

Andrew: This session is about how you can get influential clients and it's taught by someone who has done this so many times and I'm so proud to have him on here. He is Steve Sims, the founder of Bluefish, a paid membership concierge firm.

He's helped his clients get on stage with their favorite rock stars. He's helped them get down into the Titanic. He setup a table for six in Florence at the foot of Michelangelo's David. And we're going to see what that looks like and more of the things that he's done. He is also the author of this book, "7 Ugly Truths: The Things I've Learned in My Life So Far."

I'll help facilitate. My name is Andrew Warner. I'm the founder of Mixergy, where proven founders like Steve, where they teach. Steve, so good to have you here.

Steve: It's a pleasure. Thanks a lot.

Andrew: Steve, we're going to talk about all the impressive things that you've done, but I want people to understand that you're not a natural who was born at the top of a pedestal. You actually had pretty humbling beginnings.

Steve: And a humble life to date, I think. I think I was born under the pedestal, let alone on it. I come from a construction family. I think we aspired to be middle class. I don't really think that's ever come out of me. I think that's maybe my blessing there. We were very much of a grounded construction family and kept those family values and morals.

Andrew: And one of the things that you were doing as you were getting going with your business is you were making the same mistake that I made in a period in my life, you emphasized Twitter followers and paid attention to those kinds of vanity metrics.

Steve: Yeah.

Andrew: What was that like when you did that?

Steve: It's a usual pitfall, isn't it? Everyone's kind of like on the latest little thing, whether it be like I've got 10 million Facebook followers and you think, "Ah, I can't be successful unless I've got loads of people following me." It's a complete farce. So, you go out there and you do adverts and you recruit people to work on your SEO and you get everything tagged up the wazoo. So, you get people following you. It doesn't convert and all you end up with is a million people that you can't have a conversation with. So, I just found it a complete and utter waste of time.

Andrew: And later on in the program, we're going to talk about how you actually cut

back on some of the people who were on your list and who added to your vanity metrics. And the reason you did that is so you can focus on the people that I invited you here to teach us how you reached. Let me show some photos here. Just describe a little bit about who they are and how you connected with them. How do you know people? Who's this? This is Richard Branson, right?

Steve: Yeah. He's on the right. So, yeah, I did work for him. I did couple of events for him, Rock the Kasbah Charity Event. It was actually for his mom. So, I [inaudible 00:03:08] by getting clients on to his Necker Island entrepreneurial events. This is Donald--

Andrew: Yeah. Let's bring Donald... Where is he? There's Donald Trump.

Steve: Yeah. I worked for Donald Trump for two years at an event in Palm Beach. That's Michael Milken. He was part of the tennis tournament. So, that's actually a funny story. I've got to quickly show you that. I don't wear a tie.

Andrew: Are you wearing a tie in that? I didn't notice.

Steve: Yes. Here's the funny story. I never wear a tie. Donald wanted to get that shot for a local newspaper. I didn't have a tie on and he didn't want to have a photograph taken with me without a tie on. That's the photographer's tie that he took off and slipped on me.

Andrew: You wear it well. And there are so many other people who you've gotten to know and work with. This is a zoomed in way too much Elon Musk. Here is one of my favorite people, there's Steve Forbes and on the right is Joe Polish, am I right?

Steve: Yeah. That's correct. That's at Joe's event up in New York.

Andrew: Alright. I used to, as a kid, read Forbes magazine so much, the early Forbes magazine, back when he was editing it and he had these little quirks, like he would write his favorite restaurant in every issue.

Steve: Yeah. Times have changed.

Andrew: You've also taken people down--I don't want to do too much of this, but we'll show one more. Let's see if we can show this. What did you do in the Titanic? That's what that is, right?

Steve: Yeah. It is. We sent about 60 people in the mere submersible down to see the

ruins of the Titanic off the of Keldysh. They've spent two hours getting down to the sea bed, two hours floating around in deep pressure and darkness and then two hours getting back up again. So, it's six hours roundtrip under the water.

Andrew: So, Steve, that's why I wanted to have you on here. Most people, when they say, "I've reached an influential person," they mean like their favorite blogger. You've gone way beyond it. You've worked with some of the top people in the world, frankly, not just in our space, and you've taken them to places where most people would have thought we have no right to go. So, that's why I invited you here to teach the rest of us how we can connect with influencers.

We've pulled together a list of actionable tactics that you've put together with our team here. And the very first one is one that really surprised me. You say uglify your communications. You love the ugly for some reason, even though, if you ask me, I think you're a very handsome man.

Steve: Oh, shucks.

Andrew: Yes. Thanks for doing your hair for this program.

Steve: I made an effort.

Andrew: And when you say that you uglify your communications, this is the kind of thing that you mean and the Vatican is the kind of place that this has led you to. What are we looking at here? Describe it through your eyes.

Steve: Alright. So, first of all, you've got to understand the concept of uglifying your marketing.

Andrew: Okay.

Steve: Everyone gets these copywriters and they get Photoshop and they get these editors to produce a really wonderful looking email with startling picture sunsets and they get a copywriter there that puts more syllables in a word than I can count. Quite simply, it's not you. What happens is people, they get diluted and they get blank and vanilla over it.

So, what we've started doing was instead of sending out an email, we would get a postcard or a letter and the letter that you just saw is actually a postcard. It's from the Andaz Hotel in Hollywood. This is one of my tips and tricks. I'm actually doing that today because I'm in New York. I go to a good hotel and I ask them for 200 envelopes and

stationary or 200 postcards. They give this stuff away because they want you using their stationary to high-end clients.

So, you tell them, "Look, I've got 200 messages to send out to my top clients. I want to let them know that I was here." So, they give you this stuff for free. And then what I'll do is I'll put a little note on there saying, "Hey, Andrew, I was thinking of you. Love the interview. I want to reach out to you in the next couple weeks. Thanks."

If you can go back to the picture, you'll notice something else on there. The stamp is not only off-kilt, it's wonky because a computer would put that stamp in that box perfectly. It's obvious a human being has done that. To make it even more accurate, you'll notice the damn thing is even upside down.

Andrew: You know what I was wondering and I couldn't tell if it was? That's you intentionally saying, "I'm not going to put any effort into getting this exactly right. In fact, I'm going to insist that I get it a little bit off-kilter or upside down so that people know that I really sent this myself." You know what though? You're sitting there and you're writing it and you're also writing the address down. I'd hate to get so detailed about this, but how do you get people's addresses even?

Steve: We've been doing this for 18 years. So, the simple fact is that nine times out of ten I don't know how to contact the person I want. I very rarely get the same request twice. I'll do something with a rock star and somebody will come by to me and go, "Hey, I saw you did that with Sting. Can you do something with Taylor Swift or can you do something with ZZ Top?"

So, usually what happens is I then go to the person I first used--the manager, the agent or the celebrity--and say, "Hey, in your circle, who do you know that's close to that?" And hopefully they know the person that's actually in the camp. If not, they can get me one step closer. As it goes along, sooner or later, I get to the person I need and that's when I can send them some kind of uglification so that they know it's real. It may actually be a letter and inside it may be \$20 and I'll write on it, "Get yourself a coffee while you read this letter." It can be anything just to show that I've taken the time.

The funny thing is we're so pre-tuned now to make everything look perfect. It actually takes practice to get that stamp slightly off kilter. When I write letters, I never write them across like this, I always write them diagonal. I usually do it in a sharpie. Deepening on who the person is I'm sending it to, I may even include an article from a magazine that I have roughly torn out just to show them that I'm thinking of them.

Andrew: So, show that not a computer cut that out because no computer can be so

dramatic in the way it rips a piece of paper out of a magazine. But let me ask you this, though.

Steve: Rip it out.

Andrew: This is where I get a little too deep into the weeds, but I don't want to go too deep. We're going to get to the Vatican in a moment, but I think it's still important. Do you have an address book where you have the addresses of all the people who are important to you where you make sure that one of your assistants gets all their addresses? That's an issue.

Steve: I keep all of those addresses.

Andrew: You always keep it in your address book. So, how are you going to get my address after this? I didn't mail it to you. I didn't email it to you.

Steve: No. You haven't. But we've been talking and I'm sure if I said to you, "Hey, Andrew..." Okay, let's go one step further. Let's say you don't want to give me your address. You already know that we know about 100 people that know each other.

Andrew: And so you might ask one of them.

Steve: Yeah.

Andrew: Here's the thing. I don't do exactly what you're saying. You're taking me to the next level. But look, I've got a stack of these San Francisco postcards, right?

Steve: Yeah.

Andrew: If I wanted to send you one afterwards saying, "Hey, I'm sitting here looking at the bridge and I'm just grateful to you for having done this interview, I don't know how to get your address or it's going to take me like five minutes to do it. I could do that for one person, but could I do it for 20?"

Steve: Okay. Now you're coming into the vanity metrics again. Do you want ten brilliant clients or do you want 1,000 flakes?

Andrew: I see. So, you're saying, "Look, Andrew, stop thinking 20. Think about the one or two people who are especially influential and are important to you and just get their address and then you can do more of this. This is not about sitting down and becoming a robot."

Steve: Absolutely not. Put it this way--how long does it take you to just scribble that note that you mentioned on that envelope or on that postcard? It takes seconds.

Andrew: Let's do it right now. "Steve, killer learning from you on Mixergy. Andrew." Look at what I did. I even put it on an angle like that.

Steve: That's perfect. That's absolutely perfect.

Andrew: Now, if I want to get your address, I'm on your website. There is no address on your website. You know what I would do? I would go to BetterWhois.com and type in your domain name. Here, let's go to it. I'm getting too deep in the weeds. I know we have so much more to cover here. Tell me if this is accurate. I'm going to type in TheBluefish.com. Is your address Tiger Technologies LLC, PO Box--no.

Steve: No.

Andrew: Is your address in fact--no. I don't know it. This is one of the issues with this kind of approach. What do we do at that point?

Steve: No, you see, you're looking at this from the wrong angle, my friend.

Andrew: I am. I know it. Tell me.

Steve: You can very easily phone up any one of your friends, whether it be Jayson Gaignard, Ramit, any of these people and get my address. You see, I don't want to make things easy. I really don't. The whole point is I want to get that postcard and all of a sudden I know, "Andrew has had to work for my address." I don't want you asking me for it. I don't want you emailing me for it. I want you to work so I know, "Andrew has put the time in."

Andrew: I see. All right. So, that is why this is so powerful. I don't get postcards here at the office every day and I make my address available. You definitely don't get a lot because you don't make your address available. If one shows up at either of our doorsteps, it's a shock at this point. That's what you want, the shock.

Steve: Yeah.

Andrew: So, you did this with the Vatican. Why would you send the Vatican a postcard? What were you trying to achieve?

Steve: If I sent them an email or I made a phone call, it wouldn't have made any difference. So, what I did was I put a letter together. I spoke to some people that I knew in America who pointed me to some people in Florence. The people in Florence knew someone in Rome. That person put me in contact with someone in the Vatican and I was able to send them a note.

I actually send them a letter and on the letter I put a little link for a YouTube private video I had done. I actually spoke on that video and said, "I would imagine you're going to be receiving this letter between this time frame. I'm going to call you between this time frame just to go over in a little bit more detail what I'm trying to achieve."

So, they knew I was going to be following up. They got to see my personality. They got to see me on video. They get to see the expression and passion of what I was trying to create. So, they got that whole bundle, more than just a blank email with, "Dear Father, what I'm looking to achieve is this. How much will it cost me?" which is quite honestly the easiest way of just getting the delete or just a big fat no.

Andrew: And did you get a deal from them?

Steve: Well, he got married, didn't he? So, the answer is yes.

Andrew: So, you got your person married at the Vatican?

Steve: Yeah.

Andrew: And that's the thing that gets them in the door, the postcard. All right. This shows me the way you--

Steve: Another thing you've got to do is usually when you're working on an event, especially of that stature, you may be going through one person who is the gatekeeper that's going to agree, but you're always going to get ten people below him that's actually helping you put this together. When you finish an event, I may never do anything in the Vatican ever, ever, again. But jeeppers, just send them a box of chocolates, a flower, anything.

I had one girl there. She actually loved New York. I live in Los Angeles and she knew about it. But I sent a little book with loads of these beautiful pictures, a photographic journal in New York. We can go in the sale section of Barnes & Noble and get a big, beautiful book for like \$5. Just post it to them. They remember you.

I can guarantee if I need anything at the Vatican or even just for them to give me

credibility or validate who I am, I've only got to make a phone call and they'll be the first one going, "Oh yeah, Sims, he's a great guy." They'll say it better because it's an Italian accent.

Andrew: All right. I get it. I now see the way you work. Also, I'm glad that I asked you about why it's still difficult to find the address because it also shows me the way you think about the work that you're doing. Let's go on to the big board here and continue the conversation. The next big point is shoot videos and send them from your phone.

Steve: Yeah. There are too many people--for what we're doing now, I understand you need a lot of professional material--but you really want to show that your hand is a little bit wobbly. Put an earpiece in for an Apple headset or something like that. But just keep it raw. Keep it passionate. Keep it energetic. Don't have these editing tricks coming in or trying to make sure the background is perfect. Just have you as the focus and what you've got to say and your engagement with the camera.

Andrew: Can I show you one of yours? I'm sorry to interrupt, but I've got to show this. Look at this. This is one of yours. The bottom of your head is cut off. Is that intentional?

Steve: Well, you've got pretty bikes in the background. So, that's the only interesting part.

Andrew: I see. You're showing on your phone, "Hey, I'm here. I'm just shooting a quick video. I want you to see the bikes in the background."

Steve: Yeah. I'm just in my garage. That's actually my little man cave. That's where all my bikes are. So, you'll see that I'm slightly out of picture. So, you'll get to see where I am. You get to see the environment I'm in and that I'm happiest in.

Andrew: All right. Donald Trump, who you said earlier asked you to where a tie or else he wasn't going to take a photo with you, which I would never have guessed, you sent him one of these videos?

Steve: No. He didn't get a video. I worked with him back in like 2004 or 2005. So, it was actually one of his people that were looking for someone. It wasn't actually him. I reached out to them. They liked it, shifted it throughout the channel and that's when Mr. Trump got involved. I looked after that tennis tournament over in Mar-a-Lago in Palm Beach.

Andrew: And they got one of these videos--I guess at the time the iPhone wasn't around.

Steve: They didn't get the video, but they still got the book and they still got a letter. It's always handwritten. There's always a note inside the letter. Did he open it? I have no idea. But I've done things with the family since. So, I think I'm on good kilt there.

Andrew: And I'm seeing here in my notes, clients come back and say, "Hey, I didn't know you were British." So, they start to pick up on who you were with your personality. I didn't know you had motorbikes. When you're in your man cave, they get to look around the way I would. They're getting a sense of who you are. That's what you're going for, the kind of stuff that wouldn't come across if you were sitting here in a studio the way I am or if you were writing an email the way most people do.

Steve: Yeah. If me and you sent an email to Mr. Trump, then they're going to look at it and just realize that Steve Sims can't spell. But if they get a video from me, then all of a sudden they realize that there is something a little bit more different. That's when they get to see the individuality between us.

Andrew: You know, Jayson Gagnard for our MastermindTalks did that. He sent me a link to an invitation to the event and when I opened it up, there was a video of him talking about me inviting me. It wasn't just, "Hey, insert name here." He said, "Hey, Andrew, I know you're in San Francisco and I know with the new baby you probably have a lot going on right now. So, you may not be able to make it to this conference, but I want you to know that I would love to have you here and I want you to meet the other people who I invited," and then he just kept talking more about who I was. He did it all in a minute.

Steve: Yeah. People think that by collecting these emails and doing these mass emails, all of a sudden it's going to come to them. We adopted the philosophy in the company, grow by one. Focus on one client. You've got one client out there thrilled with the attention to detail that you give them in any of your business.

And I've spoken to people in gardening businesses, people in jet companies--complete gamut--focus on one, keep your word going above and beyond what you say you're going to do. They tell other people. You've got no marketing fees there. Just look after that person that's actually paying you and they'll go and tell people about you and it grows.

Andrew: All right. Again, Steve, I don't want to get too deep in the woods, but how do you keep track of all these people who you're sending videos to and sending little notes to? Is there a system that you use or is it just such a small group of people that it doesn't even matter?

Steve: I keep it very primitive, very basic. I've got an Excel spreadsheet that I carry in my Dropbox wherever I go. I've got all their details. If something happens in the relationship and they get deleted, they get deleted. New ones get added. So, it's constantly being harvested, this list. And then in the other column, it will have a date and it will have video and it will have a date letter. I may go into Italy and I'll go, "Italy letter," or I may go into San Francisco and I'll put, "San Francisco video." So, I'll actually have columns with the dates and then who gets what. So, every week they're not getting peppered with something.

Andrew: Gotcha. All right. That's very simple. It makes sense.

Steve: It's very primitive.

Andrew: Again, it would be very difficult to do that if you were doing thousands of people. But if you're doing a small group of people, it makes a lot of sense. All right. Every time I talk about that, I keep wanting to go to thousands of people or hundreds of people. Every time I do that, I look at your expression and it's like, "Andrew is not fully getting it." But I can see a little at a time you're noticing that I am getting what you're talking about. I get it now.

Steve: Let's hope.

Andrew: Keep signaling when I don't. That is the instinct, to keep saying, "How do I scale this? How do I scale this? How do I scale this?" And this is not for scaling. This is for a few really important relationships.

Steve: Okay. There you go again. This is to scale, but it's to scale by people that actually interact with you. People are so focused on getting 2,000 clients. You can be an absolutely billionaire with just 20 people that engage with you. You've just got to get the right people with the right check books engaged. That's it.

Andrew: All right. Let's go back to the big board here. We've talked about uglifying. Now we're going to talk about ugly mailings. This is one of my favorite stories of yours. You were in Italy. You got a cocktail. You looked down at the--what was that? This is one of my favorite stories. I want to fly to Italy just to do something like this.

Steve: So, I was in this hotel. Whenever you check into the hotel, as you know, you get a fruit basket or you get something like that in your room. I was staying at the Hotel da Lucia in Rome. A really cool idea of theirs--they brought in this little silver tray. On it, it had pre-measured drinks, liquors and whiskies and little whatever the extras are, and a

menu of how to concoct this cocktail of the day. I forget what it was called. But when I get a drink, I want it to be handed to me and I want to be able to start drinking. I don't want to have to work for my drink.

But this was a kind of a cool little idea. I got into it and I tried the drink and I loved it. So, I went downstairs and I said, "I want 200 of these menus, these cocktail recipes that you just sent to the room." He said, "We actually don't have them. We only produce a certain amount and then we change it." I said, "That's a shame because I want to send them out to my top clients." Of course, that gives them the promotion.

So, they went and printed an extra 200--I think they printed more than that--of these cocktail recipes and gave me the envelopes. All I did was sit in the garden. I just wrote a little note on there saying, "Just had this drink in Rome, Italy. Phenomenal. Thought of you." Or, "I can't share a drink with you at the moment, so make your own. All the best, Steve."

Andrew: We asked you for a copy of that to get a sense of what it looked like. I'm so glad that we did. Look at that. This is what we're talking about right there.

Steve: There you go. That's the one.

Andrew: Such a simple thing to do. And of course, all these nice hotels have envelopes. They have everything ready for you to go.

Steve: Yeah. And of course, when you get an envelope in your mail, it's usually your gas bill or your water bill or something like that. When you get this, the key is not to fold it over like a fulfillment center. So, you've got a handwritten envelope with a cool hotel logo on it and something a little bit squishy, obviously humanly folded inside. That's the first damn thing you open up. And then they communicate with you. That was actually a picture from the client going, "Steve, I just got this. It's so cool. Thank you very much." Was over the moon. Look how much that cost me.

Andrew: Nothing.

Steve: Nothing. The hotel posted it because they wanted the promotion. They paid for the printing. They paid for the envelopes. I just took a few drinks and just wrote out some merry little notes and put some little squiggles and my little face on a few of them.

Andrew: I see that face. I love that.

Steve: Just to point out here--this is an important thing--you've identified at the

beginning that I deal with a lot of very affluent clients. But look how I'm treating them. Look how I'm communicating with them as people, not as pedestals.

Andrew: Yeah. I see that. You're not making sure your handwriting is perfect. You're not avoiding little touches. You drew your face on there.

Steve: Yeah.

Andrew: Kind of in a cartoony way. Let me ask you this. The card, I notice, I sometimes wonder do you add a card because then it becomes a business thing or do you not add a card, but if you don't add a card, people may not know who you are. If you do add a card, it seems like...

Steve: I don't have many business cards. That business card is from years old. I didn't include that in there. He, for some reason, put it on that picture because then he sent it to a bunch of his friends saying, "Look what I got," and he actually had one of my old cards and my phone numbers wrong on it. My email is correct, but my phone number is wrong on it. So, he actually sent that off to a bunch of people and then sent me it saying, "I've just passed this around a lot of people." So, no, my business card was not in that letter.

Andrew: So, you wouldn't put your business card in there, partially because you're not travelling with hundreds and partially because it makes it more business-y.

Steve: I don't carry business cards. I don't have business cards. You're right. This was not a business transaction. This was a relationship.

Andrew: They're going to know that it's you. Sometimes I get notes and I can't tell who it's from. They're going to know that it's you, I guess because this guy, what's his name? Daryl? Daryl would know it's you because you contacted him already. He's someone who's met you. He would get the look of the cartoon and know, "That's my guy Steve Sims."

Steve: Yeah. He knows my signature. Sometimes I'll actually on the envelope, write on the back of it, "All the best, Steve Sims," or something like that so they know it's coming from me. If it's someone that maybe knows Bluefish more than me, it will be a Bluefish on there or maybe I'll just put a little ugly Sims on the back. But they'll know it's me usually before they've even opened it.

Andrew: So, if I were going to do the thing for you, this one, it's not right for me to have left it, "Andrew." I should write, "Andrew Warner," otherwise how are you going to know

it's Andrew Warner? You're going to think it's one of your old friends Andrew, right?

Steve: I'm going to know it's you now. But yeah, if I haven't received anything from you before, then you should put on there Andy Warner or something like that. Yeah.

Andrew: You're right. We should be clearer. Anything more than that? Am I becoming too anal if I start to put an email address or URL or something?

Steve: Don't put any of that stuff on it. If I'm doing business with you, I'm increasing my relationship with you.

Andrew: All right. Back to the big board. Get engaged relationships, not followers.

Steve: Yeah.

Andrew: Now, this is what we were talking about earlier. You used to have 160,000 people on your mailing list. First of all, how did you end up with 160,000 people on your mailing list?

Steve: People like us. What can I tell you? They just find us on the website. They see us on CNN or in Forbes. We get a lot of media. Then they would jump on the website and they would subscribe. And then you just end up with this dead weight.

Andrew: They were doing this. They go to UglySims.com and then they were scrolling down to the bottom...

Steve: Well, actually, the emails that we're talking about are the Bluefish ones.

Andrew: Okay. Bluefish used to have 160,000 emails?

Steve: Yeah.

Andrew: I see, because you were on CNN and they hear, "Hey, Bluefish is going to get me into outer space or down to see the Titanic," and they decide they're going to add their name to the mailing list because they'd like to do that.

Steve: Yeah. So, they would go and throw their email on there. We don't want bystanders. So, we would send out a few emails and just watch it and then we would send out some individuals. It was laborious. I'll tell you this. We'd pick about 1,000 emails. Split them up between the team. There are about 18 of us full time. We would split it up and we'd say, "Just send out 100 emails." When you've got a bit of low time,

just send out 100 emails, see what interaction you've got.

If we're not getting any interaction, then my job is not there just to send you wallpaper. My job is there to interact with you. So, we would then send them an email and say, "Look, we don't hear from you." We do this occasionally with our big email list saying, "Every six months, we want to make sure you're still around, still alive, still breathing and still interested in living life to the max. So, if you don't reenlist, bye-bye." We would get rid of them. We're down to 48,000, something like that. So, we shafted a lot of our email out of the way and it's worked better for us.

Andrew: All right. By the way, you know you don't need to actually do that manually anymore. That stuff is all automated.

Steve: Yeah, you can automate it. I'm sure you can. I just like to reach out in person.

Andrew: I see. You really do like the personal touch. You don't want to have all those emails. You do like this.

Steve: Oh, that was me in Italy. That was where I was doing the sheets and stuff.

Andrew: Yeah. You're in there with your computer. It looks like you've got some tea or coffee there and your wallet is on the table and you're sitting there writing your card.

Steve: Yeah, just scribbling away, just having a laugh. The trouble with automation, automation doesn't have 100 percent effective rate. If you've got MailChimp or Constant Contact and you send out 100,000 emails, your open rate is, if you're good, 7 to 12 percent.

Andrew: Right.

Steve: So, personally, if you send out an email, if I send out an email from my Outlook, it's going to get through to you. If it doesn't and it gets bounced back or for whatever message on it, I learn more about it. Secondly, when it bounces back, nine times out of ten it bounces back with a, "Sorry, I'm travelling. Andrew Warner, phone number, email, website, address." Bang, I've got your information.

So, I send you a postcard going, "Andrew, we don't chat much but you've been on my list for a year. I just want to know why you're not a member or why we're not looking after you. If you found someone better than us, tell me who they are and I'll go and work for them."

Andrew: That's a good line. What do you charge for membership?

Steve: We charge \$5,000 per annum.

Andrew: So, \$5,000 a year, what do I get for that?

Steve: You get one of us. Then we build up a profile on you. We look after your travel. We look after your flights, restaurants. So, basic concierge stuff but then we look after everything from tickets to remarkable once-in-a-lifetime experiences.

Andrew: So, \$5,000, you're going to set me up with a remarkable, once-in-a-lifetime experience?

Steve: We're going to plan it for you, you're going to pay the difference. The \$5,000 is just to be part of the club. Any of the other stuff is an additional fee. So, if you want to go to a red carpet event or the Milan Fashion Week or you want to go down to see the Titanic, we'll quote you out what it is.

Andrew: All right. I'm now obsessed with how do I get your address. It is a tough thing to do. I see your sig file in your email includes your email--sorry?

Steve: You're just going to text Tim Ferriss or something and he's going to give me up.

Andrew: I don't think he would have it. Now, you mentioned you talked to Ramit today. He might have it. But Ramit doesn't seem like someone who's going to collect your address. Hmm... I'm going to have to email Richard Branson. Would Richard Branson have your mailing address?

Steve: Yeah. He's got mine.

Andrew: I'll have to email him. All right. We'll keep hunting down. On to the next one-- ooh, this one is kind of painful. I'm glad that you're talking about this. You're saying own your mistakes. So, the Bluefish--the URL is TheBluefish.com--you launched it before and what happened to it?

Steve: I launched The Bluefish in the early '90s. We opened up one of those new-fangled website things in like the late '90s. It was like fully rolling in the early 2000s. So, along the way, you make mistakes. I'm always cautious of these people that go, "I've never made any mistakes," and stuff like that. I've made shit loads. I kind of hope I continue to make mistakes, otherwise I'm not trying hard enough.

But I really made a big mistake in 2005, I think it was. I listened to what other people told me my company should look like. I have a certain attitude. I have a certain style, as you've probably guessed by now. I'm not shy about saying what I think. I speak to clients in the way that I want to be spoken to, so I relate to them in the same manner. People started telling me, "If you want to be a billion-dollar company, you need a COO, a CFO, an SBO," and all these other titles I didn't bloody understand.

But my company was already making good money and I was happy and everyone was cheerful and everyone wanted to go to work. And I screwed it up.

Andrew: And you kept building it up. This business here--this is the early 2000s version of the site. You kept hiring and hiring more layers of management in this business and making it more and more professional, let's say.

Steve: Yeah. That was the key. They actually wanted me to become more professional, so I did. I suddenly found that I gave myself so many shackles. It took me an hour to work out if I was able to get a cup of coffee. It just became pathetic. We just injected too much water into this ship and the thing just started to sink fast.

Andrew: So, how do you deal with that when you're someone who has such high expectations for the service you give your clients, they have such expectations for you? What did you do? What did you tell your clients?

Steve: Well, luckily the clients were never affected. This was all internal. This was all structural.

Andrew: Okay.

Steve: It just became really harder and less fun to put up with our bureaucracy when all we wanted to do was really phone up a client and say, "Hey, Andrew, what are we going to do to make it more interesting this weekend?" What we did was to quite simply own your mistake, know you fucked up and just go, "Right," pull the plug. "You aren't doing this now. You're not doing that. You're fired, by the way. That's not happening. We're going back to the way that it works."

If it works, don't change it. If what you're doing works, then get other people to do the stuff that they can do that you do and allow you to focus on doing what they can't do, and it will give you more time to do twice of it and there's your revenue generator.

Andrew: And the part that you're saying of owning your mistakes happened when you started phoning your clients and saying, "Look, we screwed up. Bluefish is no longer in

existence because of this mistake. I made a mistake. But I'm coming back."

Steve: Yeah. We closed the company. It became so un-fun. There were people yelling at us internally. There were a few of the directors we had taken that were screaming rape and pillage. It was just horrible. I just pulled the plug. I said, "I want nothing to do with it."

A client actually phoned me up. I remember this, it was very funny. He phoned me up and he said, "Hey, Steve, I need you to do this." I said, "Well, I'm not sure I can because Bluefish doesn't exist now." And he turned around and he said, "Who's Bluefish?" I said, "Well, the company." And he said, "I never dealt with Bluefish. I dealt with you."

It suddenly got me realizing what the culture was, and that's when I went back and we had sold all the company assets and everything. We went back and we went to the people and said, "Look, we want to buy the company back. We want to do this, but as we should be doing."

They loved the idea. They took part ownership in the company. We took the whole thing back. We went back and said, "Right, we're not doing this. We're not doing that. That didn't work. We're not touching that." We went back owning the mistake. We went back and we went, "We screwed up. We're not going to allow it to happen again."

Andrew: And from what I hear and see in my notes here, a bunch of your clients related and said that they had similar setbacks in the past and the fact that you were opening up about your mistakes allowed them to connect with you and get a sense of who you were.

Steve: Yeah. I really didn't expect that. I really didn't expect that. But people came out of the woodwork that I had been having great relationships with and they were coming forward and they were going, "I've been in your boots. If you need anything, if you want to chat over anything, just let me know." And I actually started to establish far stronger relationships with people by opening up, being who I was, showing the cuts and bruises and going, "There you go. I got a couple of slaps there, but I'm not out for the count."

Andrew: What kind of revenue can you generate with this business? What are you guys doing at Bluefish?

Steve: It does change from month to month. I think we've never exceeded \$10 million.

Andrew: \$10 million annually.

Steve: Yeah. We've never exceeded \$10 million. But we usually roll. The recession years were bad for everyone.

Andrew: That's not just membership. That's membership plus the cost of setting up the experiences for your clients.

Steve: Correct. Yeah.

Andrew: How many members do you have?

Steve: We have now about 2,500.

Andrew: I was thinking you could sit down at a coffee table and send a note to each one of them, but that would be really tough.

Steve: We can. You saw my coffee table.

Andrew: So, you really will, in the course of a year, every one of your members gets something personal from you?

Steve: Maybe not always from me, maybe from their host. There are situations now where my hosts are actually speaking to clients which I haven't had a lot of interaction with. So, maybe once a year they'll get something from me, most definitely, but three or four times for the rest of the year, they'll get it from their host.

I teach my marketing strategies to my hosts, to my people and then they go out and pull out the letter or find a magazine or find a book or find some kind of chachki somewhere in some kind of fairground and send it off. But they're very interactive in establishing the relationship and the personal identification with their people.

Andrew: You know what? We never actually did get into what you do with that. No. We didn't. We have to talk about it now before we even get to the next step. You will, when you're at a hotel, maybe you'll have--I guess you used to have--SkyMall. You'll have the SkyMall magazine with you and maybe you'll pull that out. What did you used to do with the SkyMall magazine, that catalogue of catalogues full of weird things? What did you do with that?

Steve: I didn't used to do anything. I still do it. The funny thing is my case is in the other room and I think there are 20 SkyMalls in there now getting ready for my flight home. SkyMall, as we know, is probably one of the most hilarious magazines which is best read when drunk. There's no other reason that someone should buy a pink dolphin post

box or a dead skeleton for their front garden. It's just got the most hysterical stuff in there. So, what I do is with my Sharpie, I get these SkyMalls, tear it out and I'll put on there, "Andrew, I hear you just had a new baby. Maybe you'd like this in the crib," just something stupid.

Andrew: Got it.

Steve: Then I'll fold it again, in the envelope, from a hotel and then just send it off to you. Again, you'll get this envelope. By now, you'll be like, "What's he sending me now?" You open it up and there would be like a battery-powered pig for a baby to ride on or something. You'd be like, "That's just stupid." But you'll contact me or you'll communicate with me and then we'll just, again, establish the relationship and keep it strong. Again, think of how much money I'm spending on that?

Andrew: All right. Let's go back to the big board here. The next one is paralysis by analysis. I think we can actually be clearer about this. This has got to be avoid paralysis by analysis. Now it looks much better to me. To talk about that point, we've pulled up this photo here. Where is that? Who is this guy in the center of this photo?

Steve: Well, he's not paralyzed. So, I'm not sure of the link. But that is Andrea Bocelli. We had a client that wanted to have an exclusive dinner experience in Florence. Quite simply, Florence doesn't have exclusive dinner locations. It's not like New York or any other kind of place like that. They have these beautiful restaurants. Some may be hard to get into, but they're not the kind of exclusive snobbery that you'd find at, say, a London Mayfair restaurant.

But he wanted something that was really exclusive, that not a lot of people go to. I think you may have a picture of it. But we actually set up a table for six at the feet of Michelangelo's David. You'll be surprised how many people think that picture is Photoshopped.

Andrew: I didn't think that was legal, to actually go to Michelangelo's David and have a meal right there with this beautiful table.

Steve: We took over the entire Accademia, which is the museum for Michelangelo's David. And then halfway through, we told the client that we had a local musician that was going to come in and serenade him and his wife and in walked Andrea Bocelli.

Andrew: Wow. So, how do you even get to set that up? Here's what I got from AnneMarie who talked to you and produced this session. She said you were like a bull in a china shop, that once you get it in your head that you want to do something, you're

just too fired up and too charged up to just think about it even.

Steve: Yeah. Why wouldn't you be? When you get someone that says, "I want to do something like that?" It ignites the pants out of you and you just want to go for gold. So, you rattle any bush, any cage you can to get one step closer to the goal. When you hear a no, that just means you spoke to the wrong person. Just keep on going until you get the answer you want. It was very, very funny. I'm not a big tough guy at all. I got this request on a Sunday. We pulled it off on the Wednesday. It was all done by the Wednesday.

I sat in the Accademia as the waiters and everyone had gone outside to smoke cigarettes, the security guards were just waiting for the clients to turn up. There was no one in the Accademia apart from me, Andrea and Veronica. Andrea was warbling just to get the reverb to find out what it was like. It hit me like a truck where I was and who I was with and I don't care who knows it, I actually had a tear come up and my body just went cold and I had the hair come up.

I turned around to Veronica and I said, "You're not going to believe this, but I'm kind of having a shock now. I can't believe what we've pulled off in two days, where I am. Yes, I'm with one of the greatest tenors in the world, but I'm also at the feet of one of the most iconic statues in history." I just sat there in a gallery that I've taken over halfway across the world from where my family are. It was a shellshock.

That kind of stuff tingles the pants out of you. Every time I see that picture that you just shot up there, I can't help but grin. It gets me so fired up.

Andrew: That is shocking that you can do that. But let me ask you this. What do you say to someone who's listening that says, "Hey, you know what? Steve has really rich clients. You throw enough money at even a museum, maybe especially a museum and they'll let you into anything. They'll let you into their drawers. They'll let you sit and eat off of Michelangelo's legs." Is it because you have all this money and your clients have all this money?

Steve: I will pause for dramatic effect and not actually give the rude answer I would prefer to give.

Andrew: Oh, please, give the rude answer first.

Steve: That's bollocks. If someone actually said to me, "Oh, throw enough money at it," then you're in the wrong business. If you think money is what gets this done, you've got your head up your ass.

Andrew: It's not that your client has so much money that you can go to the museum and say, "We'll pay, what does it cost?"

Steve: They won't do it. If you want to buy a set of tickets, if you want to buy a car, if you want to take over the floor of a hotel, that's all transaction stuff. That's all commercial. You go in there. You haggle the best deal and you get a good deal for the client. That's money. When you want doors to open, you've got to get them on your side so they buy into the passion of what you're trying to create. They can get excited. This is something exciting for them.

When we phoned up the Accademia, we actually said to them--actually, we didn't phone them up. I went down by train from Rome to the Accademia. I said, "Look, this is going to sound absurd. This is going to sound ridiculous. And you're probably going to want to say no straight off the bat. But can you just listen for just a few seconds so you can understand what I would like to see happen on Wednesday or on Thursday the day after what I hope?" And they were like, "What do you want?"

And I started to walk through that I wanted to make the most exclusive dinner at the most exclusive, beautiful venue in the whole of Florence, for people that understood the passion of what this was. I spoke to them and they got really behind it. They got really excited with it. Now, here was the thing that made me laugh. When the event happened, there were probably about 50 people in the gallery.

When the event happened, I was obviously in the back looking through curtains making sure everyone is all right and the security guards are with me. The people from the galleria were also there peeking through the curtains. Now, a couple of these people had been working there for like 30 years, but they loved seeing what we had created. They had never seen Michelangelo in that environment before with, at the feet of him, not only six clients, but Andrea Bocelli.

We had shone a new level of light and love and respect and passion on Michelangelo's David. They wanted to be part of it. They wanted to be part of that experience. Yes. I agree with you. The client had a lot of money, shit loads of money, could easily afford it. But you would not have walked in there if you thought opening up the checkbook was your way of doing it. Most people will turn you down if you walk in and think it's a simple transaction.

Andrew: All right. Well put. Is your address, in fact, on Sunset Boulevard?

Steve: It is.

Andrew: It is? Is there an 8 in the number of your street address?

Steve: It is.

Andrew: All right. I think we got it. I don't know that I should say it out loud. Should I?

Steve: I've got two addresses. Oh yeah, please do.

Andrew: Are you sure?

Steve: The one you've got there is the only one that I allow out there as my mailing address.

Andrew: This is 803 West Sunset Boulevard. I know what this is. The fact that there's a number 291 tells me that's probably a mailbox.

Steve: Bingo.

Andrew: That's what it is.

Steve: It's 8033.

Andrew: 8033 Sunset Boulevard #291. So, if I send you a postcard there, will it make a difference?

Steve: It will get to me, yes, because you've had to find it.

Andrew: I see. Let's see where it is. It's right next to... I'm now looking at Google Maps here. Let's zoom in. It's next to a deli and wine shop.

Steve: Yeah. You've got to go the other way. Go left.

Andrew: There it is, right there, the UPS Store.

Steve: Bingo.

Andrew: This is where I can mail you a card and it will eventually get to you. All right. So, let me ask you this. First of all, let me look around your neighborhood. I know this place. I used to live near here. It's where Mixergy started.

Steve: I don't. I live about a mile and a half away from that up in the hills.

Andrew: Yeah. I didn't live exactly here. I lived in Santa Monica. But I get the neighborhood. I see it. So, let me ask you this. Is it déclassé for me to send you this postcard--and more importantly not just to you, let's extrapolate from this to future conversations--is it déclassé for me to send you and other people a postcard to something like the UPS Store? Will it have the same impact or not?

Steve: Yes. It will.

Andrew: It will. So, that's okay.

Steve: It's not the location. You may send it to my work address. That's registered as my work address. But it's the fact that you took the time. Now, you know when you took a few seconds. I actually challenge you to be able to type what you just wrote much faster. You've just scribbled it out on an envelope. It's taken seconds.

Andrew: Oh, you're saying this right here took too long? Why did it take this long to write this postcard, you're saying?

Steve: No. What I'm saying is you probably thought about because you're doing the postcard. My point is if you were going to send me an email, you'd over think it. Then you'll type it and the spell check would be done and then you'd have to make sure the grammar is there. It's got no personality because it's in Times New Roman. It's in Verdana or something like that.

Andrew: Ah, so if I'm understanding it right, Steve, what you're saying is it seems like it took a long time, but this can take less time than writing a thoughtful email. In an email, I couldn't just get away with saying to you, "Hey, killer appearance on Mixergy." Here, I can get away with the short note, it has more personality and it comes directly to you. So, it doesn't take as long as it seems compared to email.

Steve: I don't think you would write, "Killer interview on Mixergy." You'd try to make something sound a little bit nicer. You may through a link on there of your latest article and a picture of your dog. You'd just put too much thought into it. That's got more passion, more flare, more character, more punch on that postcard and I would get that postcard and I'd go, "That's nice." And then I would call out and I'd go, "Andrew, cheers for the postcard man," and we'd have a chat and then we'd share a whiskey and that would be it.

Andrew: I'll tell everyone where I got the address. This is a secret that I've used when

I've needed to figure out people's addresses in the past. I went down to your privacy statement, which a lot of websites require you to have in order to do business with you. Facebook, for example, requires a privacy statement on your site. Privacy statements need to have a mailing address on them. It's like, "If you need to contact us, here is the email address. Here's the mailing address."

I've found people's home addresses that way because some people just only have a home address. They don't have a mailbox. So, they put it on. I'm a big personal card sender too. Look, I got this box of cards right here just waiting for me to pull one out and send a note. It is sometimes faster.

Steve: You can do it when you fly. That's why I've got my SkyMalls. I'm going to spend five hours going from here to Los Angeles tomorrow. I'm going to SkyMalling the crap out of those envelopes all the way over.

Andrew: So, Steve, doesn't it become mind-numbing? Don't you at the end of the day, at the end of the flight go, "I spent five hours doing something that a virtual assistant can do for me," or, "I just spent five hours instead of enjoying a scotch on the flight or watching a movie, I'm just writing notes to people. My life shouldn't be about this. My life should be about stuff that's more meaningful than writing addresses on cards." Do you ever feel that way? I sometimes do.

Steve: I'm not quite sure how my life could be more meaningful than reaching out to people I like.

Andrew: What about writing the addresses--I see...

Steve: No, you see--

Andrew: I'm seeing too much as the mechanical processes and you're seeing it as the emotional connection.

Steve: Yeah. See, you're just going to write a note about "killer interview" and I'm going to be able to relate to some people and I'll put a little scribble on there. For a start, I'm definitely going to be enjoying the scotches. I guarantee you some of the letters by the time I've landed in Los Angeles will probably be a lot squirellier than the ones there were when I was taking off from New York.

But my whole idea is that my assistants will do all of the other stuff. They will go and pick up my mail from the postbox. They will come and pick up the envelopes and go and post them for me. They will go and do all of that stuff. But for me to just be able to go

through it and just go, "Hey, Roger, we haven't chatted for ages. Did you enjoy Spain? Where are we sending you next?" Always try and keep the text short, but try to finish it off with a question if you can. Even if it's, "Are you going to buy this pink dolphin postbox?" just something stupid because getting a thought in their head is always a good thing.

But I don't see that as laborious. I actually see that as great interaction. I'll get 100 percent hit rate. I may do 100 envelopes on the plane tomorrow. But I guarantee you over the next two weeks, I'll have 100 conversations and out of that 100 conversations, probably about 20 percent will go, "We forgot to speak to you because we need to go and do this thing or we need to go and do whatever." Great. Well, I'm glad it clicked something. So, let's make sure you're dealing with it. Let's get it going.

Andrew: All right. Let's go on to the final point here. This is what I've been doing a lot of--overthinking. You're saying, "Stop thinking. Do it." You did it so many times, including--here is a photo of a guy named Dan Fitzpatrick. Is that Dan Fitzpatrick the stock guy?

Steve: That's right.

Andrew: Stock market guy. All right.

Steve: I never ever ever ever give up a client's name. The only reason we gave up his name is because he kept on about it for about six months on CNBC. So, it was very public knowledge.

Andrew: So, that is the band Journey that he loves. What happened with the band Journey for him?

Steve: It was actually Branson that reached out because he was on Necker Island with Branson and he asked Branson to setup a meet with Journey. That was his lifelong favorite band. Believe it or not, when he was in college, he was in a Journey cover band. So, he wanted to complete the cycle and actually meet Journey. So, Branson and Joe Polish actually directed him over to me.

I got chatting with him and got to listen to his passion and got to suggest some things. We went from a simple meet and greet to he actually sang live on stage in San Diego with the full band, pyrotechnics, lasers, smoke machines of Journey. I think he did three or four hits of Journey live on stage. It's deemed as the shortest term lead singer of Journey in history.

Andrew: That's you doing it, but there's a bigger connection that happened there around autism. What was that?

Steve: Oh, yeah. Well, everything has got a hot button. If you can get two people passionate, then you're going to make fireworks. We were discussing how we could actually fulfill a great fan's dream, how we could actually make something memorable. I was speaking to the management and all these kinds of things and I said to them-- again, with go in with the checkbook, that's arrogant. It cheapens the whole transaction. A lot of people would just turn around and tell you to piss off.

So, we never brought up the money. We brought up the idea. We brought up the ideology, the whole process, the immersion of the passion, the experience that was going to be generated, how well it could help promote your upcoming tour, how great PR it would be for you to have a fan actually do this. And yes, if there's a charity or some kind of financial numeration, yeah, that will be done. But that's secondary to creating the experience.

And then it popped up that the drummer's son had autism. Dan's brother's son has autism. There was a natural connection there. So, as soon as we put that together, we now not only had the management on our side, we had a member of Journey on our side because he wanted to do something to bring awareness to autism. So, we wrapped the whole experience around and actually got a great donation to Autism Speaks.

So, Dan got to do something wonderful. He raised a lot of money to Autism Speaks. The drummer was over the moon. He was over the moon. Autism Speaks was over the moon. He brought 40 of his close friends to actually fill up the front two lines of the amphitheater to actually see him be live on stage.

Andrew: That's a great story. That's the kind of thing that you do. It's not just about connecting people and giving them good experiences, but it's about connecting with people and the things that matter to them. I'm so glad to have you on here. I'm going to keep using your advice. I will send something to your mailbox.

But I want everyone who's listening to this to follow-up with you and to do a little more than just go over to your website. This is your website, TheBluefish.com. And of course, they can do what tens of thousands of other people have done and join the mailing list here and what thousands of people have done, just become a member.

But I urge them to also check out your personal site. To me, it's your personality that draws me to your methods. You're a guy who's got piercings everywhere, including your eyebrow. And you're teaching business from a point of view that I could relate to as

opposed to the khakis and blue button down shirt approach, where everything just sounds like it's a geeky experience that I have no interest in. Everything you do becomes fun.

Anyway, that's why I like your site. That's why I urge everyone to keep connecting with you. The problem with your site is it's hard for people to figure out how they can stay in touch with you and maybe that's intentional. I'm going to tell them to scroll down to the bottom and enter their email addresses right there so that they could stay in touch and see what you're up to. So many people who I admire and I respect for their interaction ability like Jayson, he's so phenomenal at this, have said good things about you and I know why. The website is UglySims.com. Why is it called UglySims?

Steve: Someone said about the way that I market was ugly. I kind of liked that. So, I like the fact that I live life being imperfect and I said it off the cuff once that the perfections are in the imperfections. Someone said that's the way I am. I'm ugly. I suppose because I'm also physically ugly, UglySims stuck and it just grew.

Andrew: Alright. There it is, UglySims.com. I'm going to send him a postcard. How about we give everyone an assignment for the end of this session? Here's the assignment, something really simple. Do what I'm doing. Take out an envelope and a piece of paper and send a note to somebody or pull something out of the junk mail that you've got and send that out to someone. I get junk mail still to this day.

Steve: Yeah. Don't do it for one though. Let's make the challenge worthwhile so that you can actually quantify it. Do it for ten.

Andrew: Ten people.

Steve: Ten people. Just write ten envelopes. Try and pick two of your favorite people. You listen to the end of this. Two of your favorite clients, two people you want as clients, maybe two people that you lost as clients, a vendor, because you never know when you need that vendor on short notice--always look after your vendors--and then your wife, your boyfriend, your husband.

I work with my wife. She sits one and a half feet away from me on a daily basis. Every now and then, she opens up the post and there's a letter from me. I've just been somewhere watching the kids play soccer or something and I've written here a little note and then I've just sent it to her. I sit with her and I tell her I love her on a daily basis, but just that little note, that raises the bar.

Andrew: You've raised my bar, sir. All right. I'm going to do that. Thank you. That last

part is one I actually should do too. All right. Thank you so much for doing this. I love having you on here. I asked you why you wanted to do this. You said, "You know what, Andrew? I'd like to experiment with some stuff. Let's see what comes of this."

I don't know what comes of it for you. I hope you get something out of it. But I know I got a lot out of it and I know that the person who is listening to us right now, especially if they do this ten-letter challenge is going to get so much out of this session and I appreciate you being on here.

Steve: Thank you, sir. Thank you.

Andrew: You bet. And thank you all for being a part of Mixergy. Bye everyone.