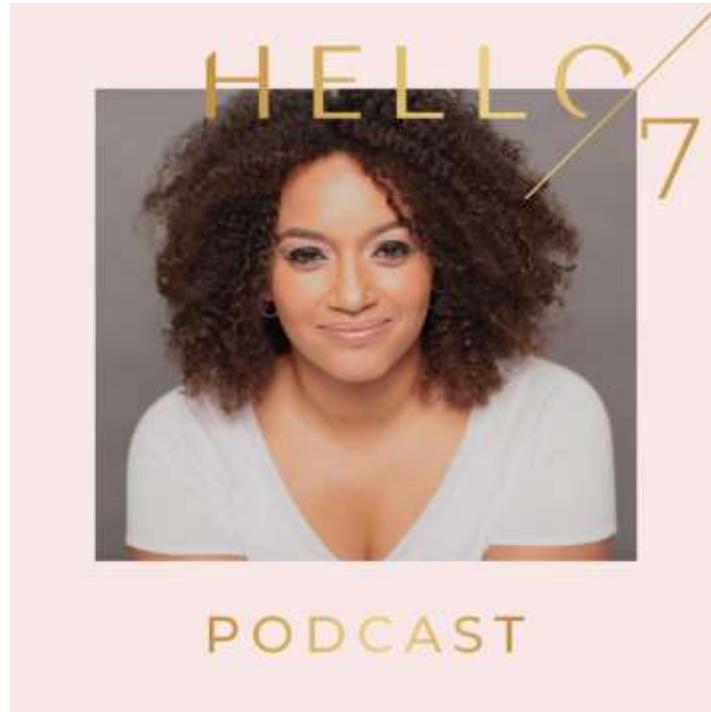


058 Build a Badass Brand



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Rachel Rodgers

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Alexandra Franzen: And also just to slow the fuck down, take a breath, take a nap, it's okay for you to sleep.

Rachel Rodgers: Take a nap, take a nap, take a break from social media.

Alexandra Franzen: That's right, take a break.

Rachel Rodgers: Welcome to the *Hello Seven Podcast*. I'm your host, Rachel Rodgers, wife, mother of four children, a lover of Beyoncé, coffee drinker, and afro-wearer, and I just happen to be the CEO of a seven-figure business. I am on a mission to help every woman I meet become a millionaire. If you want to make more money, you are in the right place. Let's get it going.

I am so excited for you to listen in on this session. It was a live panel discussion from our May virtual Mastermind retreat, all about what it takes to create a badass brand that calls in your ideal customers. Spoiler alert, it's more than just fonts, colors and logo designs, you guys. In this session you'll hear my business besties and branding geniuses, Robert and Alex and I talk about the brands who are doing it right. And why a good brand built with love, and time, and attention will always cut through the noise.

We also talk about the boldest, scariest brand moves we've each made and why you need a squad while you're building your brand. We talked about how living in your truth will change everything, what to do when you get haters or negative feedback and you're going to love this advice my friend.

Now, one more note before you jump into this episode. If you want to experience brilliant sessions like this live then you need to join us for the Million Dollar Focus Retreat that's coming up next week. This virtual retreat is happening September 24th to the 26th 2020 online. So you can join safely

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from anywhere, but it is only available to members of We Should All be Millionaires: The Club.

You're going to experience amazing sessions that will help you create your next million dollar offer, simplify your marketing, define your money making values and hire your amazing team. Plus we'll dig into planning your days like a millionaire, creating and enforcing boundaries and all with DJ dance breaks to keep it fresh and fun. I will tell you this, the more you focus the more money you will make. To get in on this retreat you need to join the club before our cutoff in just a few days, so head to helloseven.co/club right now.

Plus you'll be joining just in time for Build Your Brand Month, which is happening in October in the club. So if you love this panel discussion you're going to love the work that we'll be doing on your brand together next month in the club. Now, please enjoy the badass branding panel.

You guys, if you don't know, obviously you should, this is two members of my squad. These are the people that I text with damn near every day. And they're both geniuses, so we're going to get some genius out of their brains right now. So this is Alexandra Franzen.

Alexandra Franzen: Hey.

Rachel Rodgers: You know about her. She's an amazing copywriter and so much more, entrepreneur, delightful human being. When I first went to therapy, this was like my first session a couple of years ago she was like, "What are you hoping to get out of therapy?" I was like, "I want to be more like my friend Alex. So, Alex is my therapy avatar, I like your goals, because she's just so joyful and generous and calm and Zen, and a super badass. And also lives in full freedom, so anyway Alex is amazing.

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And she's worked with all kinds of people, I'm sure you've read her bio. I'm sure you've heard of her. And if you haven't, go do that.

Robert: Right now.

Rachel Rodgers: Right now. And she's also the amazing queen that is helping me with my book because we all know Rachel needs lots of help and support, okay. And so do you. So if you don't think that you do, you do. But Alex is helping me with getting my book done. So yeah, she's babysat me, she's like, "What are you writing today? Let's sit on Zoom, get those fingers going, here's a playlist." I love it. I love it.

Okay, and then, Robert, you guys should know Robert at this point. But Robert is my bestie and we met via a Facebook ad. And Robert is a delightful human being that is so generous and so relationship driven too. I feel like you're great at connecting with people and being so warm. Your branding is fucking ridiculous. So I think that is one thing that people definitely, I think, would admire about you is not only your visual brand but just how you can connect with people and make them feel like they're the only person in the room.

And also obviously an accomplished Broadway performer as well, let me not forget that, so many things. So that's whose here today, very successful and amazing entrepreneurs. And we're going to talk a little bit about branding. So the first question I'm told is what are some brands you love and associate with greatness? What's amazing about them?

Alexandra Franzen: Well, if I may, we should just take a little tiptoe step back before we dive into this question and kind of explain what even is a brand? Because I feel there's a lot of confusion about what a brand is. Because it's not your logo and it's not your color palette, it's not those super or surface level aesthetic details.

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So our mutual friend, Liz Dennerly Sanders who's an amazing brand strategist, I like her definition the best. So she says, "If you go to a swanky cocktail party and if you could be invisible, like invisibility cloak and just hide in the corner and you overheard a group of fabulous people talking about you, talking about your company, what you do, what you offer. What would you want them to be saying about you?"

Maybe they would be talking about Rachel and Hello Seven and they would all be murmuring in the corner, like, "Oh my God, whenever I hang out with Rachel she sneezes on me and I get richer. I don't know what happened, it's amazing. I just hang with these ladies."

Rachel Rodgers: That's definitely something I want people to say about me.

Alexandra Franzen: Yes. "And that she's all about empowering women to make more money and she makes me believe in myself and see a clear path to building wealth. And it's just amazing and she's convinced me that I can be a millionaire one day." That's probably what people would be saying about Hello Seven, so that's your brand. It's what people are saying about you. It's the impression you leave on their heart. It's like the murmured conversations over brunch that people are using to describe what it is that you offer. That's your brand.

For Robert, I know people are gathering saying, "Oh my gosh, Robert's so amazing, he inspires me to be so disciplined. His work ethic is unbelievable. He inspires me to go all in 2,000%, leave nothing on the table and believe in my dreams. And he makes me believe that I can get to Broadway or some other stratospheric height in my career. I can do it, I can dream bigger than big. And if I work hard I can get there." That's probably what people would say about Broadway Collective. So that's the Broadway Collective brand.

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Now, if people are gathering and they're kind of struggling to describe what it is that you offer then that would indicate a weak or confusing brand.

Would you guys agree with that, that definition of what a brand is?

Rachel Rodgers: Yes, 100%.

Robert: That is so on-point, and you're absolutely right because at the end of the day it isn't – also I live in New York City and my neighbor is a vocal person, so like... And that's why honestly in all of my Facebook ads, my music, I play the background track so loud. Because typically you'll hear her, if you listen to our Facebook ads she always makes an appearance, it's kind of amazing. But I totally agree with you Alex here, that is so real because it doesn't come down to the color and to the fonts. Although those things do matter, that's pretty superficial.

It's how do you feel then when you connect with the brand is why you then continue to come back. I actually hate Lululemon's logo. I don't like it. And I don't like even the look of the inside of the store. I don't like it. It's not my palette. It's just not me. But when I go into the store and experience what you're saying, which I truly believe to be the core of what you're saying a brand is. It's the culture and how they make you feel and I would never buy my stretchy pants from anybody else but Lulu, just because of the feeling.

Rachel Rodgers: They just feel good. They make you feel good and then the clothes feel good and they fit good. Totally. Awesome. Okay.

Alexandra Franzen: Yeah, it's how it makes you feel ultimately. It's the improved emotional imprint that a company gives on your heart. It's what people are saying about you when you're not in the room. That's what a brand is. And then the logo, the copy, the font, all of those things are then an expression of them, of that core, yeah.

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Rachel Rodgers: Yeah. Yes, exactly. I was just going to say it's like when you're a teenager and you're discovering who you are and you dress a certain way. And maybe you're doing lots of eyeliner, or maybe it's no eyeliner and you're always in new sneakers, like cool colorful sneakers. Whatever you're kind of aesthetic is, that's what happens. So it's almost kind of like the personal brand that you decided to adopt as an adult, and there are probably phases of it and it probably changes.

And that's true for businesses too, it's the same way. It's like how do you dress it up to express what you believe, what you believe about the world, what you stand for, how you want to make people feel. That's what branding is about. And it is one of those things that doesn't feel like you can hold it. It's kind of more expansive than that.

Alexandra Franzen: So the question was, what are some brands that we're obsessed with, was that the question?

Rachel Rodgers: Yes.

Robert: I love Nike because I love the idea of Just Do It. I feel when I watch their ads, when I go into their store that everyone is just throwing themselves into whatever it is. It's like if I put on these \$150 sneakers I will be able to run a marathon. And so I love that I also – I know this is so strange, I love the smell of their store. But there is a certain smell of a new pair of Nikes and even a scent that is pumped in their store. I don't know what it is. But it just feels clean, and crisp, and athletic, so I really love.

And I just love the consistency of it, the fact that their logo and their font has transitioned truly the test of time. Like they're like, no, this is it.

Rachel Rodgers: Yes. You've touched on a couple of things that I love, one of them is commitment. They have committed to that logo. They have committed to Just Do It. So they have committed to that brand and have re-

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imagined it and allowed it to evolve and express it in different ways. But the core of it is still there so you can still recognize it. And there's a lot of benefit to the longevity of a brand if you can stick with it. And then I also love the simplicity of Just Do It. It's so good.

Alexandra Franzen: Do you guys remember a couple of years ago they ran that commercial featuring Michael Phelps, the Olympic swimmer?

Rachel Rodgers: Yeah.

Alexandra Franzen: And it was this incredible commercial where it just showed Michael training, preparing, swimming in darkness, before 4:00am, 5:00am. And then the message of the commercial was it's what you do in the dark kind of thing, that elevates you into the light. He became that Olympian because of those thousands of pre-dawn workout sessions in the dark. That commercial was, oh yeah, it just got me. I am the least sort of interested in sportsperson that maybe has – the only sport I follow is figure skating. But that commercial landed in my heart and really spoke to me.

Rachel Rodgers: Yes, I love that. I love that. Okay, any other brands? What brands do you love? Yes.

Alexandra Franzen: Okay, so on a very different note, not a multi, you know, multibillion dollar huge, huge brand like Nike. But a very successful small local business here in Hawaii where I live is my friend Iris runs a little mini spa, it's called Mermaid Spa. And I am obsessed with Mermaid Spa and let me tell you why.

So from the moment you walk in for your facial, eyelash appointment, whatever it is that you're doing, she offers a range of services. The first thing you see is a little sign with an arrow pointing down the hallway that says, 'Mermaids this way'. So from the moment you enter it's like

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everything's teal, and white, and gold. It's like a mermaid paradise. And you feel like you are becoming a mermaid, which let's be honest is my life goal.

Rachel Rodgers: Hence the blue hair.

Alexandra Franzen: Hence the blue hair. So the very moment you enter you feel like you're in a different place, the world melts away, the stresses of the day. You walk down this magical hallway, you're like, yes, I'm ready, where's my seashells? And then you go in and everything is branded to perfection, seashells, water fountain, beautiful crystals, blue, teal, white, everything. She looks like a mermaid, she has flowing hair down to forever. She makes all of her products by hand using natural ingredients from Hawaii.

So everything she puts on your body is like this is some magical volcanic dust from the Goddess Pele. This is [inaudible] that I harvested with my grandmother. This is, you know, it's so good. And just, through every step of it, you just – I literally feel like a different person when I leave. And here's the thing, she's a smart, smart businesswoman. This woman is so booked, if you miss your appointment, good luck, maybe you'll see her in two months because she just has a constant clientele pouring in to see her.

And she's now started selling her products around the world, so a new revenue stream. And she has recently started doing – well, pre pandemic, she'll start up again once we can have group gatherings. She's doing these parties where you can come with all your girl friends, have champagne and have little snacks. And then she teaches you apothecary style how to make your own beauty products using...

Rachel Rodgers: Oh my God.

Alexandra Franzen: And even that, it is like a little wooden spoon and a beautiful glass jar, every single thing is just so pretty. And you feel like an

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elevated supernatural being when you're there. I love her because she's a great example of a working mom, kids at home including toddlers, who's just killing it. She's just doing one thing and she does it really well, and she's super consistent. Every time you go it's a beautiful experience and she's booked from here till the end of time. So Mermaid Spa in Hawaii, shout out, I use her facial toner every day.

Robert: Wait, question.

Rachel Rodgers: I love it.

Robert: Is this where you also get your crystals?

Alexandra Franzen: No, I get my crystals from Wild HeArtist, which is actually – I mean I could talk for an hour about Wild HeArtist because that's another amazing shop. But Mermaid Spa is one of my faves in town. And when you guys come back to Hawaii I really want to take you there. It will be great.

Rachel Rodgers: Yes, for sure.

Robert: Fun.

Rachel Rodgers: Obviously. And what you said about the attention to detail is something that I feel like Robert does very well, to the point that he got yelled at by his bookkeeper about the ribbons on the goody bags. First of all when I go to stay with Robert, his old apartment used to be filled with swag. I feel like you must have a storage unit at this point or something. Because he's got the Broadway Collective t-shirts, he's got a sweatshirt. At one point you had the top with the shimmies that came down the arms.

Robert: Friends, the limited edition of Friends moment.

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Rachel Rodgers: Yes.

Robert: But here's the thing, Natalie just said something really great in the comments, she said, "Great brands are not for everyone." And I love that and respect that on such a real level. For those of you that don't know, I work with young people, with teenagers of 12 to 18 who want to pursue a career on Broadway.

And if you know anything about theater kids you are never the cool kid in high school. So our idea always from day one for our branding was how can we make space for these kids to finally be the cool kid and have a really trendy, sleek and a fashion forward brand that they can align with to feel like I am the cool kid? So that has definitely been something that we've worked with Alex on in our messaging. So we don't say things like, "Broadway or must."

Or ever use the tacky, you know, that font that's like stage lights, spelling out the word Broadway with light bulbs. It's like, oh, it's so tacky. That's not cool kids. Our litmus test is, is like is it cool, get approved. And so yeah, so I definitely do get in trouble a lot with our bookkeeper around the dens and the swag and things like that. But I just love training them but I also just love the feeling of looks for them because at no other theater training program do they go and they get a beautiful white bag, white craft paper bag with Broadway goodies.

It's just like theater kids aren't treated with that level of, I would say love. And I do think that it matters because it feels good to them, yeah.

Rachel Rodgers: Yeah, for sure, I guess it makes your brand stand out compared to anybody else offering musical theater training. And then the other parts of your brand too are having a really high standard of excellence. So yes, we're going to treat ourselves wonderfully. We are going to think highly of ourselves and we're going to work to back it up.

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Robert: Yeah. It's interesting because I have never felt – and we've talked about this as friends, the idea of other people that are in my industry as being competition, I just don't see that. But it's been a very interesting time that right now, what I do mainly is online musical theater education. Well, now there are all of these other programs that claim to be incredible online educators. And it's a whole different muscle of education.

So it's been really – I would say to encourage anyone that's listening right now, if you are in the process of building your brand be okay with taking time, that it just doesn't happen overnight. Because if you build it with love, and you build it with integrity, and you build it with that feeling of how you want someone to feel when they come in your door, it will always cut through the noise. So right now our brand cuts through the noise of everyone who is making noise versus actually making [inaudible] for their students.

Rachel Rodgers: Yes, I love that. And I mean also if you're going to have a standard of excellence you've got to be able to express that. And that's one of the things that you guys do as well. You've got all of these kids that are going to the top schools for fine arts programs. And you're helping them to make that happen. So it's a beautiful continuum. And I think sometimes people get scared, like how can I have the standard of excellence? I haven't gotten those results yet. But you have to start, you've got to start and then you'll get there. I love that.

Okay, so I have a question. What's the boldest, scariest brand building move you've made? Alex, I feel like there's an obvious answer from you.

Alexandra Franzen: Well, yeah, I mean there have been a couple, but I would say for me choosing to drop off social media comes to...

Rachel Rodgers: 100%.

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Alexandra Franzen: Right. Because I had a lot of anxiety about that. And I can tell the story of that real quick.

Rachel Rodgers: I want to hear that story. Everybody wants to hear that story like I can have a successful business without being online, how?

Alexandra Franzen: How? Okay.

Rachel Rodgers: Yeah. And really I think it is doing something that's different. And I almost feel like for you especially, Alex, it's like everybody else is doing x, but for me my brand says y. And it leads you to your brand values. Yes, I love it.

Alexandra Franzen: I'm just going to mermaid some over here.

Rachel Rodgers: Exactly.

Robert: That's so Alex in a nutshell.

Rachel Rodgers: 100.

Robert: [Crosstalk] go this way, breaststroke, breaststroke, backstroke, backstroke.

Alexandra Franzen: Look, get this book, Under the Sea. No, so okay, so in a nutshell what happened was this was about – I don't even know how many years ago, maybe five years ago. I was very active on social media. I was on, you know, I had them all, I was on Twitter, I was on Facebook briefly. I had the LinkedIn, I had the Pinterest. I had the Vine, remember Vine? And who knows what else. And I really enjoyed it. It was fun. I'm a writer by trade, so of course communicating online, writing, sharing fun little inspiring snippets came very naturally easily to me.

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What ended up happening though was I started to notice almost like compulsive behavior. My hand would be reaching for my phone, reaching for my phone, reaching for my phone, sometimes when my phone wasn't even in my pocket, almost like a phantom limb situation. Because I was just craving that little dopamine drip of someone liked it, reach me. Someone this, look whose following me. And I was craving that little hit all day long, all day long, all day long.

And I mean frankly it started to concern me. I was like I do have a bit of an obsessive personality which is a super power as well as a flaw, depending on how it's harnessed. And so I was like something about this doesn't feel good. I feel like I'm getting a little too much of my validation, confidence, self-esteem from that little devil box.

Rachel Rodgers: Devil box.

Alexandra Franzen: Sometimes it's an angel box, sometimes not. And so one day I just was curious. I was curious to find out how much time am I actually spending on social media every day, every week, every month, every year. Because I had no idea. I was kind of just checking throughout the day, type, type, whatever, whatever.

So what I did was I did the math. I got – literally got out a little calculator and looked at how many times did I tweet in the last year because you can see those stats. I guesstimated okay, well, how many minutes goes into each tweet. Okay, maybe about three minutes to come up with a tweet, another minute to edit the tweet, a minute to post the tweet, maybe two or three minutes checking to see who re-tweeted it, maybe a couple of minutes later in the day.

So I guesstimated the sort of creation, and cultivation, and harvesting of one tweet is like 12 to 15 minutes of my life or whatever. And I was tweeting a couple of times a day. So long story short I did the math and I

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figured out that if I continued to use Twitter, not even all the other social media platforms, but just Twitter. If I continued to use Twitter at my current rate for the rest of my life, for the next 30, 40 years of my life, at the end of my life on my deathbed the grand total was about 3.4 years of my life on Twitter.

And oh no, exactly, data tells no lies. And my first reaction was that can't possibly be right. And I redid the math over and over, and I redid it again and it was right, because that time, it adds up. And that was – I felt sick to my stomach, there was an immediate feeling of no, I'm only here once so far as we know. And there's a lot of things I could do in 3.4 years. That's a lot of novels I could write. That's a lot of people I could serve in a different way. That's a whole lot of long Sundays with my mom. And that's a lot of sex I could be having.

I could think of 100 other things that felt more meaningful, more impactful to me and the world than tweeting the picture of the bagel that I had. So that was a wake-up call for me. And it spurred me to make some changes. And it was a gradual thing. I started by taking just a little break, like a summer break from social media to see how that would feel. And then that turned into a longer break, and a longer break. And then eventually I just made the decision. And I want to be very clear; there is nothing wrong with social media.

Social media, and we have seen, can be used to do immense good in the world. It can be used to connect with your people, to build community, to spread your message. It can be a very, very good thing. And it can be used as an amazing tool to further your mission. But it's an optional tool, not a mandatory tool. You have other tools at your disposal should you choose to use them. And that was kind of the realization that I had is like okay, well, I run a business, I need to find clients, I need to fill my programs in advance, I can't just not market myself, but what else could I do?

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If I just decide to take social media off the table what are my other options? And in fact there are so many other options. You can run a bomb newsletter and just have your community gather there. You can connect one-on-one, you can send snail mail. You can do media appearances. I mean there's no end to the other things that you can do if social media just isn't your thing or if you just don't want it to be part of your life for now. Never say never, maybe in the future I will use Instagram, who knows.

But long story short I felt – I trusted my – what I call my hut which is my heart and my gut. And my hut was telling me at least right now in this stage of your life; just take social media off the table. You don't need all that noise in your head. You don't need to be there. Focus; focus your attention on other things.

And I don't think it's a coincidence that since making the decision to leave social media, which was the right choice for me, again, not the right choice for everyone. My income went up, my audience grew and I wrote four out of the six books that I've written and they flowed with greater ease. So many good things happened as a result of freeing up more space in my brain. So again, the moral of the story is not, okay, everyone go quit Facebook necessarily.

But I think the moral of the story is just because most people do it that way doesn't mean that you have to do it that way. And you can trust your hut and you can decide from an intuitive place, what feels right? Where do I want to focus my energy? Do I want 3.4 years on Twitter or elsewhere? And if I'm not using social media to grow my brand, then what could I do instead?

Because there is no limit to the number of options and this pandemic is teaching us that. Okay, in person events, off the table. If that was a big part of your marketing strategy, now what, now what are you going to do? So

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there's always another option that might feel better for you and maybe even be more effective. And that's my social media story.

Rachel Rodgers: I love it so much. And it feels like a big bold thing. I can imagine it being a little bit scary. But it's so on brand for you too, especially with where you're going. And even your retreats, we talked about this. Robert went on one of Alex's retreats and he slept the whole time. And it's like, yeah, that's what you needed. Come to Hawaii and get some fucking sleep.

Robert: Just full disclosure, I just want you all to know, the retreat was bomb and people walked away with chapters, upon chapters, upon chapters of their books completed. It was amazing. But where I was on my journey was I needed to sit – I needed to set down, I needed to set all of my brown life down. And in classic Alex fashion she was so kind and was like, "How can I support you?"

Rachel Rodgers: Exactly.

Robert: I love you.

Rachel Rodgers: Exactly. And I think people come on your retreats in Hawaii literally to detox from the rest of life, from the busyness, from the noise. Set my brown life down, hilarious.

Alexandra Franzen: And it's interesting what you said a moment ago, Rachel, because this – my first real decision to leave social media in a very unexpected way. I didn't plan it this way, has become part of my brand. People know me as that weird blue haired lady who doesn't use social media that somehow runs a business. How?

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And I cannot tell you, literally on a weekly basis I get emails from people saying, “Hey, I saw that essay you wrote about why you left social media. Oh my God, it really opened my eyes. I’m thinking about making some changes too.” People constantly email me, ask me questions, they’re so curious about this, they want to know more. It’s led to media appearances. It’s led to interviews.

People are very intrigued about this and it’s kind of connected with, like I feel that my brand is about encouraging you to trust your hut, encouraging you to write from the hut, live from the hut, act from the hut. Encouraging you to not necessarily go along with the crowd but to do what’s right for you. And also just to slow the fuck down, take a breath, take a nap. It’s okay for you to sleep.

Rachel Rodgers: Take a nap, take a break from social media.

Alexandra Franzen: That’s right, take a break. And this is kind of like a little secret detail, but I am in the process of launching a second company, which will be a totally different brand separate from what I do as a writer. And it’s going to be all around tech detox, inspiring people to spend way less time in front of a digital screen and way more time out in the world living, breathing, moving around, dancing, be their bad selves. Because I really feel that this is the cultural epidemic of our generation; we’re all little cyborgs and we need boundaries. We need to have balance.

Technology needs to make our life better, not worse. So it’s interesting how that decision has kind of sort of helped to create my current brand. But it has also become unexpectedly the seed of an idea for the next thing, which is I think another reason why it’s so important to trust your hut because your hut is telling you what’s up. It’s telling you what you need to know.

Rachel Rodgers: Yes, trust the hut, please.

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Robert: So we are now going to pass the offering plate around. If you don't know, that was what my mama would call a word, okay. That is a word from all on high, so the offering – the invitation, the offering is now open.

Rachel Rodgers: Exactly. Pass the plate.

Robert: Pass the plate like we used to do, okay? That was – I'm literally like Alex, I'll always be like writing notes on my – I'm like, yes, that's so right. It's so right, I can't wait to sign up for those offerings.

Rachel Rodgers: I already told her, I'm like I'm customer number one, so you just let me know.

Robert: I'm so ready, that's [crosstalk].

Rachel Rodgers: Okay, so I have another question and this one I'll send it towards you Robert, because I'm interested to hear. You've got some thoughts on this. Strong brands have strong haters. How do you deal with them both internally and externally?

Robert: First off I apologize for the noise, at 7 o'clock we give it up for our essential workers here in New York. So now you'll hear a dog barking, neighbors screaming and pots and pans for three minutes. But it's so interesting that you ask that question because I feel like in this season right now everyone in our squad is truly – and I mean everyone everywhere, but I definitely really see it strongly in our tight circle of entrepreneurs.

Everyone is – we're in a season of becoming. And because of that you're really having to do some very, very vulnerable – I've been calling it to my team, I'm like every day feels like full frontal nudity in a way that I did not know I signed up for. And I'm used to showing my face and sharing light, but I feel like naked AF when I'm talking to our team, you know, talking to

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our people right now. And with that my ex who is one of my best friends, Ramone always says, “New level, new devil.” I’ll never forget...

Rachel Rodgers: I wish ya’ll knew Ramone and could hear his deep ass voice saying that. I love him.

Robert: He is a true, true, true bass. And I’ll never forget...

Rachel Rodgers: And like a legit full on Black man.

Robert: Full on Black man.

Rachel Rodgers: He’s like an old dude. I’m like how are you only – what is he, 30?

Robert: Yeah, yeah. But he said, we had just filed our corporation papers for the Broadway Collective. And at the time it was actually called the Broadway Dance Collective. And we then started getting all of these – there is a huge organization here in New York which I won’t share their names, it’s not necessary. But they use the word Broadway and dance together in their company name as well. And they tried to have a field day with me legally. And so I called Rachel crying and I was like, “I have to change my name. My brand is ruined. It’s all over.”

And people were – other people in the musical theater education space were kind of looking at me like who is this. I was 28 at the time. Who is this young Broadway performer claiming he’s going to be able to coach kids to get to Broadway? And so there were all of these haters that were coming up and I’m a great judge of character. So even when people are smiling at my face, I am southern, I can read that you’re BS really quickly. But all of that to say it was preparing me for where we are now. It was preparing me for the hate mail that I get in our general box.

[Hello Seven](#) with Rachel Rodgers

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It was preparing me for the homophobic comments that I get on my Facebook ad. It was preparing me for the crazy Instagram direct messaging that we get. It was preparing me for all of the venom that was going to spew because I was trying to do something different. Because I was a gay Black Christian man who is unapologetic about all of it. I talk about it in our emails. I talk about it in my classes. This is who I am.

And when you do that and when you tell people you are going to push them in a way that they have never been pushed before there's going to be pushback for that. And I think it kind of goes back to Natalie, what she said at the top of the call is that, "You are not going to be for everyone."

And what I've loved most about this whole launch of we should all be millionaires is that never – I mean we've been friends for four or five years now. Never have I seen the people that you've wanted to work with more show up at your doorstep because of how you spoke to them. How you showed up on the webinar, how you showed up in the email of really saying, "These are the people that I want to cultivate. This is the community that I'm after." And there's going to be pushback.

But I believe the pushback that is greater are the people that you don't want to work with and you don't have space for anymore. And so all of those things that were coming at that time against me and causing me anxiety and making me doubt am I on the right path. It really is the reason that I'm here today.

Had I stayed the Broadway Dance Collective, there are only 20% of my kids that identify as dancers first. 80% of my students identify as actors or singers first. They would have been – 80% of my kids would have been intimidated to work with me because of simply the word 'dance'. Having that backlash really allowed us to solidify a brand that now can become anything. The Broadway Collective, it could be a clothing line if it wanted to.

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It can be a talent agency if it wanted to. It can be anything because of pushback.

And as far as haters are concerned I definitely would say that it has opened me to really knowing that I'm on the right path, whether it be everything from our pricing to how we position our offers. It's very different than what other people are doing. And that is for them and this is for me. And until I'm not, you know, my dance teacher, my mentor told me, "You have one job, if you're going to be an educator," she said, "You have to touch people." And until I'm not doing that I don't see how goodness want to chase after us.

And so I think as far as the haters go, just know they're going to come and if they haven't yet you've got to get a little more concrete in what you're talking about because I don't think you're talking about nothing.

Rachel Rodgers: Natalie's like, "Ooh."

Robert: And then at the end of the day, truly you've got to have then good, good people in your life because just full transparency, we all run successful businesses. But we're all very human people at the end of the day. There are moments where Rachel calls and it's like, "Do you see this comment of what someone put on this Facebook ad?" And that shit is hurtful. We're still humans.

But it comes down to then having a squad because I'm going to tell you right now, Alexandra Franzen is going to put in our squad chat, you are beautiful. You are a mermaid queen, I see you [crosstalk 0:42:53].

Rachel Rodgers: You are a unicorn or sunshine. Look at this waterfall.

Robert: I am. I am a unicorn.

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Rachel Rodgers: I am a unicorn. This is what I'm talking about, you all. I'm not talking about, when I say up-level the community around you; this is a part of brand building. Who I associate with influences me, which influences the brand that I'm creating. It influences all of you guys. So I'm not saying don't hangout – don't hangout with your friends who, at least they don't bitch about boys all the time anymore, so I can hangout.

No, hangout with people who do the – not just like they're tolerable, hangout with people who uplift you, when you leave their presence you're like I'm on another level. I'm hyped now. To use a phrase that Robert and I use on a regular basis to quote Jay-Z. I'm on my own dick. You need to find people that get you in that mode because that's what we do. We literally hype each other up all day.

We will go find something on social media and screenshot it, or find something, some newsletter you wrote or something off your website and be like, "You did that bitch, let me praise you. Everybody else see this?" And then we all go nuts over each other. This is what we do. And it's so important and it is part of building a brand as well.

Robert: Can I encourage all of us right now that I think what's really unique about this time is the honesty and the transparency. And I have definitely – there have been moments where someone reaches out to me in this time and they're like, "I want to pick your brain, or I want to." And we'll get on a call and then I'm like, this actually isn't in line with who I am or who I was BC, before corona. You know what I mean? Because I think we're all just like, because we've all spent so much time in isolation, I feel more in tune of who you want to surround yourself with and who you want to be.

Alex has been talking a lot about this is like who do you want to be after this? And I'm like, no, who do I want to be with after, in and after this? And there are definitely some relationships that I'm like...

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Rachel Rodgers: To the left. Exactly.

Robert: To the left, yeah.

Rachel Rodgers: For sure. So I hope you guys are taking – some of the main nuggets are listen to yourself. Your internal voice creates a brand. And the brand that your internal voice creates is the brand that you should create. That is the brand that is unique in the world that no one has done before. This is not a question that your coaches can answer. This is not a question that Natalie or I will be like, “Yeah, this, this and this, yeah, that creates a great brand.” No.

You want it to be something that comes from you. That pours from you, that you’re a little bit afraid to put it out there because that’s how unique it is. Great, that’s how you know you’re on the right track. What do you think is cool? What do you think sounds fun? What do you think sounds amazing and impactful? Do that. So doing that and then also just living in your truth, whatever that is.

Our friend, Susan Hyatt, pretty much hates Trump and hates Trump supporters. And I hate Trump. But I don’t necessarily ban all Trump supporters from my life. But that’s where she’s at and she’s unapologetic about it. And then when she finds a Trump supporter in her community she’s like, “Bitch, how did you get here? Refund. Bye.” You know what I mean? She doesn’t give a fuck. And I love that about her.

Robert: That could be illegal.

Rachel Rodgers: Oh my God, I love it. But that’s her truth and that’s her brand. So you’ve just got to live in what’s true for you. Yes, Alex, please share. Please share mermaid, the mermaid in the corner.

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Alexandra Franzen: So I just wanted to share one statement that has really helped me with dealing with haters, trolls, negative reviews for my books etc. So when you get a piece of negative feedback, someone says, “I hate this, this was dumb, not worth it,” whatever. You can ask yourself number one, is this coming from my dream client? Is this coming from someone who’s paying my bills? Because then maybe I should listen. Kind of like that RuPaul quote, “If they’re paying your bills, then pay them no mind,” that kind of thing.

Rachel Rodgers: Yes. RuPaul is full of so much wisdom.

Alexandra Franzen: Right, so much wisdom. But that often the criticism comes from just someone randomly out in the world. It’s a negative comment. It’s a negative email, it’s whatever. So then the question is, okay, this person who is sending this criticism in my direction, is this person living a life that I respect and admire? Because I only want to take constructive criticism from people who are leading a life that I respect and admire.

So for me, constructive criticism, if Robert gives me criticism, if Susan gives me criticism, if Michelle Obama gives me criticism, I’m going to be taking notes because I want to be my best self. But if some troll who spends their precious time, who spends 3.4 years of their life writing one star Amazon reviews about authors or whatever. This person is probably not leading a life that I respect and admire, therefore I don’t really take their criticism. I don’t need it. It doesn’t serve me, it’s not valuable. Why would I take advice from someone I don’t even respect or admire?

So that helps me to really cut through the noise and focus on is this a piece of criticism that is valuable to me, or is it just noise coming from someone who’s having a really bad day/bad life? And unfortunately I was caught in the crossfire, which is the case most of the time. Yeah.

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Rachel Rodgers: Yes. I love it. Well, thank you so much guys for being here and sharing your brand wisdom.

Are you ready for a revolution? Then download my free guide called Million Dollar Behavior. In it, you will learn the 10 behavior shifts you need to make to build wealth, claim power, and have an impact.

I've learned how to play the game of success by my own rules, and in this guide, I'm going to lay out the million-dollar behavior required for you to define your own success and chase after your goals on your terms. Get this free guide now at helloseven.co/guide.