

Ep #154: Nailing Your Messaging to Market Your Business Effectively with Arianne Bellizaire



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Tobi Fairley

[The Design You Podcast](#) with Tobi Fairley

Ep #154: Nailing Your Messaging to Market Your Business Effectively with Arianne Bellizaire

You are listening to the *Design You* podcast with Tobi Fairley, episode number 154.

Welcome to the *Design You* podcast. A show where interior designers and creatives learn to say no to busy and say yes to more health, wealth and joy. Here's your host, Tobi Fairley.

Hey, hey friends. It is winter when I'm recording this episode. I see snow and ice on the ground which is very rare in Arkansas. But it's a good excuse to stay in and record podcast episodes all day. And one of the episodes I just recorded which was so fun, so delightful, so life giving to me, was with my friend Arianne Bellizaire. And so I think you're going to love this episode.

If you are a creative or a designer who struggles with really defining and dialing in your message and really articulating your value so that you get the right clients and you can charge at the right pricing this is your episode. So I won't delay any longer getting you this amazing information, but get out your pen and paper because there's some good stuff here, there's some nuggets here.

And after this episode I think you will be thinking differently and hopefully communicating differently about who you are, what you do and how you really serve the world. Okay, so enjoy this interview with Arianne.

Tobi: Hey Arianne, welcome to the Design You podcast. I'm so glad you're here today.

Arianne: Thank you so much Tobi, I'm glad to be here.

Tobi: Yeah, so fun. So we've known each other for a long time.

Arianne: Yes, you were my design crush. Do you remember the first time I said that?

Ep #154: Nailing Your Messaging to Market Your Business Effectively with Arianne Bellizaire

Tobi: Well, I remember you coming to an event I had in High Point that was a one day event. It was kind of like a crash course in my designer MBA program called Think Tank. And I was so impressed with you.

Arianne: Thank you.

Tobi: I was just so impressed with your intelligence, and your tenacity, and your understanding or your ability to quickly grasp ideas and make them your own. And so we probably had met a few times before then. And I think we had interacted online. But we spent that day together, which has been quite a while ago now.

Arianne: That was five or six years ago. And do you know? I saved every penny to go to that because it was on my vision board that I was going to meet you and actually get a chance to really interact with you on a business perspective. And that was a big goal of mine. So you have no idea. When you posted that one day event I was like – you were like limited spaces. Oh no, it's going to be one of them is me, I'm going to be there.

I saved and registered for that event and it was really great. And definitely one of the things that I look at when I think about the earlier part of my business that helped me as a business owner and as a designer think about how to run a successful business.

Tobi: That's so good. Well, then I may have been your design crush, but over the years you've been mine because of so many of the things I've seen you do with just – I don't know. You've just been really courageous in the way you've used video on your platforms, and your voice. And just getting publicity and all kinds, it's just been really fun to watch. And I mean it's not unlike what I would have expected. Like I said I could see from the moment I met you, the tenacity and the go getting kind of spirit. But it's been really, really fun to watch.

So I've loved watching you and feeling like that's my friend, she's a rock star, she's doing big things so that's been really fun. So while we have this

Ep #154: Nailing Your Messaging to Market Your Business Effectively with Arianne Bellizaire

mutual girl crush going on, why don't you tell everybody who's listening a little bit more about you, in case they don't know about you? Because there's a lot there, there's mom, there's business, there is a wife.

Arianne: Yeah, there's lots of hacks.

Tobi: There is all kinds of stuff, right?

Arianne: Lots of juggling going on. So again, I'm Arianne Bellizaire. I am a Baton Rouge based interior designer, specializing in residential projects for clients who typically are in home number two or three with a family. They're growing into their spaces. And I have a lot of fun helping them on their reconstruction or their renovation project. So that's the technical of what I do. Also I'm a wife of my college sweetheart, we've been married, believe it or not, for 18 years, March it will be 18 years.

And then we have two kids, Sebastian who is 11. No, sorry, Sebastian's just turned 13. And Lauren, Lauren is 11. Oh my God, two years, what am I thinking about? It's crazy, I know, I'm still the same way when I see Alison, I'm like how did she grow up so fast, it's like you blink. So the hats of mom, and wife and business owner...

Tobi: And your daughter's how old? How old is your daughter?

Arianne: She's 11, Lauren is 11.

Tobi: She's 11, he's 13?

Arianne: Yeah, she's 11. And then we just had a new baby added to the family, our puppy, Toby.

Tobi: I know. I saw that. I was like, Toby. Toby.

Arianne: I know, but you spell it with a Y, because he's a boy. I promise we didn't name, consciously name our dog after you, although it's a kind of a funny coincidence. But he is our new little treasure, we love him so much.

Tobi: There's so many dogs in the world named Toby.

Ep #154: Nailing Your Messaging to Market Your Business Effectively with Arianne Bellizaire

Arianne: It just felt right.

Tobi: When you hear my name, it is more of a dog name than a person name I think. I've definitely met more canine Toby's than human Toby's, but that's okay.

Arianne: There's something about it, it's a perfect dog name.

Tobi: Yeah. I love dogs, so it's all good. Okay, so let's get into this conversation. You have a very specific point of view in the way you do business. And then you even help business owners with the same concept. So talk to us about that a little bit. Tell me what it is that lights you up, that gets you excited about this concept of your messaging with your business.

Arianne: Yeah. I probably should have said this in my intro. But interior design is my second career. My first career was communications. So my bachelor's degree is in public relations and my master's degree is in political communications. And I really thought that my career would be spent on Capitol Hill, working on laws, changing the world that way, that didn't work out, kind of glad. So 10 years of my career, my life were spent in the realm of working on public relations and marketing plans for corporations.

And so it's just a part of the way I think about the power of messaging, about how you can frame or reframe the way someone receives what you're saying, or selling, or offering based on understanding the power of messaging. And that is one of the things that you said you saw something in me in my ability to kind of just be on it and kind of quickly grasp topics and understand how to crystallize the nuggets out of them. And I think that comes from being able to listen and glean the nuggets.

And then really regurgitate them in a way that's really easy to understand. That's at its core someone who's really effective at messaging. So that gift and the training of messaging has served me well as I transitioned to the second career of doing my passion which is designing but being able to

Ep #154: Nailing Your Messaging to Market Your Business Effectively with Arianne Bellizaire

communicate their value, the actual thing that I help people with so that they don't get to tell me or frame for me what design means for them. They don't get to dictate my pricing, or my services, or how I work based on their understanding of what a designer does.

I set the expectation by framing for them what I do in a way that they understand who I'm serving, the value I'm providing, the problem I'm solving and then they come and play in my sandbox because I've created the environment, invited them in. So it's a different way of approaching it. And then I think as someone who started this design business clearly passion driven. And then realizing, okay, if this is going to be your business you've got to have the business sense, which is why you were my crush because you were like, "I've got both, finance, accounting, and design."

I'm like, "How do you do that?" So understanding that I need to have both of those things, but then in order to be able to keep the lights on and keep the doors open so that I can live in my passion I have to have a sustainable business. And the thing that lights me up about messaging is that I have had people tell me, "You're so good at communicating, you're so great." And I kind of knew because I've had training in it.

But I didn't realize that people were saying it from a place of I don't think I can do that too. I couldn't do what you're doing. I couldn't be as confident in the way that I deliver my messaging or talk about my products or services. And this is everyone from designers to other creative entrepreneurs.

So that's what lights me up, when I'm able to get on the phone with them and help and say, "Wait, you're throwing away opportunities to talk about your value. If you just change this one thing you're going to see a difference in your confidence and in who you're attracting as far as the clients and projects that you're working on."

Tobi: I love that so much because I think that what I see happening so often is exactly what you're describing. And that we accidentally let other people decide who we are and what services we should provide them. And

Ep #154: Nailing Your Messaging to Market Your Business Effectively with Arianne Bellizaire

then like you said, even dictate our pricing. But before we even get to pricing, just thinking about what we do, I think so often, and I don't know if it's – I mean we may get into a little bit later of like, you know, which is funny because it was your previous background, the politics of things.

I don't know if it's kind of this patriarchal society we live in. I don't know if it's laziness on our part. I don't know what it is. But I think we allow other people to define us and then feel an obligation to fit that mould or that understanding of us. And so for me it almost feels that we are allowing ourselves to be silenced in a way. But the pressure then we put on ourselves to even do parts of a job that we don't like, that we're not good at, that's not our passion.

And kind of I think the story, don't you that we justify this with is, "Well, a legit design firm does this kind of work, or the cool kids do this, the successful people do this." And for me and I think for you too, that's irrelevant, if it's not my sweet spot, if I'm not good at it, if I don't like it, why am I allowing other people to define how I show up in the world, right?

Arianne: Yeah. And I think most of us come to that place when we get to a point in our career where we feel like we've kind of hit some hurdles. We've paid our dues. We've got some credibility. And then we get the confidence to then say, "No, never again. I'm not going to be all things for all people." But you don't have to wait 10, 20 years in the business to set yourself up that way. You can be a one, two, three year creative entrepreneur who just knows how to speak to their people, knows how to build value into their product or service.

And from day one is setting healthy boundaries and healthy expectations because at the end of the day we are not best serving our client if we are not operating in our zone of genius. We're just not doing it, it's a loss to them, it's a loss to us, everybody's miserable. And so if we can really be clear on what we love, even if it's not something that I'm an expert in today,

Ep #154: Nailing Your Messaging to Market Your Business Effectively with Arianne Bellizaire

if it's my passion I'm going to dive down that rabbit hole and learn what I can and at the expense of the other things that don't feel my passion.

So there are a lot of designers or an example, there may be a designer who loves interior design but is passionate about the art. And a few years from now figures out they just want to be the artist who provides the art for the interior spaces and along the design. It's the permission to say, "What is my passion?" And then communicating that passion so you get more and more requests to do that thing, and then that is how you find yourself. You don't just arrive there but you do with purpose and with proper messaging find yourself doing more often than not the thing that is your zone of genius.

Tobi: I love that so much. And I think a lot of what you're saying there, or maybe implying, and I want to make sure that's what you're saying is it felt to me like you were giving us permission to evolve and our businesses evolve, and our services evolve. I just had someone on the podcast recently completely unrelated to the design industry but her – she's more in wellness and ayurveda techniques. And she talks a lot about dharma and your purpose. And she was saying how the thing you do at this moment is not your full purpose.

Maybe you're an interior designer today and like you said, then you may decide you don't want to be that anymore, you may want to be an artist, or it led you down a path, or you go into just sustainability, or just kitchens, or you go into something else entirely. And I love what you're saying there because I've found that over my career I have evolved a lot. And I feel like I'm evolving again right now in what's important to me and what my values are. And I'm bringing that into the work that I'm doing in the world.

Arianne: Yeah. A few months ago because I watched this movie, Soul, have you seen it?

Tobi: Yeah, I love it, yes.

Ep #154: Nailing Your Messaging to Market Your Business Effectively with Arianne Bellizaire

Arianne: And it's that thing where he thought his job and life was to be a musician. And he thought that was his purpose. And he thought that was his defining moment. And when he looked at his life he felt like a failure when he measured it against that perceived purpose. But then stepping outside of himself he realized how much value he actually gave to the world by just doing what he loved, like getting in the zone. It's like exactly what you say, once you get to that place of zone, and he was just creating, that was when the magic happened.

And so for all of us that should be our quest, is to figure out not by definition of a term what our purpose is. But how do we move through this world in a way where we're constantly providing, where we're adding to the experience, we are being good humans? We are doing all of those things just by virtue of being who we are and doing the thing that we love every day to serve other people, that's it.

Tobi: I love that so much. And I think that where we fall short of that is this human need that our human brains want to put things in categories and have labels and boxes. And we want to look at everybody else and compare and be like do I have all the parts? Do I have all the acceptable parts? And am I doing them the way that the world tells me I should?

And I think that by nature of that, don't you think that – to me that just by nature of labeling in general we hold ourselves so small. Because if it's something that we can label and if it's something that has to be fixed and defined, and can't evolve or change then we're cutting ourselves off from a lot of our genius in the world.

Arianne: Absolutely. And we're cutting ourselves off from a lot of genius, but also we're cutting ourselves off from access to genius. And this is something that you and I can relate to because if I'm sitting with a client and she or he is asking me, "What's the right answer?" I'm like, "No, what's right for you? What do you love? What makes your heart sing? Let's go

Ep #154: Nailing Your Messaging to Market Your Business Effectively with Arianne Bellizaire

look at the countertops and you pick the one you love.” “But I’m not seeing pictures of that, is it on Trend?”

It doesn’t matter if it’s not on Trend, if it’s timeless to you then it’s authentically what you love and that’s what we go with. So even my ability to operate in my zone of genius and really help you realize the dream of that home that you want. You have to be willing to be open, and vulnerable, and authentic enough to access that place of what you love and be open about it and share it.

Tobi: Yes, I love that so much. Yeah, because we can be as authentic as possible on the other side and we’ll talk about next how to define that. We’re like if everything’s a possibility and no businesses are the same, how do we put it into words? But before we even go there, I love what you’re saying. If you are completely clear on your values, and your genius, and your gifts, and the way you like to work. But your customer is not self-aware and they’re not confident enough or courageous enough to listen to their own heart, or gut, or intuition, and they’re always looking outside of.

I would say if you’re a client or a business owner, if you’re always looking outside of you for the answer you’re going to struggle, and make mistakes, and second guess. And so I think kind of what you’re saying in a nutshell which has been a realization I’ve been coming to over the last several years is this whole thing is about learning to trust ourselves and honor what we hear, right?

Arianne: Yes. Honor what we hear.

Tobi: Yeah, that internal message, yeah.

Arianne: And listen to it, tune into it, kind of turn our frequencies, tune into that voice, turn down the other voices outside. And that’s the goal, that’s the goal.

Tobi: Okay. So if we’ve done that, or we’re on our way to that, or they’re like, “Okay, I hear you. We haven’t done it yet, but I’m ready to dial in the

Ep #154: Nailing Your Messaging to Market Your Business Effectively with Arianne Bellizaire

frequency.” Then how do you start to share that message in a way that doesn’t sound generalist, that doesn’t pigeonhole you or have you doing work that feels like a grind and the treadmill for 20 years? How do you dial it in and speak it? And then of course then you have to have the courage to leave it. But let’s start with how you dial that in, that message.

Arianne: For me one of the best things I learned, you know, one thing I will tell you is, you know this and this is why we get along is that we are like long learners. So I’m always reinvesting myself and learning via podcasts and trainings. I will pay money to anyone whose 10 steps ahead of me so that I understand what nine steps to avoid. And so a couple of years ago I learned from – I can’t remember which business coach. I need to find this person to properly attribute the quote to them.

But they talked about understanding who you serve; it was called the value articulator statement. And what it basically says is I help this person overcome this person so that they can realize this with my whatever. And so it was this statement that you would set. And I probably spent hours going through different iterations because of course the first time you do it, it’s very generic. I’m an interior designer who helps people build houses so that they have three houses.

But the real power of that value articulator statement is that it helps you zero in on who you serve, what the problem is that they’re facing right now, what you offer to help them overcome it and what the payoff is for them at the end. So if you understand that, the first piece of the exercise is understanding that. So who do I want to work with? What are the projects, or the products that I’ve developed, or the services that offer that?

Really I just feel like at the end of the day whether I’m an introvert, extrovert, omnivert, whatever. I can burst through the door. I have so much energy and joy because that was the right thing. Figure out who that person was, what their problem was and how you help them. And now you know who you serve and your core offering. And then the big thing that we forget

Ep #154: Nailing Your Messaging to Market Your Business Effectively with Arianne Bellizaire

to talk about all the time is what it looks like in the end. What is the transformation? We forget to articulate that because we've been people – we assume they know.

So if you were coming to me as a health coach I would say to you, "I'm going to help you get a healthy lifestyle through meal planning and workouts." If I stop there then I'm no different than anyone else. But if I tell you, "And I've proven it by," I'm making something up, "Helping people drop 30 pounds in 30 minutes." So that's different, okay, I know what the end is, I'm going for the 30 minutes. So now I know what makes you different, I know who you serve, I know who you help. And I know what you're promising me. I know what you're promising me.

So when I get that value articulator statement down it becomes my mantra. It becomes my introduction. It's no longer you and I at a dinner party introducing myself to other people and them saying, "What do you do?" And we say, "I'm an interior designer." I don't throw it away like that anymore. What I do at that point, if someone's introduced to me and I'm introducing myself is I pull out my value articulator statement.

So if you and I were at a party Tobi and you were like, "Hey, this is my friend Arianne, you should go meet her." And I shake Cathy's hand; I'm like, "Hi Cathy, nice to meet you." And Cathy says to me, "Nice to meet you Arianne, what do you do?" I would say to her, "Cathy, I get to work with married couples who are at the beginning stages of their building process for their dream home. And I help them save time and money because I help them avoid mistakes and sometimes I help save their marriage because we eliminate all those arguments.

And in the end they have an enjoyable process for that American dream. It no longer becomes a nightmare for them. And at the end of the day they move into this dream home and they experience all of their favorite moments with their family, friends and loved ones without having to have

Ep #154: Nailing Your Messaging to Market Your Business Effectively with Arianne Bellizaire

gone through the painful episode of the building process”, that you and I probably have heard lots of stories about.

And Cathy’s at that point shaking her head. If she doesn’t need me, she’s like, “I know what you’re talking about. I either built a house or I have a friend who built a house. I have friends who divorced over a house. I get what you’re saying. You are brilliant.” I didn’t say at any point my technical title. I didn’t say that. I just said who I serve, married couples building homes, and how I help them. I make the process real simple. I just clarify and take the pain points out of it for them.

And so any of us can do that, we can think about the exercise of how would we introduce ourselves at a dinner party post Covid? How would I introduce myself in a way that people know exactly who I serve? What I do to provide that service and then what it looks like on the end for that person that I’m serving. What does success look like for them? And that has been a game changer because not everybody’s going to be for me so not everybody’s my ideal client, but those who are, every time come to me and they say, “It’s like you read my mail.”

Because guess what? That value articulator statement is not just what I say, it’s on my website. So my website literally says, ‘save time, save money, save your marriage’. And it’s the icebreaker. It’s the icebreaker. And my website reads as a story of that person that I am trying to serve. It talks about them and how I serve them and how I offer value to them. And that’s something all of us can do, all of us can do no matter what.

Tobi: I agree. I love it so much and here’s what comes to mind when you’re talking about that because when I think about helping people clarify their message in this way people think it sounds great. And they look at other people who do it and they’re like, “I want to be like her.” But when it comes down to time to actually do it I find more often than not people are afraid and they focus on the wrong thing which is all the people that they will be repelling at putting this kind of stake in the ground.

Ep #154: Nailing Your Messaging to Market Your Business Effectively with Arianne Bellizaire

But they're like, "Well, if I say that I'll only work with married couples, and I only work in new construction and the main thing I do is save time, money, and your marriage." And the brain serves you up immediately 75 people that aren't going to be a fit for that and you're fearful.

And it's so interesting because I often say, "Why are you basing your business around the people who aren't already hiring you anyway?" Because one of those people are usually their current clients but their brain goes to like but, but if this mom comes and they just want their daughter's room, or whatever comes, or this office comes. And you and I both know the beauty of sticking with that really more niched or narrow approach and the magic of it. But how do you help people who are afraid to do that?

Arianne: That's a great question.

Tobi: Or even if they're not afraid, a lot of people if they're not afraid they just are confused. They're like, "I don't know what I love or I don't know who I am."

Arianne: That's two great questions. The first thing I would say to you is if you don't know, they don't know. If you don't know who you serve and how you serve them, and who your people are, they don't know. So that means you look like everybody else.

Tobi: Yeah, problem number, one, right?

Arianne: Problem number one, right?

Tobi: If your bank account's not where you want it to be and your pipeline is not, well, you might want to look at the fact that you don't even know who you serve, right? Yeah.

Arianne: That's it, they don't know. If they're interviewing clients, which at this stage they're likely interviewing, they're not just coming one stop shop. So you have to think what is going to make me different from the other three people they interview. If you don't know, they don't know. That's the

Ep #154: Nailing Your Messaging to Market Your Business Effectively with Arianne Bellizaire

first thing I want to offer that person. The second thing I would offer that person is it's probably really easy for me to jump to this and be comfortable on this because I have a natural abundance mentality.

So I automatically look at everything and think there's more than enough for all of us. I just believe that with my heart, I don't really necessarily have a scarcity mentality. And I also know that I'm a people pleaser so I hate telling people no. So by me getting real clear on my, who I serve, guess what it does for me? I don't have to tell people no, they see my website and if they don't see themselves in it, they tell themselves no.

If they call me and they don't fit that avatar, which happens. I have the discretion of saying, "But I think I still can serve you." It might not make sense if I'm telling you that my, you know, the thing that makes me different is that I understand how stressful the process is. And the dynamic between the husband and wife and the conversations that happen on the pillow at night and the arguments, that might make sense. But I would have the discretion to say, "Okay, well, you're outside of my ideal client. But the project is still fabulous, maybe I want to take it."

But more often than not the thing that that value articulator statement has done for me is as a people pleaser who is saying yes to every project. You literally could call me in the early years and be like, "Can you just come help me pick a wall color?" And I would go and of course it would take two seconds and then I would feel so bad, I'm like do I charge them for the hour? Do I charge them for five minutes? I'm thinking how do I pro rate this? Okay, well, I'm here so then let me...

Tobi: Charge \$5.

Arianne: Right. So I'm here and I did say. I knew I'd have to stay an hour minimum so let's figure out what else we're going to do, how can we rearrange your furniture? So all yes, yes, yes because I do not like saying no, don't like disappointing people. That value articulator statement does it for me. It allows me to stand in yes all the time, yes, I can help you if you

Ep #154: Nailing Your Messaging to Market Your Business Effectively with Arianne Bellizaire

are this person. Yes, I can help you if you have this problem. Yes, I can help you if your goal is to get here. Yes, yes, yes, not no. And as scary as that is I promise you I'm telling you I'm not an urban legend, the business comes.

When you get clear and you repel the people who waste your time, who nickel and dime you, who aren't a good fit, who you lose money on because it's just not the right fit, not the right project, not your wheelhouse, making mistakes, whatever. All of those things balance out. And when you are literally working with the people that you love, and the types of projects you love, they come so frequently that you almost have to then build a network. And this is where that second part of the fear comes where you're like, either I won't have enough business, or I feel bad for repelling people.

I repel people real gently, and in a good way. So if someone comes to me and they say, "I want you to do my project." And I know it's not the right fit or I have too much work, I have other designers that I say, "You know what?" I have a friend – someone called me last week from Atlanta. I'm like, "Hey, I'm not in Atlanta." "No. But we follow you on Instagram, we want you to do our house." I'm like, "That's great. But guess what? You'll have a better experience from a designer in Atlanta. Let me give you the name of two of my friends who are fantastic in Atlanta." So even my no...

Tobi: I love that so much. The thing of abundance, it takes – I mean just stop it right there for a minute. The number of people that do not have that abundance mentality to give work away to other people, that in a nutshell, we could do a whole podcast just about that. And about how most people don't feel comfortable doing that because their scarcity mindset is, well, what if it's embarrassing? What if I need that money? What if another job doesn't come? What if it was the dream job and then I see the other person do it and they get in a magazine and I regret that I didn't keep it?

There's so much scarcity in the world, and I think that is a lot of this problem that makes us afraid to even put that stake in the ground. But I

Ep #154: Nailing Your Messaging to Market Your Business Effectively with Arianne Bellizaire

love that about you. And I'm not surprised at all, that's who you are and how you work. But that in and of itself, to me just vibrating at that frequency is why you have so much work coming to you I think.

Because when we freely give, and support, and share, and love other people I think every bit of – I mean whether it's a religious belief or not, wherever you fall on your belief spectrum, I think we all can agree that that kind of showing up in the world comes back to you.

Arianne: Yeah. It absolutely does and it also clears the path for when you do, locking on that niche and you're known for that thing, that's why you get so much work. So you're no longer vanilla. So for example, if I have a client whose project is one that is not my wheelhouse or my level of expertise, I'm pivoting them or forwarding them to someone who specializes in that thing. So that person knows their sweet spot. I know my sweet spot. And I'm handing them off to someone who I know knows what they're doing in that capacity and is going to best serve them.

So everything from the standpoint of what is going to best serve that person? And if you do that, I've had clients call me and say, "You didn't do my project, but thank you for the goodwill. I referred you to a friend. I had this person follow you on Instagram." Whatever, people feel like when you have that type of goodwill they want to give it back, however they can, whether it's a referral, or a connection, or a thank you note. People will send you thank you notes. It's just really good to think that way.

And I know, listen, I know that it's scary and I know that there's a lot in this world that will leave you staying up at night losing sleep because it's just not good. I also know that it could sound very Pollyanna; I was just born with that, with that optimistic spirit. But I believe that this is something we can kind of control in terms of how much real estate in our mind is taken up by fear, I really do.

Tobi: Well, I think that you might have been born with that personality type. Maybe it lends itself to that. But I would say you practice it because you

Ep #154: Nailing Your Messaging to Market Your Business Effectively with Arianne Bellizaire

could also have that innately and still buy into a lot of the cultural messaging. And you wouldn't be showing up. So I think give yourself credit for the fact that you practice abundance. And you walk the talk as well. The other thing I was thinking about when you were saying that, that I think is so important to mention here too is so many of us define success from a really ego based standpoint.

And so many people would think they had arrived when they had a client in Atlanta calling them in Baton Rouge. And they would want to fly there, if that's a fit for you, great. But what I'm also noticing that's so beautiful is that the fact that you even know yourself, and you're like that's not, I mean I've got a family, I've got children at home, I've got my people to take care of. I've got my clients to take care of. And that's not a fit for me to travel.

I love that you know that because I see so many creatives and just people in the world that are on that treadmill and say yes to too many things. And they're spread so thin and they're so stressed out. And what we don't realize is that those choices we're making are what's creating the stress. It's not just happening to us. And I love that you're saying, "You know what? Immediately I'm flattered that they want to work with me. But I'm in Louisiana; they're in Georgia, that's a no for me." And I think that that's amazing as well that you're making that choice based on your values.

Arianne: Yeah, for sure. My values, my ability to show up authentically is really knowing myself, knowing how I work best, also understanding that my business, and you could probably say this too, a lot of it is referrals. What I do when I take a project – I'm anticipating I'm going to have more of it. If I take a project in Atlanta and I'm going to bring everything. If it kills me, I'm going to give it a 100%, that's just the way I'm made.

So if I do that and I knock it out of the park and the client is happy, that client lives in Atlanta. She's going to tell people in Atlanta who did her house. She's going to tell people about the amazing experience. And

Ep #154: Nailing Your Messaging to Market Your Business Effectively with Arianne Bellizaire

people in Atlanta are going to call me and now I'm going to have more work in Atlanta. So that's just going on in my head because I think about it.

Tobi: And again I don't even know that you notice how unique you are to be able to have such an abundance mentality that you can turn that down. Because a lot of people again would get a lot of ego stroking from that and rightly so. And there's nothing wrong with doing things that feel good. But when we look at the day-to-day and the operations of making jobs happen, when I live in another state and my children are at home and the stress with that. You're so clear on that would be amazing. And not only would it be amazing. I know I'm the rock star so I would get more business there.

I love the confidence but at the same time you're saying, "But I know enough about what I want my days, and my life, and my experience to look like, that that's something I'm going to say no to." And in the same way that people have a hard time repelling people and saying no to clients, I think they have a hard time saying no to opportunities that look good but aren't really aligned or really a fit. So kind of like there's a quote that says say no to the good so you can say yes to the best or something of that kind of concept.

And I think that's what you're saying here. And I just want to point it out because so many people just get on, we sign up for the definition of success that the world tells us and you're going against the grain by saying no to work and knowing what work is right for you. And I just think that that's really important for people to see. Because if they're sitting there going, "Well, I don't like to repel people." They're going to be the same people that wouldn't say no to jobs like that even though they don't serve them, even though the timing's not right.

Arianne: Right. Well, I mean especially there are unique circumstances, so the other reason that that's important to me is because it directly ties into my value articulation, because if I'm telling you that I understand the emotions that happen in a building process. And I understand the stress

Ep #154: Nailing Your Messaging to Market Your Business Effectively with Arianne Bellizaire

that happens at home in the conversations. I'm telling you tongue in cheek, but really I mean it, that I'm going to help save your marriage, I really am. I'm going to save your marriage because I'm going to help you communicate, that's part of it.

I train them on how to communicate with each other. But if that's not happening in my house, I'm not authentic when I tell people, "I can help you save your marriage," if the next thing you know you see me head to the divorce court.

Tobi: Making a sentence that put mine in jeopardy, or that don't nurture it, or make me not be here for my family. I love it so much.

Arianne: It has to be the full circle alignment.

Tobi: That is so good. It's so good.

Arianne: Now, if you are a specialist, I think I guess it still goes back to how you work. But let's say you are a specialist who – I think about this lady, when my kids were young, my son had a death – he was deathly afraid of water. I mean he would shake and it scared us so bad because we were like if he ever falls in he's not going to know how to survive. So we had to break that fear of water. And he was real young at the time and everybody told us, "If you don't break it before five he's going to have it for the rest of his life. You've got to break this."

So we put him in all the classes, we went, and every week I was the mom dragging him into the water, and I had to go in the other room.

Tobi: Traumatizing, yeah.

Arianne: It was traumatizing for both of us, I'd be crying, he'd be crying, the longest thirty minutes of my life every week. And we tried everything. We tried different places. We tried a private person, a group, nothing worked, he was still deathly afraid of water. And then we heard about this lady who was The Baby Whisperer. And she would teach babies from 18

Ep #154: Nailing Your Messaging to Market Your Business Effectively with Arianne Bellizaire

months to 99 years old how to survive in water, not necessarily swim. He won't be Michael Phelps but he'll survive. This woman lived in New Caney, which at the time we lived in Houston. This was an hour and a half drive to her.

She had a pool built in her house, she would take clients, she was booked to the point where every half hour, she would stay in the water from six in the morning till six at night and not eat because she had that much work. But her promise, her value was, "I help people who can't swim, or have a fear of water, get over that fear so they can survive in water in three days." That was her value articulator statement. I was like take – the lady, I'm like, "Take my money, swipe my card. Three days, okay, I'm going to give you a try." For three days I would...

Tobi: Sold.

Arianne: Sold. I would pack him up and would drive to New Caney, we would go in and she was like, "Mom, you have to sit in the building. You can't come outside. If you hear screaming, crying, don't worry about it. You can't stay here."

Tobi: He will not die.

Arianne: "He will not die. I've got you. But he has to learn to trust me." Long story short, in two days, in two days she was like – so we went day one, day two, day three, she's like, "Mom, you can sit out here today." I'm like, "What?" She's like, "I just want to show you something." So sure enough, the time comes. I'm sitting on the chair next to the pool, she's like, "Sebastian, jump in." Sebastian jumps in the water, floats on his back, and paddles to the end of the pool. And I'm like, "What?"

She's like, "No, hold on, I've got some more. Get up Sebastian, get out of the water." He pulls himself out by his hands, pulls himself up off the side of the pool, stands up. Now, he's still crying. She's looking at him, she's like, "Sebastian, did you survive?" "Yes, ma'am." "Sebastian, do it again."

Ep #154: Nailing Your Messaging to Market Your Business Effectively with Arianne Bellizaire

Jumps in. I don't know what she did to this kid in two days. The moral of the story is this woman was so good that she would fly all over the world. She would go to Africa, and she'd go to Hawaii, and she'd go to New Zealand because she was known for that thing.

So I'm saying that to say if you become known for your thing, and it works well for you to sacrifice.

Tobi: Yeah, it's in alignment with your life.

Arianne: It's an alignment thing, yeah. I'm not saying that everybody should be like, "I'm not leaving my house." I'm just saying be in alignment with what you're saying your values are and what you provide. And then make sure the opportunities match up with those things.

Tobi: I love it so much. Okay, so let's get in a little bit into that conversation of alignment a little bit deeper because I want to talk about this. We briefly discussed it, I made sure before we started recording that this felt in alignment with you to talk about. It's something that's been coming up for me a lot personally and also with a lot of people that I help create kind of, you know, select their niche, decide who they are in business. It's really what I call integrating all of themselves and their belief systems into their business.

And I personally think we're going to see this more than ever in the future because of everything that has happened from the pandemic, to the social and racial justice things we've been going through, there's a lot, politics. We've had the last 12 or 15 months that have been pivotal, I think, in how businesses will show up. And not all businesses will. But I think to your point of messaging and how we talked about if you're not defining the message, somebody else will.

For me, that's all the more reason why I am making a decision to integrate publicly my beliefs, my values, the things that I champion, the things that I stand for. And so I wanted you to talk about this a little bit because what I

Ep #154: Nailing Your Messaging to Market Your Business Effectively with Arianne Bellizaire

love from when I mentioned this is – and I think so many people will value your opinion because of this. You said, “Hey Tobi, I’m pretty private. I’m pretty introspective. I’m not an over-sharer, I’m not a tell all my business all the time.”

Yet this has come up for you as well so can you talk a little bit about what you think about how much, is there a right or wrong, how much is right? What do you think this is going to look like moving forward of really integrating our beliefs into our businesses?

Arianne: Yeah. It is absolutely 100% a part of how we think about how we show up. Like you said, I mentioned to you, I’m actually I’m a very private person. You might not feel that way if you follow me, you might feel like you know a lot about me, but I’m very private. I’m not the person who’s documented every moment of my life. I’m very careful with how much of my kids I put out there or how much of my life. Just because I feel like some things are just for us.

But I also happen to believe that I have a responsibility as someone with a platform, whether it’s my following on Instagram, YouTube channel, any of those things. I don’t want to be a caricature and I don’t want to be one dimensional. So I feel like I always need people to remember that I’m a human being, that I do have thoughts and feelings about the things that I see.

And I am always prepared mentally. I’m like hey, you know, some people have come to you and they only know what you do in terms of the transformation or they only know you for feeling like you’re someone who constantly provide a source of inspiration. Or it’s kind of like their insight, look at design. And sometimes I know that they may forget. They may forget you’re a Black woman. And all the things that come with being a Black woman. And so especially with summer I really felt compelled to say, “I’m a real person.”

Ep #154: Nailing Your Messaging to Market Your Business Effectively with Arianne Bellizaire

Now, I posted in an Instagram Live, and this was probably a week after George Floyd. It took me that long to get my thoughts together. It really did, it really did. But it never occurred to me to not say something about it. I just couldn't imagine myself going back to posting photos of beautiful spaces. I just felt out of alignment, I guess that's our word for this. And so before I can go back to our regularly scheduled programming, I had to address the moment in history. And I started that live and I honestly did not have a script. I did not know exactly what I was going to say.

But I was certain of two things, one, I needed to show up and put a stake in the ground so that people knew my values and my position on things. And I also knew hey, there are going to be some people who are going to be like, "You're not for me." And that is completely okay. If I woke up, I think at the time I might have had just under 10,000 followers, if I woke up the next morning and only had a 1,000 it would have been completely fine with me. If those 1,000 people align with my values, that's my people. I don't care. It's not a numbers game.

If you're here and we don't – because here's the thing, the person I want to work with, I'm not saying we're like, yes, we would vote a 100% the same way, I'm not saying that. I'm saying just core values of you should be a good person, a good human, you should be kind. If we don't agree on core values we will never work together. If we are a brand partnership, relationship and your brand doesn't believe what I believe, we are not in alignment. And I am not going to enjoy that relationship experience, you probably won't.

So when you're thinking about messaging, you don't have to be someone who feels like every day I've got to turn on Instagram Live and give a 30 minute speech, or I have to post a political post every day or whatever. I'm not saying that. I'm simply saying remember that you're a whole person, a whole human. And the things that you want to make sure you would be in alignment with, with your client or potential customer. Those are the things you need to reveal.

Ep #154: Nailing Your Messaging to Market Your Business Effectively with Arianne Bellizaire

You don't ever want somebody to be surprised. I showed up to work with you, we are in a paid relationship and now we don't get along because we are not as core value [inaudible].

Tobi: I love that so much. I haven't heard it said that way and that is so important. If they're going to be surprised, if they get to know the real you and they're like, "I had no idea." Then that is something to stop and question about how you're showing up online. The other thing I was thinking about when you were talking is earlier when we were saying, "If you don't articulate your value then you're just basically letting everybody else kind of decide you're a generalist."

And so when we're thinking about that, and this is we're like, "Yeah, that makes perfect sense. I get the whole niche strategy thing. I get the specialist", whatever. But when you come to touchy subjects, when you come to touchy subjects, those taboo subjects of race, or politics, or money, or religion, or any of that stuff. So often what I've found is – I mean I've had amazing experiences because I've been very vocal and very open. I've had amazing experiences of people aligning with me. But I've also had plenty of experiences of people saying, "Shut up and stick to decorating."

And what I want to make sure people understand is someone telling you to, "Shut up and stick to decorating", is exactly the same thing as someone deciding for you what your services are or someone deciding for you what your prices are. It's the same exact thing, right?

Arianne: Same thing, yeah, same exact thing.

Tobi: That's so good.

Arianne: And it's not, like the way you feel when someone tells you that and how basically they're trying to dictate to you what you can think, and feel, and believe. That's the feeling you should have when someone's trying to dictate to you how to run your business, or how to deliver your offer, or how much to charge. It's the same thing.

Ep #154: Nailing Your Messaging to Market Your Business Effectively with Arianne Bellizaire

Tobi: Absolutely, yeah. So there's lessons on both sides of this, on one side, we're right now talking about the political side. But if that fires you up to think someone's going to tell you what you can talk about then why in the world are you letting them dictate how much you charge, or what services you provide, or that you're on the grind, or that they have to set an unrealistic deadline and you agree to it. All of those things are the exact same behavior, yeah.

Arianne: And the difference is we're willing to be affronted when someone says that on our values, our personal values side. Because for us our personal values are personal, what you believe, what I believe is directly related to my experience, the belief that I have on how much it matters, how powerful certain decisions are. And that same visceral reaction I have to things that I see in my personal life, and having to take a stand on those things. Those are the things we don't want to have visceral reactions to in our business.

We're like, "It doesn't matter if they didn't pay me enough. I'm not going to charge you, I'm taking this client." We don't want; we try to remove the emotion and the gut feeling from that. But the thing that gives us the power to stand in our truth on the personal side is that very thing we need to tap into on the business side to know who we serve, how we help them, and what the end result looks like.

Tobi: Well, yeah, because what's coming to mind for me when you were saying that is I think what happens, when you're saying, "We don't want to think about it on the business side." Is we're forgetting that those are choices we're making also. We might be abdicating the choice. We might be letting someone make the choice for us. But we kind of pretend it's happening to us.

Arianne: To us.

Tobi: I'm a young business, or I'm a this, and somewhere out there in the future, enough time will pass or I'll have a good experience or something.

Ep #154: Nailing Your Messaging to Market Your Business Effectively with Arianne Bellizaire

And then I can start doing different things, making different choices. And that's never the truth. Like you said, whether you're a two year old business or a 30 year old business, how you run your business, how you integrate your beliefs into your business, and whether you do and all of that. Every bit of that is all a choice, yeah, so interesting.

Yeah, I love it so much and I think that the way that you said earlier is – when you even said it to me before this, before we started recording. You said, “I know that what I do every day is get up and repel all the people that don't align with my business.” And you know that that not only accept that as part of business.

But almost the way you said it, it was like it is kind of a goal is not to offend people but to – if you're being clear with your messaging, whether it's a personal core belief or a business decision, either one. You know that every single day if you're doing it right you're repelling some people or even a lot of people, or even most people.

Arianne: Yeah. And you're so on it when you make the distinction between repel and offend. Because I think people hear that and they think I'm offending people by telling them that I'm not for them. I'm offending people by saying, “I don't want your project.” But I'm actually doing something different. Repel is really just as if I was a barrier and they were bouncing off, they were just kind of coming at me and just bouncing right off of me.

And that is so important for anyone who struggles with being a people pleaser, for anyone who struggles with telling people no, or having firm boundaries. Until you get that confidence you need to lean on the fact that your messaging is all built around what you want to say yes to. If you think about and focus on the when I get to say yes to, then the repelling happens naturally and you don't have to wear the burden of I've got to say no to this person. How do I write this email that says, “No, your project isn't for us?”

Tobi: Right. Well, and I think to your point about the distinction and I think that to take it even a step farther that it's so important is you might both

Ep #154: Nailing Your Messaging to Market Your Business Effectively with Arianne Bellizaire

repel and offend. You may repel someone, you're not going to offend someone because being offended is something that person does. You don't do that to them. And I think it's just important for us to understand. We're going to repel people, whether or not they're offended is their choice. We can do nothing about it.

It doesn't mean anything about us, if they are offended and we can still do it with love and with professionalism and still be okay. And not even have to apologize and just acknowledge, I get that you're offended. It makes perfect sense with your values and you're welcome to your values. And I think we can understand that we don't have to take responsibility for other people's emotions in the process, whether it's in your pricing, or your services, or the way that you speak on social media, right?

Arianne: That's true, that is so true.

Tobi: Yeah, so good, awesome. Okay, well, now if everybody's bought into this and they're like, "I need all the help. I need Arianne to tell me all the things." You have a service or an opportunity for them to learn how to do their messaging from you, right?

Arianne: Yeah. So I have a bootcamp that I do because most people who are professional entrepreneurs don't have a lot of time. So actually one of my great friends, this is that goodwill, one of my friends whose a designer in Atlanta was like, "Girl, you need to do a weekend bootcamp, get people into shape. They don't have a lot of time. By the end of the weekend they'll have their messaging down and they'll know how to incorporate their messaging into all areas, whether it's social media and the website. They're elevator pitch, value articulator speech", whatever you want to call it.

And so that's what I do. I do a bootcamp once a quarter with creatives; it's called Masterful Marketing for Creatives. And we do a bootcamp in two days, we get all of the message, we work through that hand-in-hand, what should your value articulator statement be? How do we massage it? How do we niche it down? And then how does it show up? Also for those who

Ep #154: Nailing Your Messaging to Market Your Business Effectively with Arianne Bellizaire

don't want to do a weekend, I just do a one hour consultation. So they can go to my website, click on mentorship, reach out to me and we can set up a time and I can answer whatever questions they have.

Or even if they're struggling with working through that statement and they want me to help them tweak it or they want me to maybe look at their social media and see if I can figure out what they're going for or what their thing is. Those are some of the ways that I've been able to help people. And it's really been rewarding for me because I feel like I'm able to use the skills and knowledge that I have from my communications degree.

And the real world experiences of business honor to really provide value to people and help kind of course correct. So they can get to where they're going sooner rather than later.

Tobi: So good. Okay, and then tell them your website so they can find you. And if they also are like, "No, I'm not that person, I'm the married couple who wants to build the house and I want you to save my marriage in the process", they can also find that, right?

Arianne: Yeah. So the good news is they can find it in one place if they can spell my name. So the website is ariannebellizaire a.r.i.a.n.n.e.b.e.l.l.i.z. as in zebra, a.i.r.e.com. And I've wanted to spell all of those things and say it just that way. So if you go on my website you will see of course, interior design, again if you click on the menu and mentorship you will find resources for help with messaging.

Tobi: And they can find you on Instagram, is it all...?

Arianne: They can find me, yeah, that's my name, Arianne Bellizaire Interiors on Instagram. And yeah, that's pretty much my hangout outside of...

Tobi: Yeah. And if they love this concept, you do show up there, I know that you – I don't know if you're still doing it, but I know many weeks I've watched your Q&A Tuesdays.

Ep #154: Nailing Your Messaging to Market Your Business Effectively with Arianne Bellizaire

Arianne: Yeah, which I love. And that's strategic so can I share a secret with you?

Tobi: Yeah, please do.

Arianne: And your listeners, so the Q&A Tuesday was born from me having people ask me the same questions all the time. And me realizing it was an opportunity to educate people for free on the value. So if you watch from now on you'll notice that the questions I choose to answer, build value in design. So I'm never going to say, "Hey, yeah, go ahead and put this size art piece on your wall, sure." So I leave it to you. I'm going to educate but I'm also going to subtly remind them that there are people who can give them that answer much more quickly and elegantly if they pay them.

And whether I'm the designer or it's someone else, my goal on those Tuesdays is to build value in our industry. So it looks like, which it is in some ways serving the audience where they are.

But it's also repelling, it literally is people hearing me say, "Oh my gosh, it's too much but I'm not there yet. I'm not there to hire her because I went to your website and I realize I'm not, no, not there yet but I know now. I'm not going to waste time calling her and asking her to give me that information for free. I'm going to show up on Tuesday and pose my question and hope she picks it. And I know who she says she works with." And it's really a tool so you can use that.

Tobi: It's a tool for your business but it is also a way for you to give back to those people that aren't quite a fit for you yet, or maybe move them in a direction that would be a better fit. That's so cool.

Arianne: Absolutely.

Tobi: See, more of your abundance mentality right there. I love it. Well, thank you so much, delightful, loved every moment, you're such a joy to be with. And I am so thankful you were here today.

Ep #154: Nailing Your Messaging to Market Your Business Effectively with Arianne Bellizaire

Arianne: Thank you so much, Tobi.

Alright, good stuff. She is just, oh gosh, an inspiration. I think my favorite part is just being reminded of not only her optimism but that abundance mindset and spirit that Arianne practices. And I just – I'm naturally that way as well. But just such beautiful reminders that what we put out into the world and what we give away all comes back to us and creates so much joy in our existence. So I hope you were inspired by this. If you want to connect with Arianne, we told you exactly where to find her. She and I would both love to hear from you on Instagram.

And yeah, let us know if this episode changed how you show up in your business and how you talk about what you do. Okay, so I'll see you back here next week with another great episode of the *Design You* podcast. Bye for now.

Thank you so much for listening to the *Design You* podcast, and if you are ready to dig deep and do the important work we talk about here on the podcast of transforming your mindset and creating a scalable online business model, there has never been a more important time than right now. So join me and the incredible creative entrepreneurs in my *Design You* coaching program today. You can get all the details at TobiFairley.com.