: Tools, how-to, community, networking, ways for them to do business with each other, ask. Most of our information is on there. It's free. So you can come and learn how to write a business plan (?) how to write a press release, financing, funding, marketing. Anything you could possibly ever want to know about starting up your business is on (?) for free.

Andrew: What's the tool that's available too? You're saying you also do tools.

Stephanie: Yes, we have a (?) platform that we sell called "Chic Works" and CRM email marketing software that we sell. And we use it to run the entire (?) back end. So we offer that to our customers at a very discounted price, or you can get it free with some of our paid membership programs.

Andrew: Got it. Here's the URL for that. That's chicworks.com. All right. Onto the big board then. Next idea for us to talk about is to find the space in between and use people's skillset to serve a new market or to use your skillset to serve a new market. What does that mean?

Stephanie: So really in terms of understanding your target market . . .

Andrew: Mm-hmm.

Stephanie: It's an interesting way to think and how [??] think in trying to find the spaces in between. So we get a lot of women entrepreneurs that come and ask for opinion or challenges and what we like to do is talk with them about the spaces in between. How can they use their company and their vertical to find ways of opportunity that they might have expertise in that they might have not thought about before?

So that's something that we always try to focus on with our consumer base, with our community or the private clients that I work with. So it's really about digging in . . .

Andrew: Mm-hmm.

Stephanie: . . . understanding what they do in our target market and then helping them find it.

Andrew: Where do you put the spaces in between? Maybe, would it help if we looked at an example? How did that play out with this site?

Stephanie: So Innovation Nation, that's a really amazing site.

Andrew: Mm-hmm.

Stephanie: The woman who owns it, her name is T.D. She's up in the Bay area and she really has such a cool business here.

Andrew: Mm-hmm.

Stephanie: She was working for some big box companies like the Googles and the Facebooks and she would come up with these really amazing ideas and then the company would take them . . . Andrew: Mm-hmm.

Stephanie: . . . from her. So she noticed that there's all these small independent inventors that aren't making money off of their ideas and they're getting stolen by the big guys. So she created this business. She finds that really interesting space in

between that. Well, she created a marketplace where you can upload your idea - and the patent laws changed last year, I think, in March - so she followed the new laws. And you can protect your idea here and if you want to sell it to the big box stores, you can. Otherwise, you can protect it for a year if you want to work on it, which is really interesting because then she created basically ecommerce of ideas between the big box guys.

Andrew: Mm-hmm.

Stephanie: So she really found that space in between, which was really . . .

Andrew: In between two different people.

Stephanie: Two different people, two different verticals, two different industries. Maybe you find your skillset or your expertise and you can pop it into another. So it's really finding that area where you can fit in and make a difference.

Andrew: Do you have another example of that? I still don't fully understand how this works.

Stephanie: So finding the area of opportunity, and really, this conversation started out with the founder of Yummie Tummie.

Andrew: Mm-hmm.

Stephanie: She was a real housewife of New York, Heather Thompson, and she and I were actually . . . I was interviewing her. And she found an area of opportunity to create shapewear by looking for those holes. So we all find areas of opportunity that aren't being served. I found it with this market.

Andrew: What did she do with Yummie? I'm looking for a Yummie Tummie website.

Stephanie: It's shapewear.

Andrew: Shapewear, okay.

Stephanie: When I ask her how she comes up with new ideas or how she looks for areas of opportunity, she mentioned she looks for the space in between, the places that aren't being served, the communities that aren't being served, the . . . another good example that I love is Quirky.

Andrew: Mm-hmm.

Stephanie: I'm sure you're familiar with Quirky. Ben Kaufman, the CEO.

Andrew: Yeah.

Stephanie: He found a way for everyday inventors also, to come in and provide them a place to do social inventing where we do it all together. So it's really . . .

Andrew: I see.

Stephanie: . . . really an innovation-type play.

Andrew: So if I understand you right, for him there was a market for the big innovators who worked at big companies, big inventors at big companies like General Electric. There was a place for the people who were just tinkering in their garage and doing it for their own fun. But the person in between there, the guy who wanted to invent something and sell it, not on a huge scale but still sell it and get it out there to people who had this shared interest, that person wasn't served.

Stephanie: Yeah.

Andrew: That inventor didn't have the ability to reach a market and that's where he went, in between the small tinkerer who did it for himself and the big guy who worked for a big company.

Stephanie: Right.

Andrew: Is that what you're talking about?

Stephanie: Yeah, definitely.

Andrew: Okay.

Stephanie: Yeah, and he found a huge market. I started with Quirky in the very beginning. I was one of their very first thousand people and now they have probably half a million inventors. And it was such an interesting thing to watch him find this new market.

Andrew: Yeah, it is.

Stephanie: So I think it's important for us to understand that we can find spaces in between and find a really big market just like Quirky did.

Andrew: It's interesting. The reason that I brought up General Electric is that I think that's the company that they've now partnered with. So these small innovators now have access to big companies, too, to work with. But these are some of the products that [??]

Stephanie: If you search Chic CEO, you'll see I won the very first invention challenge with G.E. I invented a milk jug. [laughs]

Andrew: Really?

Stephanie: Yeah. I did. I won the very first one.

Andrew: There it is.

Stephanie: There it is. That was me. So, yeah, they've found the ways for people to

come in and get involved and this is probably the best example, so . . .

Andrew: Stainless steel. Let's create a gorgeously designed milk jug that keeps your milk fresher and tells you when it's really going bad. Cool.

Stephanie: Yeah. So this is the winner and GE paired up with Quirky and we went to Maker Fair in San Francisco and had a 3D model built of it. It was on Fox News. It was . . .

Andrew: Is the image here on the site? Let me see.

Stephanie: It should be somewhere. But that's such an amazing example of finding the space in between and Ben Compton (sp) did a great job in figuring that out so if you have a business or a community that's not really thriving, it's really fun to find maybe that space in between that nobody else is serving.

Andrew: This is it?

Stephanie: Yeah. That's it.

Andrew: You know what, I didn't realize this is you. I didn't realize you did this.

Stephanie: I did. Yeah.

Andrew: Oh. That's cool.

Stephanie: Mm-hmm.

Andrew: So there. It's a milk jug at home that tells you when the milk is expired or getting close to.

Stephanie: Yep. By testing pH instead of the expiration date which is . . .

Andrew: Oh wow. So even more accurate than the expiration date.

Stephanie: Yep. Yeah.

Andrew: Wow. Congratulations.

Stephanie: Thanks.

Andrew: All right. On to the big board then. Most people, frankly like me, if you hear the same question over and over again, you feel kind of upset with people. Why do you keep hassling me with the same thing? That's the way I used to be. Today I'm learning to be otherwise and what you're saying is, if you're hearing the same question over and over again, look for a solution. Solve it one time. You're seeing a big need. And so, do you have an example of how you did that? Maybe when you were an MBA student?

Stephanie: Yeah. That's exactly how I came up with Chic CEO. I was getting my

MBA. I was in grad school and it was about 2008 and all of my girlfriends were getting laid off from their jobs and they kept asking me, "How do I start a business? I have to start doing something on the side. Whether it's consulting or wedding planning or personal shopping or anything like that. How do I get started so that I can pay my bills?" And I kept saying, "I have no idea. Why are you asking me this question?"

And they said, "You're getting your MBA. Aren't you learning how to start a business?" And I said, "Well, no. I'm not. I'm learning how to run a business. I'm learning statistics and global marketing and strategic management. I'm not learning how to go down to the courthouse and fill out which piece of paper and what legal structure I should be." So again, there's that kind of space in between.

I noticed that all of my girlfriends were starting a business out of necessity and they had no clue how to do it and the resources they were finding, the SBA's and the scores while they're good, you kind of need an MBA to understand what the hell they're talking about. So I brought all of my friends into my living room. I gave them a ton of wine. And I started asking them a ton of questions. What are you missing? What are you confused about? Have you picked a legal structure? What are you going to do about your taxes? And they just stared at me blankly.

These were not dumb women. These were very smart, brilliant friends of mine. And I had 15 of them in my living room and I thought, my god, if I have 15 of just my friends in my living room asking me these questions, nobody's serving this market. So I started doing a ton of research on women starting businesses and I started seeing this upward trend of female entrepreneurship and today women are starting businesses almost 2 to 1 over men.

So it was really a market decision that I wanted to focus on this group because they were growing so quickly and so, again, it was kind of finding that space in between, but I was getting this question asked over and over again and I couldn't understand why I was getting it, why they couldn't find this resource. So I finally built it for them.

Andrew: And so for you it was and still continues to be in person events where people are telling you this. If someone's listening to us and says, "Hey, you know what? No one's asking me the same thing over and over again. I'm not like Stephanie in school where people happen to be asking me about how to start a business. I'm not like Andrew with a big audience who happens to keep asking him questions and he can look for commonalities. I'm just getting going. How can they find these questions that keep coming up over and over again that they can then use to build a business based on what people want based on their internal psychology?"

Stephanie: You know it's interesting, I kind of troll question boards like Cora, Yahoo Answers, things like that to see if there's discussions. Reddit. Things that would interest me that I might have an expertise in to see if there's any common threads.

Andrew: I see.

Stephanie: I also look for things that might be happening in my friend group or my

peer group to see if there's common frustrations that are coming up. People say to start a business out of passion, and I really believe you should start a business out of solving a problem. So it's really about asking maybe your peer group or people . . . or a sub-set of people that you might have an expertise in already to see if there's an issue that keeps popping up and that you can kind of cherry pick something out.

I also have a (?) on the site called businesses we wish someone else would start.

Andrew: Un-huh.

Stephanie: [laughs]

Andrew: Where people go in and say, "I wish someone would start this business for me.

Stephanie: [laughs] Yeah.

Andrew: Where is that?

Stephanie: That's in our elite portal so it's private, you must remember.

Andrew: Gotcha.

Stephanie: We used to have ads pop up in there.

Andrew: You know what? You mentioned trolling Cora, and I understand the power of going to those kind of sites, but one thing that I noticed is I thought people trolled the contents of my site and see what people are complaining about or saying, "Andrew, you missed this. You didn't cover it." And specifically what many who did that noticed was I don't cover the early stage of a business. I'm not here to feature a person who just started a business and maybe did 5,000 a month in sales.

I'm looking for the mega hits. And so people would complain in the comments. People would say, "You should interview smaller companies. You should interview bootstrapped entrepreneurs like startup businesses and what I noticed was there are few people who caught that and said, "You know what? I'm actually going to do that and create a site that will answer this frustration that Andrew doesn't seem to be responding to."

So I can see the power of Cora, but I can also notice from firsthand experience that it can be done on other sites too and smaller communities even.

Stephanie: Absolutely. And that's a very wise person that can go and start to notice that there's areas of opportune space in between where you can find that small frustration and actually find a big market within it.

Andrew: Let's look and see what else we're going to talk about, and that is deliver the information the way your target market wants it. For you it was, again, in person, isn't it?

Stephanie: Some of it is. I think that obviously if we're 60,000 people entrepreneurs I can't do that all in person.

Andrew: Mm-hmm.

Stephanie: So we started to notice that there's a few ways that our community has to learn, and a lot of it is through interviews and webinars, and some of it is in person. For me I was learning more from the in-person so I was benefiting then. It was really more about benefiting me to say that selfishly. The in-person stuff, the face time, was really important in learning how to serve your target market best. And for me if I didn't have that face time I wasn't really, really getting in and digging with them.

We did have our (?) program which we talked about earlier today, and that was really a program that was \$19 a month and the women that were in it got our downloads and our templates and some tools. They didn't have access to us. We started to noticing that we were getting the same questions over and over again there, so we decided that we would create a conference to bring in the people that were asking the same questions over and over again to help them get what they needed in person without (?) and things like that. And it really worked. So . . .

Andrew: How did that help you understand that you needed to do a conference as opposed to a webinar as opposed to sharpening the tasks that you already have up on the site and the tools that you're already have up on the site? How does a complaint lead to a conference that tell you, "We want to deliver . . . People want our content delivered in person."

Stephanie: I think if you're going to get the complaint over and over again, then you should really follow it. So . . .

Andrew: So wait. Were people just saying to you, "I don't like understanding and learning online. I need to . . . No, they weren't. It's not that direct, and when people are that direct, it's often not useful.

Stephanie: [laughs]

Andrew: Because people want it exactly the way they want it, and it doesn't necessarily make sense for you. Hey, Stephanie, call me up every morning if you were to ask people what do you want.

Stephanie: Yeah.

Andrew: So how do you take what they're expressing to you and understand that what they really are asking for is information delivered in person.

Stephanie: Well, I think it's a path that you need to follow. So if you keep getting the complaint over and over again or the question over and over again, it becomes more of you need to ask the question. So I would get questions over and over but we've already answered in the program. And so I started asking them, "Well, have

you read what's in the program? Have you read what's on the site?" Well, I just wanted to talk with you a little.

So if you keep getting the complaint over again or the question over and over again, it becomes more of you need to ask them questions. So I would get questions over and over that we've already answered in the program, and then so I would start asking them, "Well, have you read what's in the program? Have you read what's on the site? Are you . . . Well, no, I just really would like to talk to you. Can I take you to coffee? Can I take you for a drink? We have a monthly networking service, and they're really valuable because first of all I get to talk to a bunch of people, my target audience every month during this time.

But when people say, "I want, can I just pick your brain just if I could have 20 minutes." I'll say, "Come to this networking mixture and we'll do it there." But if it gets more involved and I start asking more and more questions. I say, "You know would a full day intensive be something that would sound like, like something you would want?" If the answers yes and I ask a few people and then that turns- and those people come and they get what they need. Not everybody learns the same.

Andrew: Got ya. So you're hearing their frustrations with the material that's there and you're prodding to see. How do they want the information delivered?

Stephanie: Right.

Andrew: You could have just as easily asked, "Would an intensive help?" And heard back from them, no I don't have time or interest in traveling that far. And then you might have moved onto, well would it help if we did a Google hang out once a month? Would it help if we did more of a Chat- board? I see, so you're looking to see what they think they want for as a way of communicating information to them.

Stephanie: Right, and I think it's really important to understand that about your target market. How do they want their information from you? Do they want you to come and work with them one-on-one? I work with private clients but obviously that's quite a bit more expensive than if they just join the Chicory program which is only \$49 a month and they get videos.

So it's, you know, obviously the in persons stuff is going to cost them a lot more but if that's what they want and that's how they want to be served. Then make that available to them and you'll see your target market grow.

Andrew: Okay, let's go on to the big board here. The next point is to use details to delight your target market. You did that at your event, I think this is a part of how you did that at the event. Is this from your conference?

Stephanie: It is yes.

Andrew: I wish we had a picture of the bathroom, which we'll talk about in a moment. But as I look around here so what is some of the detail that you've laid out for people that we may not notice?

Stephanie: The bathroom was a huge success. We got so many comments about the bathroom.

Andrew: What exactly happened in the bathroom?

Stephanie: It was just, you know, we had signs up everywhere. We had inspiration quotes up, we had fresh flowers. Everything that we do, was part of our branding were Chic CEO, so everything that we do has to be chic. And those tiny details are so memorable and sometimes people forget about the detail. But the more detailed you get in our branding and your services and how you interact with your target market. The more loyal they're going to be and the memorable you're going to be to them.

So having- we had signs on the bathroom stalls. So when they went to the bathroom and they shut the door it was a quote from Coco Chanel or Oprah or Tina Fey or something like that to make them smile or laugh. And there were signs up that said, "You look gorgeous today." There were flowers everywhere. It was a really beautiful, beautiful event. And that was really memorable to them.

So really understanding your target market, really means what you can do in the details that will really delight them because those things actually matter. You know, Apples probably the best testament to that. And I think that for us it's really important to make sure we delight and surprise within our brand constraints.

Andrew: Let's take a look at this, this is the welcome section, the welcome area.

Stephanie: Yeah, one of them, and that iPad is from one of our sponsor's Mopro. You see we have flowers and everything was chic.

Andrew: For some reason I don't notice the flowers but I mean, my eye wouldn't go to the flowers but they would still affect my sense of the place. I'm looking kind of in the left corner, I don't even know if you can see it up on your screen they're glasses. What are those about?

Stephanie: Those are from our sponsor, Mopro.

Andrew: Got yea. This is part of their logo.

Stephanie: Right. And in the back there where the people are we had this huge board up, for people to put business they wish someone else would start, on Post-its. And you could walk up and look at them and take a Post- it if you wanted, if you're just thinking about a cool business or something like that. We had a panel discussion but the panel discussion looked like you were sitting in a really beautiful living room. We had an interior designer come in and bring in a really cool coffee table, gorgeous chairs, so everything felt really chic, it felt, like I said within our brand constraints.

I think those details really matter when you are addressing your target market. Because they tend to expect those things from you. Everything had to be chic otherwise we weren't going to do it at all. Remember when we were talking about

boring business information which was yeah, I said it can be pretty boring, you know, we want to make it fun, we want to make it chic, and we want to really play within our brand on that.

Andrew: All right lets go on to the big board. You say we need to look for places, look for those connections in the me to areas. What is a me too, in this context?

Stephanie: So, yeah, you want to connect, really connect with your target market. Quick connection happens when you (?) And I've always said this and I truly believe it, I don't think that if you want to build a community, (?) community, that you want to trust you. You have to have some sort of hierarchy and MeToo is really a great way of building trust and interaction with your audience.

And when I'm talking to my private clients or talking to anybody that I reach out or reaches out to me, I don't BS them. I don't pretend that I have it all together either. I'll tell them, "Yeah, I cried at my computer this morning too, sister. We're all in the same boat." Entrepreneurship . . .

Andrew: Why do you do that? I cried at my computer too is something that most entrepreneurs, especially people who are teaching don't want to admit to their audience. You say that, why?

Stephanie: Because I don't want them to think that they're alone because they're not. We all go through it, every one of us. I don't care who you are. You sat at your computer and cried about something real, terrified, and then it is not easy. This is the hardest thing I've ever done, but the most rewarding thing I've ever done, especially women. We're risk givers. We're afraid to take the risk. In thinking, oh my God, what have I done? What if I screw this up? What if I have no idea what I'm doing?

So that's (?) so that you don't have to have every single answer right away or know everything or have to have your MBA here for you. I get it, I understand, I know where you've been, and nobody's going to understand or trust me or think that I know what I'm talking about if I haven't been in their shoes.

So it's important for me to be as completely genuine and transparent with my audience as possible. And, yeah, I've learned some things along the way obviously, and I try to impart them as much as I can with my audience. But if I pretend to my audience that I've got everything together and it came easy to me, I wouldn't trust me. So, yeah, I want them to feel like they've got an ally in this and that I've been where they are.

Andrew: Here's what my team put together in the notes in preparation for this session. They said that you had an entrepreneur ask you if she could pick your brains. You said yes. She had an opportunity to learn from you, but you also had an opportunity to learn from her. In that conversation when she said, "I don't know if I have any business with getting started with a business." And you thought, you know what? I've felt that too and then you expressed that.

In that shared moment you guys bonded and as a result she became a private

client. And that is the point that you are making that if you share those moments and people feel like me too or if they shared and you expressed that you also felt it, that connection, that similarity is the bonding that allows people to feel like you get them.

So let me ask you this, again a question from someone on the team internally here. Is this different, the way that you're expressing vulnerability, different because . . . Is it different for you because you're speaking to women as a woman, speaking to another woman in a female community? Does that vulnerability create more bonding than it would for me as a guy speaking to a broader community or someone else speaking only to men?

Stephanie: I believe so. Yeah, I do. You know, we're built different. Women and men were built differently. It's awesome. It's great. I don't think that makes us better business owners or worse business owners, but we are more collaborative, more relationship-based.

Andrew: I see.

Stephanie: We like to do things together, and when I started Chic CEO I had those moments of "Who the hell do I think I am doing something like this, telling people how to start a business?" And I've never claimed to be a business expert by any means. I will find you the answer. That's what I claim to do. I will research something until I find out what needs to be done in order to get you to success. So that was my value. That was what I'm bringing to my community and I sometimes have to call my friends in the beginning stages and remind me why I was doing this, remind me why I was valuable.

So in learning from another woman that is just as scared about starting up, feeling like a fraud, about the fraud police, and feeling like we don't know what we're doing. So we've all been there. We all have to go through it, and there's a way out of it, and if we don't be honest about these struggles and these challenges where we're doing ourselves a disservice. And I think I'm doing my community a disservice by pretending that that didn't happen. You know, we don't talk about the struggles very often, the challenges that we go through emotionally in entrepreneurship and I don't want anybody in that community to feel like just because they're scared or they don't feel like they know what they're doing or they're not sure of the next step that they don't have value to bring to the world. Because they do. So . . .

Andrew: I see.

Stephanie: . . . you know, in being honest with everyone . . .

Andrew: If you were talking about a broader community that the person listening to us is trying to create, maybe the "me, too" is not a point of vulnerability. But we should still, it sounds like you're saying, look for places and statements and experiences to share that will make people say, "Yeah, me, too, I am like that guy." "Yes, me, too, I want what he is expressing." "Yes, me, too, I struggled like him."

Stephanie: Yeah, yeah.

Andrew: Okay.

Stephanie: Definitely. So it doesn't have to be about being vulnerable. That works but it's finding the connection, being able to say, "Me, too," is hugely powerful with your target market.

Andrew: And I still have this up on my right screen here. I wonder if the same thing works there, that if people will look at that and say, "Yes, you know what? Me, too, I also didn't like the way that my milk box looked on the table. And yes, me, too, I also needed something other than a glass pitcher for milk because I also need to know when the milk goes bad. Yes, me, too."

Stephanie: Mm-hmm, or, "Yes, me, too. I can be an inventor."

Andrew: I see.

Stephanie: "Yes, me, too. I can win something with GE," you know. "Yes, me, too, I can put out an idea just like anybody else." So it's a really great way to create a connection.

Andrew: Okay, all right. Let's go on to the final point here, which is to use the Five Whys Technique. You did it. Let me bring up one example of how you did it. And obviously, we don't expect people to read every word on here.

Stephanie: [laughs]

Andrew: But maybe you could describe what you're doing here with this whiteboard.

Stephanie: Sure, so our Chic Siren Program was our very first membership program, and not like I said before. It was just templates and downloads and it really morphed into what we're doing now with the Chic Elite Program.

Andrew: Mm-hmm.

Stephanie: And it came out of people getting too much information, having everything at their fingertips and not having the time to sort through it. It was way too overwhelming. And we kept getting the same questions asked over and over again but we'd already answered them within the program. So instead of shouting at our customers and saying, "Why don't you just read what we've already done for you?" I tried to figure out why that wasn't happening. So we went through the Five Whys.

"Why are you asking us questions that we've already answered?" "Well, because it's too overwhelming." "Why?" "Because all the information's there at once and we don't want to dig through it?" "So why don't they want to dig through it?" "Well, it's going to save them time if they just reach out and ask." So we went through this . . .

Andrew: Mm-hmm.

Stephanie: . . . asking why five times, and what came out of it was building them a program that wasn't overwhelming that we could dig into one topic a month and they could really deep-dive into that rather than go horizontal. So it was more about going vertical in a topic rather than giving them the broad sense of everything that we had to offer.

And it's been a way more successful program and it's been way more valuable to our community. So I think if you're having a struggle or really trying to understand something about your target market, I think asking five times why you'll get to the deeper issue and hopefully come out with something that's more valuable to them. It's been very helpful for us.

Andrew: You know what? I really like this example. Let me read through it just to let it sink in. Here's how you used it. The problem was your members weren't using one of the programs you created for them so the first question you asked was, "Why are users asking us questions we've already answered and that are already available in their membership?" And the answer was,

"Well, because they don't read the information we provided." "Why don't they read the information we provided?" "Because they're too overwhelmed by the amount of information in the program." "Why?" "Because they are way too busy to sort through info and don't know where to start." "Why?" "Because they're too busy and would rather reach out to us and just save themselves some time by emailing us or contacting us." "Why?" "Because they want to implement tactics quickly that make an impact." Got it. And so you created this program that was easier and faster for them to get access.

Stephanie: Right.

Andrew: Access to. Is Erin a PMS, one of your members, or what's your connection to her, PMS.com?

Stephanie: Yeah, so Erin at PMS.com. She's awesome. She's a friend of mine. She's up in Orange County.

Andrew: Mm-hmm.

Stephanie: And we got connected through . . .

Andrew: This is her saying?

Stephanie: Yeah. We got connected through a mutual friend and she was telling me about this company. So she had a friend that owned PMS.com. He had a project management system company.

Andrew: Mm-hmm.

Stephanie: There's Erin right there. And she told her friend, she said, "You can't

have PMS.com for a project management company so he ended up selling her the domain name. Now she has a... this is tampon delivery service. Like a dollar shape club for tampons.

Andrew: There it is.

Stephanie: Brilliant idea. She really went through the why.

Andrew: How?

Stephanie: She started noticing that her customers were dropping off in month four. Within these packages, you were getting tampons, you were getting aspirin, and you were getting towelettes. She started noticing this trend, and again, don't assume you know exactly what they want. She smiled and dialed every single person that canceled their subscription to find out why. What came out of it was they were just stockpiling the aspirin and the towelettes, and they just needed the tampon so all they wanted was an add-on.

It was such a small, small change, but allows them to remain her customers. Whereas in the subscription model, you have to go out nine to twelve months in order to see a return, really, in that month four. That's really scary if they drop out. She really went through. Started asking why, why, why, why why, and came up with this one tiny solution that really changed her business. I really love that she went through that because it really made a difference.

Andrew: Whereas if she would do what someone else might do which is to call customers and say, why did you cancel? The answer to the first question might be, I really have too much or I don't need it anymore. Until you dig in you don't understand they have too much of the towelettes and the aspirin. They don't have too much of the whole package. We just need to reconfigure. I see. What a great example and what a great website, too.

Stephanie: Yeah.

Andrew: All right. If people want to follow up with you the best place for them to go, I'm assuming, is Chic CEO, but when they're on here is there something that you suggest they take a look at first?

Stephanie: We have a 3-Day Chic's Start, which is really fun. It's three day of homework writing to your inbox.

Andrew: Wait. You're telling me that the first thing you want the to-do is do some work. [laughter]

Stephanie: They're there to work.

Andrew: All right. All right. Where do we click on the site in order to get this?

Stephanie: It's right up in the top Nav, 3-day Chic Start.

Andrew: Right at the very top, next to home. This is where you want people to get started.

Stephanie: Yeah. It's a great program. We give you a business plan template. Naming your company. Things like that. Really fun things to get started. That's a great way to get introduced to Chic CEO, to the offerings that we have. If you want a little bit more, if you really want to deep- dive our Chic Elite program is awesome. It's \$49 a month, and we really dig in deep. Our topic is elite scraping training, which we go through how we went from zero to fifty thousand subscribers with a zero marketing budget. The next one is how to build your list and how throw events. It's a really fun program.

If you want a little bit more the Chic Elite program is great. Otherwise, everything else on the site is free for anybody to use, really easy to get started, and we're here to support any entrepreneur that really wants to start following their business dream.

Andrew: All right. Thank you for doing this. Thank you all for being a part. If you got any value, find a way to say thank you directly to Stephanie. Frankly, if all of it wasn't...if it's all overwhelming to use it all, do what I found top entrepreneurs do. They use what they can and leave the rest behind. Your goal isn't to try to use every single thing that you've heard in this program and every other [??]program and every other thing that you read online, it's to say, you know what, I've been exposed to a bunch of ideas here, here's the summary of them, what's one thing that I can use and implement right now?

Forget about the things that I can't. What's the one thing I can implement and use right away? I'll start with that then I will continue and continue and continue. When you do that, let me and or Stephanie know because we're rooting for you. We're hoping you do really well and we're appreciative that you've been a part of this program. Thank you all for being a part of it. Check out Stephanie's website Chicceo.com. Bye everyone.