

Product Genius Workshop

Module 1

By Tony Shepherd

By Tony Shepherd
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Morning all...

The first thing to say is that I am available right now to answer any questions you might have.

You can contact me by email: TonyShepherd397@gmail.com

You can live Skype chat with me: tonyshepdirect (please don't voice call me unless we've made a prior arrangement)

Facebook Instant Messenger: <https://www.facebook.com/tonyshepherdhippymarketing> (You might have to 'friend' me first)

I'll be around for the three-week duration of the workshop, Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm GMT

If you're outside the UK time zone or don't overlap in any way you should use email. I'll get back to you.

There might be a delay in getting a reply from me at busy times but I WILL reply.

I'm looking forward to working with you

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony Shepherd". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Introduction



Check out this email I sent:

=====

Subject: I have a really badly knackered knee.

I sometimes tell people that it got injured as a I rescued a little old lady from muggers. Other times I'll say it was a motorbike accident sustained as I crashed on a Greek island (that actually happened but I was completely uninjured because luckily (for me) I came off my bike, flew 12 feet through the air and landed on someone else.

In reality I injured my knee (quite seriously actually) watching Yoga on TV. Not *doing* Yoga you understand – just watching it.

I'd had a few beers and was relaxing after a long dinner and great conversation with my wife. She wandered into the kitchen to refill her wine and I flicked the TV on. I still don't know what the TV was showing but they were featuring a 98-year old woman in a leotard who was a Yoga master. She was chatting away while sitting in the lotus position (for those who don't know it's a sort of cross-legged position but with your fee on TOP of the opposite leg)

Well machismo kicked in and I said to myself – 'If she can do it at that age, then I can'

But I couldn't. I used to be quite supple but not any more.

After 5 minutes of sweating and cursing I got hold of my left leg with both hands and pulled it onto my left knee. For half a second I actually achieved the Lotus position.

Then my knee emitted a noise like someone grinding a walnut between two bricks and a wave of pain hit me like a Tsunami.

As my wife (who'd heard me scream) pulled my legs back into their usual position while yelling at me for being a 'silly bugger' I vowed that I'd never again worry about what other people could do that I couldn't.

Which is why I'm very happy with my Internet business. It's doing pretty well.

So when the latest marketing guru tells me what I should be doing, I squeeze me knee until it hurts, re-learn the 'Yoga Injury' lesson and go do my own thing.

Hurts less.

Best

Tony

=====

and this one below:

=====

Subject: So I'm staring at this bloke's butt-crack...

So there I was.

Staring at another bloke's butt crack, half-exposed directly in front of me.

Wasn't a pretty sight, even for a youthful me in my 20's

But it saved the day...

Actually it wasn't just me who could see most of his arse either, it was the three other blokes in my band standing on stage like lemons with no sound coming out of the PA...

...and beyond that an audience of around 3,000 people sitting in the hot sun in a park in Accrington at a music festival over twenty years ago years ago

The sound engineer was crouching down in front of a large master amp that was controlling the PA system and that had just stopped working.

A fuse had blown.

We had bounced onto the stage like rock-gods, played 30 seconds of our opening song and then everything went horribly quiet.

The sound engineer said he didn't have any spare fuses.

The health and safety bloke said it didn't matter anyway because no one was 'trained' to change the fuse...

...and the PA company said there must be some 'dodgy wiring' somewhere and would be charging for any damage to their equipment.

The fuse blew and within 60 seconds all three of the above had denied responsibility or any willingness to help.

Gits.

The sound guy shook his head like a doctor pronouncing time of death.

We stood there like planks, just hoping the ground would open and swallow us up before the slow hand-clapping and booing started

Then out of the mist (courtesy of the smoke machine) strode our hero.

Thirty pounds overweight, pony-tail, wearing a Led Zep T-shirt and holding a small lunchbox that contained his sandwiches came the lighting engineer.

He looked like the comic book shop-keeper in The Simpsons

He crouched down behind the amp, opened his booty box and tore off a small piece of the foil that covered his tuna roll.

He threw out the fuse and replaced it with the foil.

Then with a wink he flipped the amp switch back on the whole sound system came to life, and we finished the gig.

It was heroic, despite the view of his ass and the fact that it was incredibly dangerous and could have fried him and most of us if it had gone wrong.

But it worked.

He overcame excuses, fear, officialdom, sanity and the lack of any resources whatsoever.

He was a hero that day to us.

He was Buzz Aldrin, Che Guevara and Thomas Edison rolled into one.

He made it all OK again

Would I have done it myself?

BOLLOCKS NO - I'm surprised he survived to be honest.

But sometimes you've just got to get stuck in and sort things out.

Best

Tony

The first email was sent in 2008 and the second one was sent eleven years later in 2019!

They both sold a product in the P.S. that brought me hundreds of dollars (I didn't include them because quite honestly they could be selling anything) and they're both personal stories. The first one was also a blog post.

The point is that I've been doing this for over ten years now
- sending content out as email, including it in my products, using it in my blogs, newsletter and other content.

I do it because it WORKS.

It engages my readers, it builds a rapport and a relationship with them, it builds my brand and it makes SALES.

And it's SO SIMPLE to do.

Deadly effective but very simple.

That's what I'm going to be sharing with you in this workshop.

How you can use free, readily available content from the internet (as well as your own personal stories and experiences) to make a shedload of money online.

We'll start by covering content you already have - *your own stories and experience*. We'll then cover where I find content for my emails AND to sell. And we'll look at how it all fits together so you can profit from it and gain a serious advantage over most other marketers regardless of your niche

Let's get going...

One quick thing first though...

The first part of this Module is about using your own personal stories and experiences as your content.

It's pretty much common-sense and obvious you might think.

BUT I couldn't leave it out because the personal emails, content and stories that I include in my products, emails and other writing makes up almost 50% of the results I get in terms of income.

My products are filled with personal stories and some of my best email results come from personal stories.

It's not only profitable but it provides a lot of content too.

Don't dismiss it as obvious ;)

Because it's REALLY effective.

And that's why I wanted to start this workshop by showing you how it works and how to use the large store of personal experiences you already have...

Personal Stories



Incidentally if you're wondering where I get the above royalty-free images from, it's pixabay.com Do your own due diligence about the license agreements.

The hardest thing to get your head around when it comes to using content is that it actually bloody works at all...

Using stories, jokes, facts, news items, anecdotes and quotes that aren't directly related (or sometimes not even *remotely* related) to your business can seem uncomfortable at times.

Why would someone who signed up to your list or bought your product to learn about blogging or product creation be interested in a story about a mystical scam artist called *Lobsang Rampa* or *The True Story of the Fatal Wedgie*?

(Both real emails of mine)

They are interested because we are human and have an inbuilt curiosity, an innate voyeurism when it comes to other peoples lives and a basic love of be entertained.

Story-tellers are older than time.

Our ancestors would gather round the fire and the story teller would regale them with stories and fables. It was a revered job and story tellers were respected and paid well.

And story tellers are STILL paid well, although today the roaring fire has even replaced by the glowing computer, and the beer and beans given in payment has been replaced by hundreds of thousand of dollars.

Story-telling still works incredibly well today when it comes to holding attention for profit.

Put simply, if you open an email of mine with the subject '*Sex and The Sixty-Six Year Old Schoolteacher*' (another real one) then I have gained your attention, and can use it **to sell to you, or to teach** in a product.

I have dozens of emails - possibly hundreds - from readers who tell me that mine are the only internet marketing emails they open on an ongoing basis

And THAT is why I use content that people want to read.

It's fun to write too :)

It has another function of course, when used in paid products - it keeps the attention of the purchaser and as I said above it allows me to teach.

But because it's entertaining, it also *reduces buyer remorse* and gives me a TINY refund rate.

That alone makes it worth including.

And the easiest way to get started with writing content is by using PERSONAL STORIES and EXPERIENCES.

(I'll show you where to find ready-made content in the coming Modules but I want to show you how powerful your own experience is first)

In Module One of my '*Stop Kicking The Cat*' course I included this brief account:

=====

The phone rang at around 8am on the morning of my 39th Birthday.

We were just finishing breakfast and I had our 9-month old daughter on my lap.

My wife picked it up and handed it to me saying '*It's your sis*'

Thinking she had called to wish me a Happy Birthday I jokingly said

'Go on then, sing it to me'

Instead what she said was:

'Dad's in hospital, he's had a massive heart attack and it's not looking good, you need to get here now'

A couple of hours later I was holding my dad's hand as he died, having not regained consciousness.

I'd seen him two days before in seemingly perfect health and as usual I gave him a hug before we parted.

I'm glad about that hug.

But a small part of me still thinks that if it had been me on the phone instead of my sister..

..I just *might* have sung it :)

My dad would have appreciated the joke.

And you should never miss an opportunity not to take things too seriously.

Unfortunately for the first half of my internet marketing 'career' that's exactly what I did..

=====

You might think that's *too* personal?

Well, not really.

None of you ever knew my dad.

I'm not disrespecting him in any way. I'm explaining what happened and how I felt about it.

If some of you feel more serious about death then that's up to you.

Personally I was comfortable with including it and I think it shows how much I loved him.

He wasn't a serious bloke. As I said in the account, he would have seen the funny side of it.

But getting back to sharing personal accounts of things...

Here is something you might not have noticed about me before:

I actually DON'T share very much personal stuff although it *seems* as though I do.

The idea is to make my readers feel as though they know me.

To establish a relationship, a rapport.

But if you actually LOOK at what I share it's a different story.

I've been telling stories about my life for over ten years.

And I've never ONCE mentioned my wife's name.

Or my children's

And apart from 'Yorkshire' you don't even know where I live.

I don't actively hide any of the above but I don't share either.

Some marketers talk about their serious family problems, their depression, their mental health struggles, their chronic illnesses and other things that are extremely personal.

I have no interest in doing that.

It's no one's business except my own.

More importantly from a business point of view I don't think it enhances my brand at all either.

And while everything I write is true - 100% real and authentic - it's also usually light-hearted and fun (even if the subject matter is a bit grim from time to time)

But It's curated.

It's managed.

I hope that it appears as though it's not - as though it's natural and spontaneous - *but the fact is I strictly filter what gets through so that nothing is ever too personal.*

I also do it to reflect a certain 'me'

A certain brand, a certain persona.

So here's what to do if you want to start using content in your emails, your blogs, your products and other places:

Start with personal stories.

Start with the funny stories you tell your mates in the pub or over coffee after you've dropped the kids off at school.

It will give your content a natural feel because nothing is more natural than sharing something that happened to you.

A true event, a real experience.

Read it back before you release it, and consider how it makes you appear - come across - to your readers.

How does it BRAND you?

Do you look selfish, arrogant, too serious?

If you *do* then rewrite it until you don't.

Take the piss out of yourself too.

I do this all the time and it makes you seem humble, real and most importantly as though you have a great sense of humour*.

*This is one of the most endearing and engaging things about people so make sure you put it across

There's no better way to sell yourself than with personal stories that reflect who you are.

You already have a ready-made source of prime content, so use it in your marketing.

Now you might feel as though you have nothing to share, and that the few ideas you do have are boring and no one would be interested.

You couldn't be more wrong.

Here are a few tips:

Concentrate on what HAPPENED in your story rather than what was SAID.

Funny conversations can die a slow death when you try to replay it to someone who wasn't there.

But something that happened - physically - can be translated into a story very well.

Here's another example of one of my emails:

(This is from March 2013)

Subject: The things you do while drinking wine

So the other night I was working late in my workroom.

Everyone else was in bed and I was sketching out some new ideas for my business...

...and listening to Spotify with my headphones on.

I was listening to everything from Neil Young through to Mumford & Sons and back to The Lumineers

So it was a pretty 'folky' kind of evening.

The volume was cranked up and the bottle of wine that was plonked on my desk soon vanished.

Which is when I decided to buy a guitar.

Amazon's one-click service is dangerous to half-pissed ex-musicians as a mate of mine who bought a baby grand piano to go in a very small house will testify...

...I bet that was an interesting conversation he had with his missus.

At least she couldn't throw it at him.

So anyway, I bought a brand spanking new Yamaha acoustic.

We've already got a classical guitar somewhere in the house but it's knackered and looks prettier than it sounds

Earlier I thought my guitar had arrived just before I started writing this but turned out that the Jehovah's Witnesses are doing the rounds in the village

(Why are there no Jehovah's Witnesses in heaven? Because God and St Peter are hiding behind the gates saying, "Sssshhhhhh! pretend we're not in!")

...Most JW's I've met have a great sense of humour so hopefully any reading this will take it in the spirit it's intended...

anyway...

I'm not really a guitar player.

When I was playing piano and organ in various bands I always picked them up and messed around in rehearsals...

...until we were in the studio with a now well-known band from Wigan and one of them said to me *'If you can't play the f*cking thing don't annoy everyone else with it'*

I was young and a bit in awe so I said nothing at the time, although now I'd have wrapped it round his head

So I know my way round the chords and stuff but I'm not too good at it...

...but that doesn't matter a flying fart.

I've had a daft smile on my face since I pressed the orangey yellow Amazon button and ordered it

I feel sort of 'lighter on my feet', although not in a leather cap and white vest kind of way kind of way...

(How many people can I offend in one email??)

...but in a 'trying something new' kind of way

And since I placed my order I've planned to get involved in no less than TWO online businesses that I know very little about...

...but had always fancied trying.

The feeling I'm having seems somewhat familiar and I realised that it's the same kind of lightness I felt when we started up the plugins business a couple of years back, and later the mobile apps business.

Now I'm hoping I won't have to buy a guitar every time I want try something new, but let me tell you this guys...

...the ENTHUSIASM for new projects is what often sees them through to success

The buzz you get as you start something new is NOT to be underestimated.

It's sometimes much harder to keep an existing (and dare I say 'stale') business going than it is to start a new project that you're bursting at the seams to try

You're like a kid with a new toy, open to ideas, possibilities and ideas

The weird thing is that this enthusiasm will rub off on your existing business, and you'll find you get new ideas, angles and breakthroughs coming out of nowhere

I try to try new things every single month because it the BEST way I know to keep things fresh, and keep your enthusiasm flowing

Try it, see what you think

Enjoy your Thursday

Tony Shepherd

P.S. (sales pitch follows)

Then the P.S. goes into a sales pitch (I'll cover how to do that later)

But the point is that the above email is simply about me working late, drinking a bit too much wine and ordering a guitar from Amazon.

It's not the most exciting story, right?

Not exactly Ian Fleming.

Yet as far as I can tell (this was six years ago) I made a couple of hundred dollars from that email promoting something on JVZoo.

Your stories don't have to be Shakespeare. They just have to be honest and entertaining. Don't embellish - just relate it as you'd tell your partner or friends about your day.

And you can go back as far as you want too.

Here's another email from 2013 although I've used it a couple of times since (don't be scared of re-using your good emails), and it's a story from back in my school days

Subject: The four months I was bullied

Hi Guys,

When I was at school there was this kid who bullied me.

I was about 11 years old and I'd never been bullied before, partly because I was so tall and partly because I got on just fine with the class 'nutters' whenever I came into contact with them, which wasn't often

But this one kid who made my life miserable for about 4 months was a right b*stard

Looking back I can see he was unhappy but all through his school life he chose one child after another who seemed well adjusted and happy and simply BULLIED them...

...physically and mentally

He nicked my sweets, chucked my footie boots into a tree, snapped my pencils and occasionally punched me

He was shorter than me by a good four or five inches but even at 11 years old I recognised he was really mean, and he didn't know where to stop

I heard later in life that he'd done serious time for stabbing someone but I don't know whether that was true or not

So I pretty much dreaded the lesson that I sat next to him in.

I mentioned it to my parents who asked if I wanted them to go see the head teacher and get it sorted

I said no because, well it would have made things worse, and I'd sort it out

When I was alone with my dad he said the dad thing which was to 'hit him back harder'

I didn't

And it went on for around four months

Until one day...

We were walking up the corridor towards the dining hall for school lunch when my evil enemy ran up behind me and swung round on my hair

It hurt a LOT and I had tears in my eyes more from anger than from fright or pain

He stood in front of me laughing and that's when I totally SNOTTED him

Luckily I did it before I had time to think or I wouldn't have dared

I didn't break his nose but I certainly spread it round his face a bit more.

He went down like a sack of spuds...

Unfortunately he got up again pretty quickly.

He was sneering at me through the blood that was running down his face and dripping off his chin, and he looked possessed.

He was going to kill me

I only had one way out

So I hit him again as hard as I could...

This time he ended up sitting on the floor crying

Teachers appeared and I got a bollocking, although to be fair it wasn't half as bad as it should have been so I think they knew what this lad was like

It wasn't just me he'd been picking on

Weeks later and he was bullying someone else

It was just what he did

But he never spoke to me or even came near me again

The moral?

My dad knew what worked and told me what to do.

He'd been there himself (I've never met a bloke who hasn't) and he knew what action to take, even though he was a big, gentle man

But he was positive of the outcome

It's not pleasant and it's certainly not politically correct but it worked

I should have listened to him and I'd have been in a much better situation a hell of a lot earlier

Thanks dad :)

Have a wonderful Thursday

Tony Shepherd

This story took place years ago when I was a kid, but that's fine.

It's the story that matters

It may feel as though it's *too* personal or it may feel as though you have nothing to share but if you look at all the top marketers out there, the best marketing books and the most popular YouTubers...

...they're ALL about personal, personality and stories.

And here's why:

Because in this age of 'connectivity' the way we communicate had CHANGED.

Social media is not about one-to-one communication.

You'll see people posting on their timeline about how they are having a hard time at present.

'If my depression allows me to get out of bed it's a good day'

Or posting about their medical problems and issues.

'My fibromyalgia had a flare-up today and left me in tears'

Now please understand I know people with BOTH the above examples, so I'm in NO WAY dismissing the awful situations they live with...

...but posts like these aren't communications intended on a one-to-one basis.

They are announcements.

They are newsflashes about lives.

And nothing wrong with that.

But there's a HUGE pile of money waiting for you if you truly understand the following sentence:

Online, people don't connect like human beings any more.

Memes, Tweets, Instagram posts, pokes and likes are NOT how people communicate on a one-to-one level.

And so by telling stories, relating experiences and sharing events you can come across as a REAL PERSON in a sea of announcements and ego-statements!

And no matter how much we love social media, we're all conditioned to love and relate to actual PEOPLE **more**.

And that's what I've exploited over the past decade.

Very few people communicate online with each other on a personal level any more online.

So when you DO that, you're going to get through the barriers that most people put up to prevent it such as ad-blocking software, the social media 'block' button or just plain old being ignored.

You WILL get your emails opened, your videos watched and your blog posts read.

It's not about platform, or social media approach.

It's about how you communicate with people.

It's about WHAT you say, not the channel you choose to deliver it on.

But let's not overthink it.

The basis premise is simple: People relate to other people.

And SELLING is about humans talking to other humans AS real people.

Guess what? Storytelling is the best way to do that in my opinion.

What it comes down to is this:

My stories and my content keep people opening my emails. If they didn't open my emails I couldn't sell to them.

As Dave Trott says:

'Marketing is marketing. Advertising is the VOICE of marketing'

My stories are my marketing. They allow me an open channel to my audience because they retain the interest of my readers.

And when I have that attention I have an open to channel to sell to them!

Without my marketing - without my stories - I don't have that attention.

Many marketers think that selling is difficult.

It's not.

They're not selling because they don't have an open channel.

When you open that channel you make sales easily.

And that is what authentic and interesting content provides.

The freaky thing is that on some level as marketers we all KNOW this, but still very few put it into practise.

I buy from people I like.

I buy from people whose stories and experiences, whose opinions and stance I LIKE.

So why marketers bombard me with high pressure, low content sales emails that I ONLY EVER READ because I'm a marketer, God knows.

They would never even get past my email filters if I wasn't checking them out from a marketing point of view.

I've laboured the point but now do you see why the easiest way to sell online by FAR is to use content, starting with the kind that is most readily-available to you and that you are an expert on:

YOUR OWN PERSONAL EXPERIENCES.

Even if (like me) you use paid traffic to drive new prospects to your squeeze pages, the first thing you must do is TALK to them.

Tell them about you.

Keep them opening the emails.

Keep your selling channel open.

USE YOUR PERSONAL STORIES.

Now here's the next big takeaway.

I use storytelling and content for ONE REASON ONLY:

TO KEEP MY READERS WANTING TO HEAR MORE FROM ME.

You do it all the time in your personal life too

You friends, your lovers and everyone else who CHOOSES to stay around you (not including your family who don't have much of a choice!) do so because they find you interesting.

They love you because they find you interesting and caring and involved and present.

Why would prospects be any different?

To compete I have to be more interesting than those marketers who sell similar products.

And to do that I simply have to keep in mind how PEOPLE work.

Not leads or prospects or customers.

People.

Simple human truths as Bill Bernbach called it.

Unless you have a huge marketing budget, talented advertising staff and unlimited time to learn how selling works...

The simplest and most effective way to do it is by telling stories, using interesting content and relating personal experiences to open a selling channel

It just plain old works.

And it's impossible to do the other way round.

If no one is listening you can't sell to them.

Stories, experiences and interesting content get them listening.

It's simple.

Dave Trott again:

Stupid people are impressed by complicated things.

Smart people know that 'simple' works.

And this is what I learned over ten years ago.

It's what I found worked for me when everything else I'd tried didn't.

The secret to a successful online business is simple.

This is it:

1. Get people to voluntarily listen to you using stories, experiences and interesting content

2. While they're listening, sell stuff to them.

That's my entire business marketing model - the overview anyway.

Now obviously I can't take you to websites where you can find your own personal experiences **like I will in the next module where I'll show you my sources for the OTHER type of content I get.**

But I *can* show you how to put them together, and present them...

So now GO TO Workshop Module 1a now and I'll show you exactly HOW to make money from these personal stories.

Best

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony Shepherd". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.