

Rebekah Mays ([00:00](#)):

Jen Adams ([00:06](#)):

Good afternoon, everyone! PWA director Jen Adams here, and today I am joined by PWA member Rebekah Mays, who has recently had some big evolutions in her business that resulted from strategically networking her personal connections. And if I seem unusually excited about this, it's because I feel like sometimes as writers, we find that it is easier to talk to total strangers as potential clients than to people we already know, and people kind of in our existing personal and social circles. You can chalk it up to shyness, a fear of being judged, worry that people who knew you from another time in your life won't be interested or won't understand your new writing skills and how they can help. It happens for a lot of reasons, but the overall result is that we can overlook some really golden opportunities. And so when Rebecca brought her story to me, I was just, I was so excited to hear it and today, she's going to share some of her tactics in this area, including how she has landed some fresh client contracts, gotten referrals for other business, and even landed a fantastic opportunity to coach with Marketing Profs at their latest event.

Jen Adams ([01:27](#)):

So, welcome Rebekah, and I'm so glad that you could join us today.

Rebekah Mays ([01:31](#)):

Thanks so much for having me, Jen. I always enjoy talking to you and just sharing my stories and learnings with the community, so it's awesome to be here.

Jen Adams ([01:40](#)):

Well, and we love to hear from you. Longtime PWA members know you as a familiar voice, but you're new to some of our more recent cohorts. So if we could just take a minute and kind of center the group on, on your journey as a writer. Like how did you get into the writing world? What kinds of things did you do at the beginning and what are some of your, your big milestones along the way?

Rebekah Mays ([02:07](#)):

Yes. So I think like a lot of folks, I'd always enjoyed writing and did different kinds of writing and creative writing, and some experimenting with blogging and stuff. But really, I came across copywriting and content writing and kind of how it all fits into marketing, I think it was at the end of 2016. I was just finishing up graduate school. I was studying English literature in Paris, actually, which was a great opportunity, but it left me with about \$30,000 of debt in student loans. And I just didn't really know. I'd had some idea of teaching, but I wasn't super excited about it when the time came. And I was just trying to figure out what I was gonna do next as a career and how to actually make some money and <laugh> pay off the student loans.

Rebekah Mays ([02:59](#)):

So I kind of started looking up different opportunities and I came across AWAI and their, at the time, the Accelerated Program for Six-figure copywriting and just started going through that. And I don't know if others have had this experience, but it was just like this whole world opened up to me of like, whoa, I didn't know there was all this stuff out there, and that you could make money doing this stuff and that

companies need this kind of stuff. And I started just kind of learning the basics. And really not too long after that, and I definitely didn't finish the course, I just was sort of in the first couple chapters, and I basically just started realizing I could approach people that I already knew. Family members who had like a... there was a family business that I started working with and then a few other opportunities in those early days where I just basically wanted to have a proof of concept, essentially.

Rebekah Mays ([03:54](#)):

Like, can you actually make money doing this <laugh>? Or is it, you know, BS <laugh>? And it turned out yes, I could make money, because really I just, I needed a job. And so that was a way to kind of have a flexible career, do some remote work for my family's company. I was living... I moved after that to the Netherlands, so I was able to continue working for my family's business from there while I got another part-time job. And that started out just as an administrative job, but about a year later, I was able to do marketing work for them. So I would say there kind of been three main phases maybe in my career as a copywriter. And the first was really that proof of concept stage where just like, can you make money doing this?

Rebekah Mays ([04:40](#)):

And just kind of exploring and experimenting and literally just writing random stuff in some cases, but having a lot of fun learning. Then the second phase was shifting to that kind of like just writing all kinds of stuff for businesses to then kind of finding my own niche or my kind of specialty, what I was really good at. And that ended up being content strategy. And so this was about 2018, 2019. I just figured out that content strategy was something that I really love, kind of thinking big picture about the tone of voice of the company and what kinds of content do we need to establish trust with our customers? And I loved that style of just like thinking a little longer term and not just trying to get the immediate sale, but really building trust over a long time and using content and writing and storytelling and all of that to make that happen.

Rebekah Mays ([05:37](#)):

So, in that role, I actually had a few in-house jobs, some really cool work actually working with a non-profit software company. So then I got familiar with the whole software world and user experience kind of came into it there, which was really cool. So that was really the second phase and all along the way I was working with AWAI as well and just being a part of the community here. And then the third phase is the most recent, and that's really just been the past year, which has been kind of taking all that experience and then going back to more of a freelance situation. Where I've had some in-house jobs, I've been parts of teams, and now what can I build on my own, where I'm really the one deciding what kind of clients I wanna work with, maybe building up a more diverse set of clients. And also what I'm really excited about is working with sustainable brands and you could call them purpose driven brands that are really trying to make a big social impact or environmental impact. So I'm able to focus on the kinds of clients that I wanna work with as a freelancer and really kind of build a niche and brand for myself. So that's sort of the phase that I'm in now, and that's been about the past year, that I've been focusing on that.

Jen Adams ([06:52](#)):

Well, very cool. And I love how it just kind of changed your, like, that journey of discovery and kind of finding what you like and also being okay to pivot a little bit. Where you're like, okay, this situation is

good, but I want to do something else, or this situation, I've kind of learned what I can at this stage. And now, I'm moving on.

Rebekah Mays ([07:12](#)):

Exactly.

Jen Adams ([07:13](#)):

But within the context of the essay series this month, one of the things I wanna circle back to is that you said that one of the earliest people to give you consistent work was family.

Rebekah Mays ([07:29](#)):

Mm-hmm. <affirmative>.

Jen Adams ([07:29](#)):

And it was paid work too, if I'm remembering right.

Rebekah Mays ([07:33](#)):

Yes.

Jen Adams ([07:33](#)):

And I know there are PWA members who start by working for family, sometimes portfolio builders, sometimes paid projects, but other people really intentionally do not tell family and friends about this writing thing that they're doing. So, can you tell us more about how this job with your family came to be and some of the things that you did to make a strong pitch for getting hired?

Rebekah Mays ([07:59](#)):

Yes. So I will say <laugh>, I don't know how strong of a pitch it was. I've learned so much <laugh> since then about how to present yourself professionally. But, for a little bit of context, my family had a textbook publishing business. It was science textbooks. My dad is kind of a genius. And so he was writing all of these science textbooks, for high schools mainly. And I had done some work in the business, and a few of my family members were involved. So, I would do like data entry or, in some cases I did more editorial work, like proofreading and just kind of making sure the textbooks were ready to go. So I had done that work. So I had, I mean, obviously I knew my dad very well and we were on good terms.

Rebekah Mays ([08:45](#)):

We have a great relationship, but we had also had like kind of this working experience together as well. And he was always enjoying having the family be part of it. So it wasn't like, I would say, it wasn't hard to convince him to hire me cuz he was excited to have me on board. But I would say, what made a difference? So, basically, from my perspective, I just needed, I needed some kind of a job. I needed some income, and I also knew that I wanted to experiment with the ideas that I was reading about and like the techniques I was reading about through AWAI. And so I think the biggest thing that really made a difference for my dad was that I was excited to work with him. And so I presented him an idea of like, Hey, you know, I can be, I think I called it like your marketing and research assistant or something like that.

Rebekah Mays ([09:37](#)):

But, so I didn't really come at it from the perspective of, "Hey, I'm a copywriter, hire me for copywriting." It was more of like marketing, like, you need marketing, I'm gonna help you. And yes, my specialty is writing and thinking about making your copy actually work from a marketing perspective. But, it was in the context of marketing. So I think that's one maybe takeaway. And then the other thing was, yeah, just being excited and being enthusiastic about how I could help and being confident. And I think I was maybe overly confident with how I could grow the business, but he was excited to have me on board. And I think, I think a lot of times business owners, they just, especially small businesses, they just wanna see that you're excited about working with them and that you have something to bring to the table. And that I think makes a big difference as well.

Rebekah Mays ([10:24](#)):

But yeah, I think definitely the early days working with family in an encouraging environment like that gave me a lot of room and grace to kind of learn and experiment. And there wasn't this huge high bar for me to prove myself or anything. It was a very familiar environment and honestly it, I mean it really got everything going. And I've continued to look for environments like that, even as I've leveled up throughout my career. But I would say even now, and we could... I talk about this more in the essays, but even now I'm working with a high school friend <laugh>, who owns a marketing agency and he's one of my favorite clients because it's just so chill working with each other.

Rebekah Mays ([11:09](#)):

We've been friends for a long time, we're the same age, we just have a lot in common and it just feels very relaxed working together and it's just something that we can both enjoy. So, yeah. So I think not everyone is a great candidate for working together like this, but what I wanted to explore in the essay series was this has worked really well for me. What's kind of a system that I can kind of develop and explain to people, like, here's the things to be thinking about. Here's the steps to take, and here are the people, especially, to think about in terms of business owners and marketers and kind of going through the different levels of priorities. So, yeah.

Jen Adams ([11:50](#)):

Yeah, well, and I liked in the essays how you had a little chart with a grid. You're like, okay, these people are business owners that I know, these people work in businesses that I know kind of starting to look at the people in your life because chances are, you know, PWA members may sat like, oh, I don't know anyone who owns a company. And you're like, yes, but not everyone you know is unemployed. Like, people have connections to workplaces.

Rebekah Mays ([12:19](#)):

You probably have past, you have past employment experiences. I think this is one of the things that I've really learned is often when we say, "Oh, I don't know anyone," and I've heard people say this, <laugh> And I have learned that you have to sit down sometimes and just write down who are the people I know and just keep brainstorming. Cuz you know, like hundreds of, you know, maybe thousands of people mm-hmm. <affirmative> and sometimes they're just not top of mind or you don't think of them in that way. And so I, I've had friends who have said, "Oh, I don't know anybody." And guess what? All their clients now are people that they knew, you know? And it's like, okay, yeah. You just had to think about it and be looking for those opportunities. And in my case, there have been people who I kind of forgot about or I just, I wasn't thinking of them or I didn't know they had a business and

Jen Adams ([13:11](#)):

Yeah. That, like, "What are they doing now?" game. Yeah.

Rebekah Mays ([13:14](#)):

What are they doing now? People change, people move careers all the time.

Jen Adams ([13:17](#)):

Yeah. I mean, even... so my husband, when I started my writing career, I very quickly moved overseas and then I lived overseas for several years. And the group of people who were kind of in our expat circle, I mean that stage of, I don't know what you would call us, the young and the restless, like <laugh>. Yes. Uh, you know, people who were in the Peace Corps, people who were volunteering, we had a lot of people who were English teachers, musicians, we had a ton of musicians. My husband was at that point more active in the music industry. But now, you know, a decade later it's like, well, what are they doing now?

Rebekah Mays ([13:51](#)):

Exactly.

Jen Adams ([13:52](#)):

Like, oh, you got married and settled down and you've, well settled down is relative in that particular instance <laugh>. But you know, you work for a power company and you've published three books, like mm-hmm. <affirmative>, oh, you're doing something very different with your life. Or you started a restaurant, or you went back and worked for your dad's company or you, you're a PR person in Chicago. Like, if I sit down and really think about just even people from that era of my life. What are they doing now? Yeah. And you talked about like getting back in touch with people that maybe you haven't talked to in a minute.

Rebekah Mays ([14:26](#)):

Mm-hmm. <affirmative>

Jen Adams ([14:28](#)):

Just great to reconnect.

Rebekah Mays ([14:30](#)):

Yeah. And, you know, we talk about this often from a like, what can I get from it perspective? But it really is just nice to be able to reconnect with people. And that's what this is all about, ultimately, is just building relationships. And it's fulfilling to do that. Business is about working with other people and bringing value to other people. And it's really fulfilling to be able to do that with people that you know, cuz then you can see the impacts of your work even more maybe than in a business where you don't know them so well. So.

Jen Adams ([15:04](#)):

Yeah, it's a different level of caring in some ways. Yes.

Rebekah Mays ([15:09](#)):

Yes. I think so.

Jen Adams ([15:11](#)):

So, well, and as you've continued evolving your career, I mean, you've gone back to networking again and again. Um, like PWA members can jump back to last fall when you came and talked to us about networking at virtual events.

Rebekah Mays ([15:24](#)):

Mm-hmm.

Jen Adams ([15:25](#)):

<affirmative>, which kind of was the big thing that so many of us took away from the pandemic era and beyond is oh, now there's this hybrid model of in-person and virtual networking and kind of how do you do that? And, and then you've been posting a lot on LinkedIn lately. So kind of what are the newest things coming out of your network?

Rebekah Mays ([15:45](#)):

Yeah, so I was actually in a call with Russ Hennebury lately. So he's one of the teachers of the certifications, at AWAI. And he was... He explained networking in a way that I thought was really helpful where he basically talked about thinking of your network as like these concentric rings. So you kind of start with your first degree connections and those are the people that you know directly. And those are probably the people that you wanna start with when we're thinking about business. And then we move out to those second degree connections, you know, the friends and connections of people that you know, and then the third level and beyond. I think often, not for everyone, but this has definitely been, in my case, you start at that innermost circle and as you move along you're able to -- and more confident also -- to start reaching out to the outer reaches of the circle and like the outer rings.

Rebekah Mays ([16:44](#)):

LinkedIn also allows us to do that. Virtual events also allow us to do that more easily. But I think also just more experience gives you more authority maybe to just kind of get a stranger's attention. Whereas when you're working with people that you know, you can just rely on the fact that they already know you, they already trust that you're gonna do what you say you're gonna do, so that's kind of how I've thought about it. Especially in those early days, you can't be <laugh> You probably shouldn't be too, too picky about like who are the clients. Like, obviously you want a good client, but you know, you can't be too, too picky about

Jen Adams ([17:25](#)):

Proof of concept. Again, you're like, okay, proof of concept.

Rebekah Mays ([17:28](#)):

And you need like, some experience <laugh>.

Jen Adams ([17:30](#)):

Yeah, well, I mean, book writers, story writers, everyone's like, oh, I'm gonna get published by a big publisher. I'm gonna get my story in the New Yorker magazine. I'm gonna be published by the Paris Review. It's like, well, okay, well you get to start with like your local

Rebekah Mays ([17:42](#)):

<laugh>. Yeah.

Jen Adams ([17:43](#)):

Smaller competition, smaller things. And often you kind of work your way into those moments where you're like, oh, I can't believe I'm actually talking to this person. And then if you trace back kind of how that happened.

Rebekah Mays ([17:54](#)):

Exactly. So, that was really the early stages was that innermost circle and I still work with some of those people, but as I have just gotten more experience and also more clarity, on who I wanna work with and the kinds of businesses that I am intentionally marketing to, and pitching myself to that has allowed me to kind of go to those outer rings. So now I'm also trying to just show up to, there are these virtual networking groups. So I'm in a couple of different business networks that focus in my niche and there I'm just attending, sometimes it is like, I kind of don't like them <laugh> like the speed dating, like virtual networking where you're just meeting a bunch of people, but they're a little bit stressful.

Rebekah Mays ([18:41](#)):

But what's really valuable is that you will make a couple of good connections and then you follow up with those people and actually get to know them in a more relaxed environment, just meeting and chatting with them on Zoom and stuff. So I've done a lot of that kind of stuff. And what's cool is that, this year I've been basically posting on LinkedIn every single weekday, which is kind of a lot, and it's sort of just an experiment also to see what happens if I post on LinkedIn every day. And a couple of things that really came from that, I've definitely had a lot more connections since then. I would say also I've built up some authority in my niche as, you know, a person talking about content marketing and SEO for purpose-driven B2B brands.

Rebekah Mays ([19:27](#)):

And, a friend of mine who I've gotten to know again, through all this networking stuff, she asked me to speak at an event for her organization called the Green Marketing Academy. So I'm gonna be speaking about SEO to that audience in May, which I'm really excited about. And then another thing that just came up, which I was very surprised by, was MarketingProfs. As you mentioned, they reached out to me, maybe a month or so ago and they were asking if I wanted to be involved in a coaching session, a series of coaching sessions for an event that they're having. And MarketingProfs is, if you don't know, it's a pretty well established B2B marketing publisher. And so I was very surprised when they reached out to me on LinkedIn. I honestly thought it was like a scam or something, <laugh>.

Rebekah Mays ([20:22](#)):

Cause I'm like, is this real? Like, I don't know why they're reaching out to me, but I think it was partly because I had focused on B2B and I was just very clear on what I was an expert in, quote unquote expert mm-hmm. <affirmative>. And so, I had some confidence. They needed something, they found me on LinkedIn and they reached out to me. And so I did that coaching session. I think it was just last week. It

was really intense, but it was really awesome. And now I can say I've been a coach through MarketingProfs.

Jen Adams ([20:51](#)):

That little logo, "As seen on"

Rebekah Mays ([20:54](#)):

<laugh>. Exactly. So, I am still kind of figuring out, what does this all mean and where I'm headed and all that. But I definitely see the progress, just if I think about the past year of like connections that I've made since I've focused. I think the niche and the connections that go hand in hand, right? Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, like if you have a specific focus because the connections are where you're gonna get your business from, usually. Not like totally cold leads. And I just look now at this treasure box of all these connections I have now, people that I just enjoy talking to. And it's not just about getting clients, either. Sometimes you need to go to someone to ask them like, how the heck do you do this in your business?

Rebekah Mays ([21:43](#)):

They're like, how are you getting clients? Or like, what's working? And can you look at this? Can you gimme an opinion? There's so many great ways to get a lot of value from networking, aside from just getting clients. So yeah. So I'm really kind of proud of that, of making that a priority over the past year. Cuz I see it's already helping my business now, but I think if you take a long term view, it's sort of like compounding interest. It just, it really grows over time, probably exponentially in a lot of ways. So. Yeah.

Jen Adams ([22:13](#)):

Well, and I like that you take the longer view, in the sense of you're like, oh, over the last year, because sometimes a frustration that I hear from writers who are trying to get started, they're like, I'm doing these things and nothing is happening. And you're like, well, how long have you been doing it? And they're like, for a whole week now. And you're like, okay.

Rebekah Mays ([22:36](#)):

<laugh> Yeah.

Jen Adams ([22:36](#)):

It does have to take a little longer than that. And I know that sounds silly, but sometimes when we put something out there, like a networking or like sharing something on LinkedIn or you're trying to to be social in groups

Rebekah Mays ([22:50](#)):

Mm-hmm. <affirmative>

Jen Adams ([22:50](#)):

And you put something and like, nothing happens and you're like, oh, that's quite deflating.

Rebekah Mays ([22:54](#)):

Yeah.

Jen Adams ([22:55](#)):

And you're like, no, no, no. This is a process to kind of, in some ways, be present more mm-hmm. <affirmative>, you know, you tell what happens if I post on LinkedIn every day and it's like, well, I show up in more people's feeds, I'm more present mm-hmm. <affirmative> in their mind. And then like those conversations do happen and people are like, you know, I saw the thing that you've been doing

Rebekah Mays ([23:14](#)):

Mm-hmm. <affirmative>,

Jen Adams ([23:16](#)):

So,

Rebekah Mays ([23:16](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. So I I think both are, both can be true. So one of the reasons that I wrote this series was because I was thinking about of all the ways you can market yourself and try to get clients, approaching people you already know who are business owners or marketers is the fastest way to get a client. And, approaching them with ideas and, enthusiasm and, and all of that. Like, I do think it's a pretty, it's a pretty efficient way to get clients as far as all the different opportunities go usually. Um, and I think you just have more chance of success than, than another.

Jen Adams ([23:52](#)):

Yeah. Well you might know the business better or kind of know where they have some gaps and they already know, they already know you and in theory they already like you. Yeah.

Rebekah Mays ([24:01](#)):

You know, <laugh>, hopefully,

Jen Adams ([24:04](#)):

We do not recommend this, this method on your haters. But, it does, it has a different vibe when you're working with people.

Rebekah Mays ([24:13](#)):

But when you just skip, you skip many of the steps that you have to take if you're approaching a stranger, like a cold prospect, especially if you don't have as much experience cuz they just, they don't know you. You're sort of just in this category of freelancers reaching out to me, which they might have a lot of people already reaching out to them. That that does happen a lot. So it's harder to distinguish yourself when you're just sort of in this pool like that. But with people you already know, they already trust you. You've kind of skipped a lot of those initial steps and you can get a lot faster, I think, to the conversation. But it is still a long-term process. And I think if you only treat it in that short-term way of okay, what can I get right now?

Rebekah Mays ([25:01](#)):

You know, how can I get clients right away? And then you never follow up with people aside from that, you know, you never network except for trying to get clients. You never give back to the network and your connections then obviously... That's not the best approach and it, it's just not as fun either. Uh, it

doesn't feel as good because you're just trying to look at what you can get out of people rather than what you can give back. So I do think it's, if you need some, you know, work quickly, I do think it's a very efficient way, if you wanna call it that. But it is really best used as a long-term strategy where you just start getting the habit of doing all these things and reaching out to people, keeping track, it's not always easy

Jen Adams ([25:45](#)):

And sharing what you're working on and how things are going. And, and you did talk about in the series too, a lot of the, the quote, the fortune is in the follow up with people. Not even that first conversation, but sometimes the second conversation, the third conversation.

Rebekah Mays ([26:05](#)):

Yes. And another thing I've learned is that if you only are good at follow up, like if that's all, if you can focus on good follow up and maybe, you know, your writing skills are not like the most amazing thing, but you you're good at staying in touch with people, following up after a conversation, you will stand out because a lot of people, they just drop the ball. They get busy, they get distracted, they just don't follow up. Or maybe they're nervous about following up for whatever reason. If you do that after an interesting conversation, after a proposal, after an interesting networking call, whatever, you just kind of follow up, Hey, how's it going? What are you up to, how is X, y, z developing or just asking them questions about what you spoke about. I just think you're really setting yourself up for success and you're also standing out because a lot of people just don't bother. They don't bother to follow up in a genuine way, let's say. Either pestering or just, you know, nothing. So finding that balance, I think is really good, really valuable.

Jen Adams ([27:19](#)):

Well, and you did, and for people who are like, well that's great, I want specifics, I'm like, in her essay she gives specifics like, within a week, within a month, here are some things you can say if you don't know what to say.

Rebekah Mays ([27:32](#)):

Mm-hmm. <affirmative>.

Jen Adams ([27:32](#)):

Because I think, that is something if you wanna address, like what would you tell PWA members hearing this who are thinking, well, this sounds amazing, but in my life I'm just, I'm scared, I'm uncomfortable, I'm anxious about getting out there and networking and putting myself kind of out there like that. So what would you say are some of the, I mean, low hanging fruit isn't really right, but like the little steps that they can take to build their comfort level with it and start that growth pattern that you've been experiencing.

Rebekah Mays ([28:09](#)):

Yeah. Well, you know, and, and I've, I've been at this a while at this point, and so there are things that don't scare me anymore. You know, it used to be that like sending out a prospecting email was like, oh my goodness, I'm gonna have a heart attack. Now, I do it all the time. And it's like, no big deal. So when you get in the habit of doing these things, they become more normal and it sets you up for that next thing. Like, you know, speaking at an event or coaching or whatever, which maybe sounds intimidating, but when you're just starting out, I think when you reach... I mean, I don't know, I have no issue

reaching out to people I know and talking about stuff with them, talking about business with them. So, that doesn't intimidate me.

Rebekah Mays ([28:52](#)):

But I do think that is a great place to start because you know, you already know them. You maybe know some things about what they're working on or you at least know some topics, what they like to talk about so that you can kind of get into a conversation that way. And I would say another... Something that Ilise Benin, who's really my, my business coach, my marketing coach, she says, "Questions are the answer to everything." So if you have no idea what to say, even after reading the essay, if you're like, I don't know how to do this, just approaching people with kind curiosity gets you pretty far. So, if you're not really sure how to start a conversation, I just think asking questions is, is a great way to be like, Hey, you know, I saw that you just started a business and you have a t-shirt, e-commerce shop. How is that going?

Rebekah Mays ([29:55](#)):

Just tell me how's it going and because people like talking about themselves, they like talking about their projects usually. So I think that can get you far and just asking some follow up questions like, you know, how is the business going? You know, how have you been marketing? Or like, is that a challenge or what, you know, do you like it? Just asking some questions like that I think can really, can really get you far and at least will get you in the practice of doing this kind of thing. Even if it doesn't result in a project right away. That's okay. It's just getting

Jen Adams ([30:27](#)):

Yeah. In showing an interest in the other person and what they're working on because then they're like, oh, this is someone that I can talk to about this. And they start thinking of you as a

Rebekah Mays ([30:38](#)):

Yeah,

Jen Adams ([30:39](#)):

Yeah. And a business conversation partner,

Rebekah Mays ([30:42](#)):

<laugh>. Yeah. Yeah.

Jen Adams ([30:45](#)):

Like I, I have kids now, so when we see people, there are people that we only talk about kids stuff with.

Rebekah Mays ([30:50](#)):

Mm-hmm.

Jen Adams ([30:51](#)):

<affirmative>. Cause in their minds that's the only thing we have in common. Mm. Or sometimes when we have a chance to talk to other parents more, we realize that we're in adjacent businesses or that we

share travel interests. The more you get to know other people, the more opportunities for connections there are beyond the most surface things that you can imagine.

Rebekah Mays ([31:12](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. And in any case, you need the answers to those questions to be able to give them good ideas. So when you get information about, oh well we tried, you know, building a website, but no one's coming to it. You know, okay, ding, ding, ding, they have a problem with getting traffic on their website. What kinds of things could you do to help with traffic? Maybe you could offer SEO services or you could help them with some paid advertising to get traffic on their website. So like when you get information like that, it's really, really valuable to then be able to say, Hey, well actually, you know, I've been studying this and I'd love to do this for you and help you, help you increase your traffic on your website. You know, and

Jen Adams ([32:00](#)):

A lot of times they're like, great, let's try it. Yeah. Like, please get this problem away from me, please. <laugh>.

Rebekah Mays ([32:05](#)):

Yes. <laugh>. And, you know, and I, well I don't know if you wanna get into the whole topic of like free work and if it's worth it and all this stuff, but I don't think I've really done free, well, I guess I've done some like volunteer things, but it was really for a cause that I cared about. But most of the early stuff I did was paid work that I would charge like on an hourly basis when I was starting out. And so it doesn't have to be free just because you are, you know, starting out or it's people that you know. So keep that in mind.

Jen Adams ([32:41](#)):

Well, and you can work your way up your rates too. I know I definitely did projects for some of my husband's music friends that were not at anything that might approach a market rate.

Rebekah Mays ([32:53](#)):

Well, and it totally depends on the audience.

Jen Adams ([32:56](#)):

It helped us both take it seriously. Like some money exchanged hands there were agreements like, I'm going to do this and you're going to give me that. And

Rebekah Mays ([33:04](#)):

Yeah. So, and with this kind of thing, it's really important to keep in mind who you're talking to because if they, you know, if they're like a thousand people at their company and they're, you know, the VP of marketing, they're gonna have a budget. If they're a musician and, and they're a one man band or something they may not have, it's

Jen Adams ([33:26](#)):

It's a different budget.

Rebekah Mays ([33:27](#)):

Yeah. So keep that in mind as well.

Jen Adams ([33:30](#)):

So. Well, and as you, you do this and you talked about things growing and, and more of these connections coming across the circles... over the next year or two, where do you think this might go? I mean, you've now mm-hmm. <affirmative>, you have the coaching experience you just had, you have a speaking gig coming up. Like what are, what are we building toward? Do you know?

Rebekah Mays ([33:56](#)):

I've been thinking about this quite a lot over the past several months, I would say a few months at least. And so I actually just went through a big rebrand with my business. So it was called Thrive Copywriting for a while. And it was just confusing everyone cuz they're like, oh, you do copywriting? I'm like, well, not really <laugh>. I'm like, maybe I should change my name. Cuz it was really more like content strategy and SEO and I wanted them to see me not just as a freelancer, but more of a marketing force that could solve a lot of their problems. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. Um, so I've actually rebranded to One Generation, which I think speaks to my specific target audience, and let's say laying the foundation to be able to build the marketing agency.

Rebekah Mays ([34:46](#)):

I don't know if that's what I'm gonna do and I'm gonna, you know, build a team and all that, but I want to have that as a possibility. So what I'm doing right now is just essentially offering the same service again and again so that I can really figure out what my processes are and kind of optimize them and, productize them as they say. And basically writing down like, what are my standard operating procedures so that I'm not like reinventing the wheel every time I do a project. Um, cuz I did a lot of different experimentation last year and then there were some things that worked well and I wanted to keep doing and other things that I've kind of dropped or, you know, I just didn't wanna focus on that. So, I'm at this point, the reason I'm marketing so much is, I wanna be able to have enough projects to keep me busy and pay my bills and all that.

Rebekah Mays ([35:43](#)):

I don't really do much retainer work. I actually work on a project basis in what I call sprints. So it's like we start with a strategy sprint and then we move on to a project-based content work retainer obviously has its benefits, but I kind of like this approach because it, it keeps everyone really focused, I think. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. So, I lost my train of thought. Um, yeah, so essentially I'm trying to, at this point I'm marketing myself so much because I'm, I'm trying to not just feed myself and my own family, but really think beyond that of like, how do I get work beyond just my own capacity, but enough work where I could bring in other other folks as well to help fulfill all the different work and, and implement the content.

Rebekah Mays ([36:40](#)):

So that's what I'm thinking about. And I think I really love the specific work that I'm doing in the niche that I'm doing. It's something I could really see myself doing for the next 20, 30 years, whatever, <laugh> and, uh, so, and I've kind of made peace with this isn't a get rich quick thing. Like you can make it that if you really want it to be, but it's much more fulfilling and sustainable I think when you see it as a business and you are willing to dedicate yourself to it for the long term and willing to improve your craft and

become really valuable to clients, get really good at what you do, and also understand the industry or the industries that you work with, understand the ins and outs of their businesses that you can just keep adding more value. That's, that's kind of what I'm looking to do and looking to keep developing. And so I'm excited, I'm excited for what, what it all means. And it's, it's a lot more fun that way than to just try to be like, put so much pressure to like, make tons of money in three months. You know, it's like, let's take your time, let's enjoy it <laugh> along the way and yeah. Let's, you know, definitely be wealthy and all of that. That's awesome. But it doesn't have to be overnight so.

Jen Adams ([38:00](#)):

Well and building and evolving and like, kind of really making that journey your own journey.

Rebekah Mays ([38:06](#)):

Yeah.

Jen Adams ([38:07](#)):

So, well, and kind of in that vein, is there any other advice that you would like to give your fellow PWA members on evolving their writer's life, networking their way to, to different goalposts or, or any other advice you'd like to share on kind of any writing topic.

Rebekah Mays ([38:23](#)):

Sure. I don't know, this is more of just a thought than advice I would say. Cuz I'm, it's something I've been thinking about a lot lately. I would say last year and yeah, last year, I focused a lot on kind of negotiating competitive rates, making sure I was paying myself well, protecting my boundaries, like a lot of that kind of stuff. And I think that was good for, I think it's important if you have trouble saying no to work on that, if you have trouble, if you're always getting rates that are the bottom of the barrel, that's stuff you need to really work on. But I'm sort of working on the opposite area right now, or it's not opposite, it's actually very complimentary. But sometimes I think of it as opposite, which is, how can I make myself indispensable to clients? How can I give my all on this project so that we're just rocking it and the results are amazing and the client is blown away. And, it's a little bit more of a long-term approach where we're thinking about getting a great case study, for example, from this project. And maybe I'm working a little bit more and maybe the hourly rate isn't quite as amazing because I'm just putting a lot into the project so that the results are there. So I have been thinking a lot about how to make yourself indispensable to clients, how to do really great work, how to just get really, really good at what you do over time and yeah, just providing a ton of value. And so I think that's more what I'm working on right now. And I think both of those things in terms of protecting your boundaries but then also giving it your all <laugh>, I think at different stages of life we might need to focus on different things.

Rebekah Mays ([40:12](#)):

And so yeah, I think that's a little nugget maybe, but thinking through like what do I need to focus on more? And obviously you can do both. You can protect your boundaries and you can get great rates by doing amazing work, so mm-hmm. <affirmative> that those totally go hand in hand. But I think sometimes we need to focus on one or the other depending on kind of where we're at and do you need to show results? Do you need to focus on building experience or do you need to focus on like, I've already got all the experience and I just need to make sure I'm raising my rates, for example. So, Hmm. Yeah. So that's kind of what I've been thinking through recently.

Jen Adams ([40:52](#)):

Well you're like, oh, my career is changing, I'm changing. I'm gonna change what I'm focusing on and change what I'm working on. It kind of keeps it fresh too instead of like, oh, I'm stagnating in one place by doing the same thing year after year. And maybe you like routine, but if you're someone who likes variety, which is more my end of the world. <laugh>.

Rebekah Mays ([41:14](#)):

Yeah. So, yeah. And I'm thinking a lot also about, I was just doing this exercise earlier today where it's like this delegation exercise where you're thinking about, what am I really good at and that I love to do, what am I good at, but I don't love to do. What do I hate and I'm bad at, you know, and what do I hate and I'm good at? I, I think those are the four categories. Basically the stuff that you hate and that you're bad at <laugh>, that's like right for delegation. So like, you know, I don't know, accounting or something like, yes, I'm not good at it and I don't like it, so that's probably something I should be delegating to someone else. So I'm starting to think through those kinds of things like what are the things that it would be better for my business if I did delegate that or maybe hire a virtual assistant.

Rebekah Mays ([42:03](#)):

Actually my husband, I've, I've enlisted him to help me sometimes with my website, like the technical stuff and he's a, he's a software engineer, so I've gotten him to do some like Google analytics stuff for me, which has been cool. So I'm trying to kind of challenge myself there cuz I'm definitely the kind of person where I'm like, I have to do everything. Like I'm the only one who knows how to do all this stuff, but actually half this stuff I'm not even good at. So get someone else to do it and pay them and uh, yeah, it probably means I can focus on the things that I'm actually good at and that are actually adding value to my business. So that's something I've been working on as well.

Jen Adams ([42:38](#)):

Well, and finding more of those things that light you up as you're working on them where you're like, oh, I'm really excited to do this. Yeah. Versus things where you're okay, I have to.

Rebekah Mays ([42:50](#)):

Yeah.

Jen Adams ([42:51](#)):

And it's not as fun when you're forcing yourself into doing it.

Rebekah Mays ([42:55](#)):

So. Yes. Yes, exactly.

Jen Adams ([42:58](#)):

Well, cool. Well, so if PWA members wanna, would keep following along as you're, you're growing this journey, follow you on LinkedIn as you're publishing Yes. Would be one way. What are some other ways that they could connect with you? Um, stay in touch.

Rebekah Mays ([43:13](#)):

Yeah, so definitely following on LinkedIn is great. Your welcome to connect with me on LinkedIn and you know, send me a message. I'm not always able to get back to all those these days cuz there are sometimes, lots

Jen Adams ([43:26](#)):

We actually, you work instead of sit on social media all day <laugh> what,

Rebekah Mays ([43:30](#)):

Trying to get some things done sometimes. But, I would say though that maybe the best thing other than following me on LinkedIn, I do send out a monthly newsletter through my website. So my site is one generation seo.com and I have a newsletter which people are welcome to subscribe to, but it's not necessarily like for freelancers, but I think it could give people some ideas of like how to, how to market themselves, how to have a newsletter for clients. Like not saying this is the only way, it just might give some ideas and especially cuz of have a specific focus and people are interested in like sustainability or purpose-driven business, that kind of thing. You might learn some things there. So definitely people are welcome to subscribe to that if they like and maybe, maybe get some inspiration.

Jen Adams ([44:20](#)):

Sounds great. Well Rebekah, thank you so much for joining me today and I know how much PWA members enjoy your articles, enjoy your insights because they tell me <laugh> and getting to see how you've been growing your career these past few years has been really fun for me. Um, because like you're out there experimenting, you're trying things and it's nice to see that bearing fruit. So thank you for sharing <laugh>.

Rebekah Mays ([44:47](#)):

Absolutely. It's, it's been really nice to think through it and definitely guys check out the essays cuz you're, you're gonna get so much from that stuff if you're actually applying the networking principles and, and it's all as you know, it's, it's stuff that you get if you actually do it. So definitely recommend checking those out. But it's been a pleasure to chat with you, Jen.

Jen Adams ([45:08](#)):

Well, and I mean in the essays there's templates, there's scripts like Rebekah has, has made it so that you are not working from nothing. You don't have to come up with everything. Yourself, you can follow a process that, that we know is working. Mm-hmm. Use her words if you feel uncomfortable coming up with your own, like we, those resources are there for you. Then one kind of last thing for PWA members before I go, um, Rebekah's networking essays, um, are actually kind of the first block of content for our 2023 cash writing challenge. For those of you who've checked that out already, we're gonna be presenting three different methods for getting clients. And you get to choose the method that kind of resonates with you the most and put it to the test and then write about your experience.

Jen Adams ([45:56](#)):

Cuz I just, I can't resist these kind of challenges where you do and then write about it. So permission to experiment. So as you read these and you consider, um, or actually start networking within your own circles, kind of tuck away what you're learning and get ready for the next installment, which is kind of building on Rebekah's networking with a case study in what we call multi-prong marketing from Rachael Kraft, which has the specific aim of helping you if you've gotten to a place where you're in the famine

stage, you're like, no, no, I'm doing the work. How did this happen? And you're like, well, how do you reboot if you've had to take a break in your writing career? If you've had clients step away for whatever reason, how do you relaunch, reboot and relaunch a little bit? It's another great series with things that you can literally swipe and deploy right away in your own business. So I hope you'll stay tuned for that. And in the meantime, everyone stay safe, stay sane, keep writing.