

## Brian Clark Interview with Jamie Tardy

Jamie Tardy: Welcome to *Eventual Millionaire*. I'm Jaime Tardy. And I am so excited to have Brian Clark on the show today. He runs copyblogger.com. I remember, way before I ever started my blog, I used to read that one. So, I'm really excited to have him on the show. He's got a whole bunch of new things going on.

Thanks so much for coming on the show today, Brian.

Brian Clark: Happy to be here. And I dressed up just for you.

Jamie Tardy: I know, he's like, this is video? No? Like, yes.

Brian Clark: Yeah. Wait, I was told there would be no video. No.

Jamie Tardy: Oh, no. Nuh-uh. I'll whip someone if they told you there's no video.

Brian Clark: No, that's my assumption.

Jamie Tardy: You hope, we're all like this. Whenever we do interviews, it's always like, no video. Unfortunately, I'm mean. So, therefore – yeah.

Brian Clark: I will tell people that I didn't get into this internet thing to wear nice clothing.

Jamie Tardy: You're kidding, right? Seriously, I'm wearing yoga pants under. It is what it is, right? That's what we do. Awesome. I'm sure tons of people that are listening has already heard about Copyblogger Media and everything that you do. But give us a rundown, really quick, so everybody knows the breadth of what you guys do.

Brian Clark: Yeah, I mean, the long and short story is, I used to be an attorney. In 1998, I quit to do this internet thing. Floundered around for about a year. Then, figured out that building audiences with content – which later became known as content marketing – was a great way to build businesses as long as you sell something other than advertising.

So, I went on that path from '99 to 2005. Then, I was looking for the next thing I was going to do. I decided to start a blog that talked about what'd done with content and copywriting and all that stuff. And that was Copyblogger. Built an audience. Started launching products off of it.

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By 2010 – I don't know – I had four or five different startups that I had launched off of Copyblogger. They all did seven figures in revenue. We merged several of them together because we had a bigger vision of wanting to build an all-in-one solution. That is now out. It's called the Rainmaker Platform. That's the very short version of what has happened over 17 years.

Jamie Tardy: It's insane that it's been that long. That's the one thing. People look at you. In general, we've got a bazillion bloggers out there trying to make it and really push for it. When you see the timeline that you've been through. Seventeen years? And don't get me wrong. You've done –

Brian Clark: And even then, nine years – nine and a half – since Copyblogger started, I don't know how that happened. I was starting a blog to show people what I could do. I knew I would attract collaboration opportunities and whatnot. And that's, of course, what happened.

But it was never like, oh, yeah, I'm doing this for the next 10 years of my life. So, it's interesting. It's been a fascinating journey.

Jamie Tardy: Why do you think that is? Because that's something. I started mine. The same thing. It was like, mine was a test. Like let's see how to do this blogging thing. And hey, it worked out pretty well. But most people stop. And they don't do it. But you can continued on. So, why did you become so successful over everybody else that's doing very similar things or trying to and not?

Brian Clark: Well, I think, I had the right topic at the right time. It's interesting to talk about now because it's hard for people to believe that in 2006, if you said, you should sell stuff on a blog, that they thought you were Satan. Now, we've got this over hyper commercialized. Everyone's out for the money.

So, there's been a huge evolution that I'm not sure everyone really appreciates. But, even the old school bloggers at the time who didn't like that message, didn't realize that their audience did. So, whether they linked to me and said, he's great. Or they linked to me and said, he's evil. Everyone was like, we're going over there.

But let me put it this way. For the first three months, I was unknown. Crickets chirping, just like everyone does. And I kept going. I don't know how many big ideas I had that didn't work. Then, one did. And that was the breakthrough catalyst where enough people found me.

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Then, with a blog, once enough people find you – I call this the minimum viable audience – in one regard, because of social media, they start growing the audience for you. So, you have to breakthrough that period. We all go through it. It's lonely and frustrating. But I think that's really a big part of the difference. I think I had a good topic. But a lot of people start blogs with topics and they just don't quite make it past that hump.

Jamie Tardy: Did you know that you were at the beginning of a trend? Because that's the trend. People that aren't seeing a lot of success – I mean, the thing is it's gonna take a while to start chugging along, and a lot of action, and a lot of keep going.

But when some people are in that, they're like, is this just wrong? Like did you know, at the time, that you were in front of a trend? Like even, I think, of John Dumas and podcasting. I was like, that's an upward trend. I have a client that does Amazon Affiliate. That's a super upward trend. They're crushing it. But most people that aren't in that don't know. Did you know beforehand that this was a trend that was moving up?

Brian Clark: I knew that I had helped me build three successful businesses. I knew it was a real thing. I knew this is how the internet worked as opposed to ideas of banner ads and all of that kind of stuff. So, I had a certain amount of self-validating confidence that, at least, I knew what I was talking about. But yeah, there are days when you're like, what is going to happen with this?

So, here's a piece of advice that worked really well for me. Copy-blogger was a complementary angle, if you will, to the larger blogging scene. So, therefore, I became friends with everyone instead of competing. That can be a tricky thing to figure out. But you have to be a complementary resource. You have to give your perspective without going, well, that's wrong. That's not gonna win you any friends.

Usually, no one else is wrong. It's just a different perspective. So, if you can share a perspective that resonates. That's also complementary to what their, perhaps, learning somewhere else, that can really take off for you.

Jamie Tardy: Hmm, did you ever want to quit, though? Like when you're in it and slogging, and being like, eh? Did you ever want to quit?

Brian Clark: I mean, I know I need three to six months for something to get going. So, I was at that halfway mark when it actually took off. So, I was

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still chugging along. If I were to go into that nine months without anything, it'd be like, you know, I could be doing something else.

Jamie Tardy: That's awesome. So, tell me a little bit. We were just talking about *Unemployable* and this whole new thing that you just launched. Which, I want to know – I mean, I know you launch a whole bunch of new and really awesome stuff – but what was the reason behind launching this specific piece, especially with so many successful companies that you already have?

Brian Clark: Yeah, so, I'm known as a blogging guy. Then, in 2008, when we accepted the terminology content marketing, which we still don't think is the best term but it's what we got. It's a \$44 billion industry now. You're gonna roll with that. Then, I became a content marketing guy. And of course, everything I've done since '98 has been content-based, audience-based, building email list. Fundamentally, that's all the thread that runs through it all.

But I've started nine businesses and eight of them succeeded. When I step back, I mean, the big realization for me in '99 – because I, originally, wanted to be a writer and made a living on the internet. Then, I found out I was an entrepreneur who could write. That was a big mindset shift for me.

So, when I look back on it, I don't think of myself as a blogging guy or a marketing guy, necessarily, even though those are key components. I'm passionate about entrepreneurship. There's a lot of part of the whole startup bro scene that annoys me to death because it's just teaching them how to play a game that benefits venture capitalists. You know what I'm saying?

Jamie Tardy: Yeah.

Brian Clark: So, I'm more like the, I identify more with the scrappy freelancer solo who has made the leap or is about to make the leap. Like you help people do this, right? And they're getting started because I was a solo at one point. Now, I've got 55 employees and we do eight figures a year. So, my evolution, I just didn't jump to this. It was a true evolution. I learned things at each phase. I got a little more sophisticated. I got better at some things and worse at others.

So, that's the point behind that project. Talk about the whole picture and not just content or not just marketing. Because it's also product development. It's pricing. It's legal. It's finance. It's all these things. So, they were just the next step of something I wanted to do so that

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I could have a broader conversation than just great, great content. I've been saying that for a while, right.

Jamie Tardy: Yeah, exactly. Oh, that's what's really, really awesome. You could really help people. I mean, business is crazy. There's so many aspects.

Brian Clark: There really is.

Jamie Tardy: Somebody's quitting their day job or like becoming a solopreneur first, right? This is how you help them. Do you think that they should have a dream of a 55-person company? Or should they be looking short-term? Going like, okay, let me just see if I can do this. Because it didn't sound like you had a dream of a 55-person company. Like, I'm gonna write.

Brian Clark: That's such a great question. I actually addressed that on one of the early episodes of the *Unemployable* podcast. I was basically what's called a portfolio entrepreneur. I had several companies running at once. And that's a great thing. I was actually making – if you really want to get into it – probably, just as much or more money than when we started the larger company just because you've got all these income sources. They're small, low overhead companies.

So, to me, that's the perfect kind of situation. But I explained. Well, okay, why did you screw that up and merged them all together? Because, that's what we wanted to do from an ambition standpoint. It wasn't about money. It was about what's your goal? And then, okay, what kind of company do you have to have to do that?

And so, I, now, have the kind of company that I needed in order to achieve the goal that me and my partners had together. But I basically say, hey, unless you've got that goal, don't do it. My hair has turned more grey. This is why I'm wearing the hat –

Jamie Tardy: I love that.

Brian Clark: The last five years. Everything has been wonderful. We've grown every year. We've accomplished our goals. The future still looks sunny. But I'm just saying. When you're responsible for 50 families, that's a big responsibility. I don't take it lightly. I'm completely happy with where I am. But I'm just saying, you don't have to aspire to this.

There's some amazing things. I just talked about how the number of single-person companies that make over a million dollars a year is

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continuing to grow year after year. It's because of technology, virtual staffing, the internet, audience building, all of this great stuff. So, yes, in '98, that's what I wanted not to be CEO. But I don't care. I'm good with it.

Jamie Tardy: I'll deal, no.

Brian Clark: Yeah, for me.

Jamie Tardy: I think that's what's so insane. I have a client that does 1.2 million on his – I was like, you don't have anyone helping? Like, I have three people on my team. I don't have enough time to do all this stuff. And so, to me, looking at somebody that's being solo, you can do so much more with the leverage that we have of the internet.

So, give me some outlines for people. We all want, just tell me how to do it, Brian. So, you tell us what you think the best process for really growing your business. Business is not just content marketing. Which is really why I really appreciate you broadening the scope. Because – no offense – people would come to me and go, well, I started a podcast. I'm like, well, that's a marketing tactic. What are you selling? What's your business model?

Brian Clark: And?

Jamie Tardy: Oh, no, there's got to be a business model?

Brian Clark: Oh, wait. You mean there's more?

Jamie Tardy: I know.

Brian Clark: That was like the early blogging days. I have blog. Okay, what's your business objective? What?

Jamie Tardy: Yeah. Wait, huh? I'm gonna make money. And everybody like make money from advertising. I agree with you a 1,000 percent. So, when somebody's getting into this, we have people, probably, within a few months in to a few years into this, usually doing like a side hustle, or just quit their job, or had been doing it a couple years. What do you suggest for them to really level up?

Because that's what everybody wants. They're like, Brian, tell me how to level up in this?

Brian Clark: Exactly. I actually use that language in *Unemployable*.

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Jamie Tardy: We're the same person, Brian. You didn't know that.

Brian Clark: Exactly. Just my female doppelganger.

Jamie Tardy: Yes.

Brian Clark: So, for years I've been preaching build the audience. Build the audience. Build the audience. And I'm not deviating from that at all, 100 percent. I think, the truly successful modern businesses, especially the smaller ones from Solo to just a few people kind of depend on having that warm group of people that resonates with you.

I always talk about what's product and service development. It can be truly innovative. It can be better. It can be cheaper. But the really powerful one is, it's your thing as opposed to someone else's thing. Because that's how we buy; from people we like and we resonate with. So, it's very powerful.

That said, in my collaborations and business partnerships since Copyblogger started, I was the audience guy and I wouldn't want to be any other guy in that equation. But the guys and gals who are my partners, weren't necessarily the audience person. They had other skills.

So, therefore, every person needs to figure out how they can collaborate somehow. It can be through freelance relationship or it can be a joint venture. It can be a more serious partnership. I'm big on collaboration.

So, if you're not the content/media person, great. Find someone to partner with. Just like all my partners came to me and said, how about this? And I'm like, yup, sounds good. The only thing I'll say about that. If you're an audience person, you may realize this. You'll say no to 95 percent of the people who come to you. And you have to. Just like Steve Job said, "What you say no to is more important than what you say yes to."

So, through the process of people coming to me. I only chose the ones that were really bringing value to the audience. I think that's why I haven't screwed up too badly yet.

Jamie Tardy: I love that. Seriously, I'm to be like a crazy gatekeeper. There are so many people coming at you wanting access to your audience. That's insane.

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I really want to dive into this partnership and what you decided to do. Because when we think about solopreneurs, especially when you first start. You're like, well, let me just figure out me first. And then, we'll deal with everybody else. But I mean, my mentors keep telling me to get a partner. And I'm like, I like employees. I don't know that I like having a partner.

Tell us how you can see people really working on that? Like should we just partners? You have one. And apparently, it's working out really well for you. You have a couple. Or should we use and collaborate but without partnership agreements and just help each other. What is the best method that you've seen? And what hasn't worked?

Brian Clark:

That's interesting. So, when I got out of the businesses that I was in before Copyblogger – they were virtual real estate brokerages. They were really successful from the marketing standpoint. But I wasn't very good at systems and processes. We had very happy clients because I work 18 hours a day – chaotically. That's how I'm driven. I'm not gonna let any ball drop. And yet, I won't take a step back and actually work on my business instead of in a **neoclassic e-myth** thing, right?

So, when I got out of that, I'm like, no – and no one even employees. I had partners. I had independent contractors. In real estate, that's how it works. But I was like, man, you still have to manage them. That really had gotten to me, I think. So, my plan was that no employees, only collaboration of whatever the project required. Then, of course now, I have 55 employees. So, don't listen to me at all. But that was the plan.

I would say, for you, for example, if you have the managerial systems and temperament to hire right away and you've got the capital and/or the income coming in, yeah, sure. Because you're preserving equity, right? With the things I wanted to do such as software, I'm not a coder. It's funny, because the early partnerships kind of just happened by, let's put on a play. You start talking about something. Like, yeah, let's do that. Then, it just kept evolving that way.

So, maybe, I wrote that script early by doing obvious collaborations. And then, other people said, maybe, I can collaborate within. Then, it just snowballed after that. So, if were starting right now with just a more mature entrepreneur, more aware of the processes and how to do all that; if I were to start a company first today, I'd probably, it'd be me and I would hire people.

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I wrote this post for this newsletter I do for fun. It was about the tyranny of goals. Where you set a goal. And then, you just blindly plough for it, towards it. Even though, hey, this was a better thing over here. No, I'm going this way. Oh, this looks like it's gonna be a disaster. No, I'm keeping, going. We do that because we don't like uncertainty. But I'm very good at just surfing the waves and that's how things worked out for me.

Let me point out. Even if I started a new company, there are things I'd like to do where there would be a collaborative model. One of my original plans back in the day was to just partner with people. Say, for example, they want to create an online course. I'm really good at that and have been doing it a long time. So, I would collaborate with them. We do it together. We'd make more money than they would do alone.

I would still do that, right? Because that's tapping into someone else's skill and asset base. So, that's a different type of collaboration. That's more like –

Jamie Tardy: Like a project basis?

Brian Clark: Project or asset building thing where you have a portfolio of companies that aren't your primary responsibility to run, but they're bringing you money. That's like being an investor but more sweat equity level based on –

Jamie Tardy: Okay, I have a question on that, though. Typical entrepreneurs – people I work with, you work with, all that stuff – are a little ADD, right? We're a little like, what's going on? Right? So, I see how fun that is. But I just see a lot of people going. But I have three companies. And I'm like, okay, how much are you making? Well. I've a day job. I get – not even close. You know what I mean?

Brian Clark: **[Inaudible]** [00:23:02] all be kicking off revenue.

Jamie Tardy: Exactly.

Brian Clark: **[Inaudible]**.

Jamie Tardy: Exactly. I'm like, so let's start with one. Make that, make a lot of money. So, to me, when I hear, oh, we'll just do a collaboration here and here and here, it's, to me –

Brian Clark: That's **[inaudible]** systems based approach. So, we're not –

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- Jamie Tardy: We just want to clarify this for people.
- Brian Clark: I did it in 2000, 2010. It was a very deliberate, analytical process of, is this good for my audience? Is this a viable money-making project? All of that kind of thing. And the ones I said yes to, were correct. So, yeah, you can't just willy-nilly do things. I get that.
- Man, I think, I'm as ADD as anyone. But once I decide to focus on something, I can ignore everything else. And sometimes, that annoys people who send me email. Because –
- Jamie Tardy: Like, no, I'm not behind the wall. That's awesome. So, I wanna dive into – and I'm not even sure if you're okay with sharing this stuff. So, you just tell me. I usually ask that at the beginning of interview. I totally forgot. I want to know how you launched *Unemployable*. I want to know how somebody, right now, is doing it to the nth degree, right.
- I know you have a podcast. Everybody should join it. I know you have a bunch of stuff that you launched with this. You already have an audience so that negates some of this for some people. I'm just wondering, what are those steps that you took to really make this a big splash for you?
- Brian Clark: Yeah, first of all, so I never apologize for the unfair advantage of having an audience. That's why, I tell you, it's so important. Everything you –
- Jamie Tardy: Like, 17 years.
- Brian Clark: Yeah. I mean, so the *Unemployable* audience is a subset of the broader Copyblogger audience. But it's still a start, right? So, yes, that is part of it. So, let's forget that part and talk about how I would have done, basically, the same thing if I didn't have that audience.
- Jamie Tardy: Thank you.
- Brian Clark: So, basically, it's a new podcast. Uh-oh, sorry.
- Jamie Tardy: No problem. Fifty-five-employee business [inaudible] [00:25:12] discussion.
- Brian Clark: Your podcast is just kind of like your blog content, your out-there-in-the-world content to, hopefully, bring people back to the mother-ship which is unemployable.com. So, the podcast is syndicated through our podcast network. It's in iTunes. It's on Stitcher, all of

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that good stuff. Then, when you get and checkout the site, you'll see that there are certain member-only features that if you register, you get more than just the podcast. Of course, that's tied to an email list so I can notify people.

The real catalyst, I guess, for getting people on that list is just the promise of a free series of webinars that are coming up in the next three or four months. One each month is the plan so far. Like, really pure education, no pitch, there's nothing for sale – that's why there's no pitch – webinars. So, people will register for a webinar and that's a great list building approach. So, I figured, why not do a series of webinars as opposed to starting another blog or whatever? Because I do have a fairly busy day job.

Jamie Tardy: You know.

Brian Clark: This project is a personal project. But it's also perfectly tied into growing and expanding the audience for Copyblogger and the Rainmaker platform. The site's built on the platform. So, it's a demonstration of that. The platform is a sponsor of the show.

So, you can see how it ties in to existing business objectives while, still, satisfying my need to talk about something more than just content marketing.

Jamie Tardy: I love that. **[Inaudible] [00:26:48]** content marketing all the time. How are you finding that people, now, No. 1, they already know they can trust you. So, of course, it's a little bit easier. But when we think of that webinar series and it's a couple months like, we have to wait a long period of time and they're just topping on the list to know eventually they're gonna get good content?

Brian Clark: Yeah.

Jamie Tardy: Is that a good enough oomph if they didn't know you already or no?

Brian Clark: Yeah, again, it's hard to separate that out. So, initial podcast episodes have been well-received. I think that's indicating to people the webinars are going to be really good. And again, I can't wait too long on the webinar. The first one has to come out in the next few weeks. But then, the next one will be a month out. You know what I'm saying. You got to follow up on your promise pretty quickly.

I would say, if you're completely unknown, you might want to have that first webinar in the bag, right? So, we all do things based on

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our 17 year overnight success, right? If you're starting out, everyone is at a different point. So, you adapt accordingly.

So, a great strategy to build the list, if you're completely unknown, you could mimic what I'm doing with *Unemployable*, have guests on the webinars who have authority in audiences. And then, try to figure out how they're going to promote you to their audience. Don't just expect them to. Those days are kind of over.

But, John Lee Dumas, he built that entire podcast. Talk about the first few months, same story. He said, no one. No one was there. And then, all of a sudden, some of my guests said that was a great interview and they promoted me to their audiences. And it caught on fire. No pun intended.

Jamie Tardy: On fire. You know me and John went to high school together. I was his coach to start his podcast, right?

Brian Clark: I did not know that. That's awesome.

Jamie Tardy: Oh, yeah, I was – yeah, so.

Brian Clark: I would take credit for him every day, yeah. Just like –

Jamie Tardy: He goes, I need wear, **I heard** Jamie Tardy t-shirt. I'm like, I'm gonna buy that for you. And, yes, you're gonna wear it. Yeah, he was cool in high school and I was not. Then, when he came to me, I was like, see, look who's cool now.

Brian Clark: Exactly.

Jamie Tardy: No, we're really good friends. It's amazing. When we think about that model even now, that was a few years ago. And so, people come to me. And they're like do what you did with John Dumas. And I'm like, okay, daily interview show, not gonna work like it did way back when.

Brian Clark: You know what I would do? If I had enough of an initial budget to do that kind of strategy and then, say, look, I want you to do this webinar. I'm going to compensate you for your time. If you would promote this webinar to your list, then we'll do it as a form of sponsorship instead of just asking for a freebie.

Now, that does take a little bit of money. But compare dot starting a subway franchise or something, you know? I mean, the fact that

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we can start these multi-million dollar businesses or just multi hundreds of thousands, depending on what you want to do, that's still pretty great. The fact that you can do that for a very, very low cost – thanks to the leverage, as you mentioned. There's the tools and the reach and other people. As long as you treat them well.

I used to be very generous about doing every single conference and thing or whatever and not charging money for anything at all. My attitude hasn't changed. It's my bandwidth. I can't do that anymore. Then, when you might run into someone who has sort of an entitlement issues; that you should do whatever they like you to do. Then, you're just like, what world are you living in? Okay, that's not how it works.

Well, those are really the only things. I don't have enough time. And some people think, because of examples like John and others that, well, this is just how it works. So, you're gonna do this for me. I'm like, no, it's always, what's in it for them? With your prospects, with your customers, your clients, your audience and your partners, right? What's in it for them? Why? Why should they do this?

Jamie Tardy: Yeah, I has to be a no-brainer on both sides. Otherwise, someone's feeling like they're getting the short stick, right? I think that's the thing that's really difficult. It's always comes down on time and money, right? So, you're like, okay, time and money, these are the things that we have.

And I think a lot of new entrepreneurs have issues – I think we're like, we're entitled now because of the internet, right? Where I can start a business for \$12.00. And this is what we do.

Brian Clark: Trust me. It's never been that way. Now, I've never invested huge amounts of money. This, probably, doesn't help. But I literally started Copyblogger with a \$1,000.00 webhosting fees. And then, I became profitable. I did that by testing out a few affiliate offers to see what my audience – so, it's like market research but I became profitable. But it was such a low amount, you didn't need to earn. But what I didn't get back was my time.

Jamie Tardy: Exactly.

Brian Clark: I worked a lot, right? I was making money for 17 months of Copyblogger before we launched our first product doing other projects. So, even that is sort of a side hustle. You got to show up for that audience to keep building it.

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Jamie Tardy: What do you say to the people that feel like they're hustling, right? So, they're like, I'm taking the actions. I'm still moving forward. I'm not that person that's quitting. But I'm not seeing the results that I really want to. I'm not hitting the goals that I really want to. It seems like I'm doing all the right things, but content marketing – everybody's telling me to do this stuff. I'm doing it. And it's not working like it's supposed to.

Brian Clark: Yeah, all I can say about that is the old definition of insanity. You can't keep doing the same things if it's not working. Again, same thing, at the beginning of Copyblogger or at the beginning of any project I do – even when I have the benefit of an initial audience segment as a catalyst, sometimes, I don't get it quite right. It's a constant improvisation, iteration. You keep getting indications of what's working and what's not. You got to double down on what does and eliminate what doesn't.

I wish I had some magic formula for that other than don't get so wedded to your ideas. You got to kill your darling sometimes. If it doesn't work, move on to something else. And make sure it's something that's designed to resonate with them as opposed to what makes you cool, right? Because that's not what it's about.

And that's the No. 1 thing. I swear it's our own egos. I have just as much of one as anyone. I just got wired a long time ago to realize that. One of my favorite sayings is, a successful entrepreneur is a highly-compensated servant. If you don't have that servant mentality, you're not gonna be highly compensated.

And some people can't do that. They want to be the badass entrepreneur who everyone is kissing up to. If you're in it for that, you're not gonna make it. You see personalities out there that seem that way. But I guarantee you, underlying that is identified problems and desires, and satisfy them relentlessly. Then, some people decide they want to be a jerk. That's who they are. Well, these okay. I hope that makes sense.

Jamie Tardy: It does. It's funny. I've never heard that quote. And it's huge to me. I feel like content marketers have this better **bent**. I was chatting with somebody the other day. **[Inaudible] [00:34:13]** with Pat Flynn. They were like, you and Pat – these people seemed authentic and actually like real people. Then, we have the skeezy internet marketers – don't get me wrong. Not all of them are skeezy. But there's some like, eeh, skeezy internet marketers. Really like, I feel they're just taking and not giving.

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Is it just like the content marketing piece, in general, that really allows us to serve and give? Is that what you feel like is that servant piece?

Brian Clark: The mindset of giving value before taking any back, I think, changes you forever and the fact that it works so well – I mean, everyone is doing content in one way or the other. Even with paid traffic. Conversation rates go way up if you get them on an email list instead of just trying to sell directly. How do you get them on an email list? Well, you got to provide content.

So, even if it's not the constant stream of a blog or a podcast. There has to be value given upfront. I know some really ethical internet marketers who have gotten that religion fairly well. And I know some skeezy ones who are doing it, too.

Jamie Tardy: I know, right?

Brian Clark: It really comes down to, hopefully, that the trust isn't abused later. That, I think, that's where we're at now. What do you do after you get someone in your audience? Before it was audience, I don't want that. I just want to sell people stuff.

Jamie Tardy: Ahh, that's a huge key distinction. It's funny. We're doing a launch soon. And I'm doing this challenge. We were working out the challenge. They're like, so, what are gonna sell at the end of it. I was like, I was just want to help people. They were like, **[inaudible]** **[00:35:49]**.

Brian Clark: Yeah, that's like with *Unemployable*. Will there be something for sale eventually? I think so. Of course, there's sponsors in the form of the platform and stuff like that. Now, I just want to do this. I think, that's another important thing which is we all love money. Let's not even pretend we don't.

Jamie Tardy: Thank you. We love money. I'm gonna sell something, eventually. Don't worry.

Brian Clark: But you know, early on, I think, when I started realizing that I was really passionate about being an entrepreneur, something clicked. You get to the point where you spot opportunity everywhere. You'll figure out how the **mortgage brokerage** business works or whatever. And you're like, oh, I could totally kill that if I did this, this and this. Then, I always stop and go, but I don't want to be in that business, right?

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It can't just be money-driven. Some people are, primarily. Even, people aren't – let's say, people who run hedge funds or on Wall Street. Once they make a livable amount of money, it's a game. That's all it is. They're trying to play the game bigger and better than anyone else.

So, entrepreneurship, I think, is like that, too, in that – I don't know. The artistic side of being an entrepreneur, the creative side is satisfying an inner desire of your own [inaudible] [00:37:08] being that servant to others. If it's just the money, you're gonna be going, oh, I'm miserably rich. It makes you no happier than being poor.

Jamie Tardy: That's the reason I do these interviews, right? I want to show that people are doing things that they adore and love, and can't get enough of, and make a whole bunch of money. That's the whole point, right? I mean, money isn't everything.

Brian Clark: It is the sweet spot.

Jamie Tardy: So, much better. I tell my team it's all about – I care about testimonials. No offense. That's like my thing. If I get a testimonial, that's – I love money, too. But that's like my thing. The more I cue that, the more I'm helping people's lives. And it works so well.

So, what is somebody doesn't have that? Or they don't know what it is that really gets them jazzed up besides the money right now? When you don't have the money, the money is really important, right?

Brian Clark: Yeah, so, the way I'm thinking – and maybe, it's just because that was my path – and why I'm trying to talk to the freelancer/small business entrepreneur, is starting there will teach you more about ultimately what your thing is than having a job, having an idea. And thinking you're gonna get super rich with your new product or sass or leapfrogging ahead.

Now, can that happen? Of course, it can. It does happen. But the failure rate's pretty high. When you haven't learned how to run a business, serve clientele – I know everyone that serves clients, even those who really love working with clients. They're like, man, I wish I had a product or a service to sell, right? That's natural. That was part of my evolution as well. You figure that out, I think, by paying your dues.

No one wants to hear that, right? I'm sorry. But even when we take jobs we don't want to learn, sometimes we start businesses that can

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economically support us – like a freelance gig. So, you become a consultant or something so you can live independent of the system. That's what I like.

If you can prove you can make it up there somehow and providing services to clients, maybe, maddening to some people, but if you can pull it off and be client-focused and value-focused, you're ready to take the next step. That's just my personal philosophy. And that's also the path I went down.

Jamie Tardy: Well, first things first, right? Take care. If you're gonna learn so much, and then you'll be like –

Brian Clark: And you're also gonna learn what you don't like.

Jamie Tardy: I've done that before. But I think, that's the thing that's so interesting about your story, just in general, is to see how far you've come. And to go, you were that guy that was doing this and then, you're "blogger." And now, you have a 55-person company because of how you've evolved.

Brian Clark: I'm pretty sure I was more clueless than most people at the beginning. People are like, no, whatever. But look –

Jamie Tardy: Of course, you could say that now, Brian.

Brian Clark: Yeah, but I was a liberal arts major.

Jamie Tardy: Oh, there we go. No kidding.

Brian Clark: Psychology and sociology, my mom thought was a waste of time. It's the perfect education for social online marketing, right? But no one knew that at that time.

Jamie Tardy: No, gosh.

Brian Clark: I didn't know what to do with that. So, I went to law school. I did really well in law school. I figured out, before I even graduated that was I was gonna hate practicing law. And I was right. But I did that for four years, '94 to '98. That was the beginning of the commercial web. I would go home every night and stare at that old boxy compact computer that I used to connect to the internet. I was like, there's got to be something here.

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But I had never taken a business class. Never read a marketing book. I really do it correctly in that I was just so frustrated. I'm like, if I have to be a bar tender in Austin for the rest of my life, then so be it, right?

So, I had no baggage but I also had no clue. They were both good for me in the sense that I didn't have to unlearn anything. Because traditional marketing concepts, you'd seen how poorly those get applied to the internet. So, the first marketing book I ever read was, *Permission Marketing* by Seth Godin. I was already building email lists. I'm like, oh, I got to sell something. Got it. It's the most important moment of my life.

Jamie Tardy: Wow. See, your story is so, so inspirational. I hope, everybody can see – I interview millionaires, right? Everyone's like, oh, there. Like this. But the whole reason why we dive into you saying, I was really crappy at first was to really let people know [inaudible] [00:41:39] connected.

Brian Clark: I was really crappy. I'm the adopted son of a truck driver. I had no trust fund. I put myself through school. I didn't know jack. But I figured it out because I kept going. That's my new catch phrase, is keep going. Just try new things. Just don't give up. I know that's hard advice to take sometimes. You'll be frustrated and whatnot. But, look, this is your life. This is not a dress rehearsal. This is it. You got to make the best of it. If this is your dream. Then, you got to do it.

Jamie Tardy: Hmm, you just give me chills. I think, that's the thing that people need to hear over and over and over again because, sometimes, we forget, as much as we can. I know we have to start wrapping up soon. You're awesome, Brian.

Let me ask you the last question. It's, so, what's one action listeners can take this week to help them move forward towards their goal of a million?

Brian Clark: That's interesting. So, going back to what we've talked about, trying to become a millionaire servant to others. Okay, we always talk about in terms of Godin and others. What tribe do you want to lead?

Well, in my case, I became the leader or one of the people that people follow in the space that I'm also a member of. I'm an online publisher who figured out things that frustrated me. And pretty much shared those frustrations with other. And created products and services to address those things.

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So, sit down and think about it. Think about where do you belong? What groups could you serve in a way that you ascend to a point of leadership? Maybe not the leader, but a leader, right? And then, that positioning lets you listen better, share empathy, all that kind of good stuff. And you'll go, oh, this is what they need. I know that sounds squishy but it works.

Jamie Tardy: So, getting in and keep moving forward, and you'll figure it out as you go.

Brian Clark: Right. Anymore, to become any kind of leader in any type of group, you have to be providing value first. So, that could be local in the form of networking or whatnot – online, of course – that's usually developing some form of content. Again, if you're not the content creator, think about how you might be able to collaborate somehow.

Even if you take a partner, let's say you give away 50 percent of your business to someone who's just really great at – it could be writing. It could be a big podcast, whatever. And yet, instead of failing, your venture makes as twice money as it ever would with you alone. Have you lost anything?

That's another thing scarcity mindset versus abundant mindset. There's a whole world of money and opportunity out there. Don't sit down and go, mine, mine, mine. You got to be generous. You got to be focused on making other people happy.

Jamie Tardy: Oh, I love this. So, tell us where we can find a lot more from you. How we can subscribe to the podcast, [unemployable.com](http://unemployable.com). Like everything. Give us it all. So that way, we can really make sure we're learning everything from your Brian brand.

Brian Clark: Okay. To get the whole package with webinars, audio, lessons, the ability to record a question and hear it answered on the show which is a lot of fun. I'm just starting to do that. Go to [unemployable.com](http://unemployable.com) and register. It's free. Like I said, at this point, there's nothing for sale and nothing soon. If there is something for sale, trust me, I hope it will be of high value. You could go to [rainmaker.fm](http://rainmaker.fm) if you just want to check out the podcast or search on iTunes for *Unemployable*.

Then, of course, beyond that, we've got [copyblogger.com](http://copyblogger.com) which is still the mothership as far as content marketing goes for our entire company. I already mentioned [rainmaker.fm](http://rainmaker.fm). That's our podcast network. I guess, that's enough to get started, right?

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Jamie Tardy: Definitely. It's so funny. I highly suggest, everyone, definitely check out [unemployable.com](http://unemployable.com), too. But the website [copyblogger.com](http://copyblogger.com), I was checking it out the other day. And I showed it to a bunch of my Millionaire Hustlers because the way that you lay it out is awesome. So, everybody needs to just check that out, too. It's really well done. Anyway, for a side note.

Brian Clark: Thank you.

Jamie Tardy: Thank you. This is what you do for a living. So, you know what you're doing. So, thank you so much for coming on the show today, Brian. I really, really appreciate it.