

## **BONUS CHAPTER**

# **WORLD RELIGIONS & SPIRITUAL PRACTICES MEET MARKETING**

What could Buddha or Jesus possibly have to do with your marketing? I've studied and researched many world religions and spiritual approaches, searching for how they can inform our marketing. I am not a scholar of religions, but I have learned how the grace that unfolds from a religious practice is helpful to me and my clients. In this chapter, I've covered these paths and how they can inform marketing. This will help you start to translate for yourself what spiritual truths exist that can be overlaid onto your marketing experience. Because, isn't that the point? No religion or spiritual approach can tell us how to behave in every situation. Rather, it's the meaning we draw from the teachings, and how we enact it in our daily lives, that brings the teaching to life.

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Am I suggesting you pick and choose from these to support you in your marketing? Not really, though I know that will work for some readers. In an ideal world, you'd dig deeply into one brand of faith and all the advice or teachings it has on your business life. In drawing the parallels I see in each, I am trying to illustrate that there is no business left behind in any religion or spiritual approach. These two do not have to remain separate.

Generally, there are twelve world religions considered to be classic: Baha'i, Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Shinto, Sikhism, Taoism, and Zoroastrianism. I admit I was as surprised as you are to see some of these! Growing up in the Midwest, I was exposed to only a handful on this list. Moving to the Bay Area in my early twenties, added a couple more. In my mid-forties while doing this book research, five were still unknown to me. This illustrates how the part of the world you live in, and what you are surrounded by, has everything to do with the kind of information you are exposed to. That may mean the piece of information you need to make your own shift is in another part of the world, or in a non-formal religion.

I've added to this list several spiritual approaches, like Paganism, Indigenous, and Spiritual But Not Religious. Hopefully, these cover any reader who's not affiliated with an organized religion. Let's explore this alphabetically arranged list, and see what we can learn.

### **Baha'i**

The Baha'i religion believes there is one unified God who is known by the world through a variety of prophets. These prophets are the founders of other religions such as Buddha, Christ, and Mohammed, as well as Baha'u'llah, who founded Baha'i in 1863. This makes it the world's youngest classic religion.

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A fundamental teaching of Baha'u'llah is the oneness of humanity. There is an open rejection of racism, classism, nationalism, and gender inequalities. It was the goal of Baha'u'llah to create a world full of equality for men and women, all classes and races. He says, "Ye are all leaves of one tree and the fruits of one branch." Humanity is like a tree, with nations or peoples as the branches, and individual humans are the leaves. We're all part of the same tree. Sounds good, right?

I so long for entrepreneurs to feel this way about their business! Think of it as one tree, with the branches being your clients, vendors, and all the parts of your business—finance, operations, sales, and yes, marketing. The leaves are all the ideas, tasks, and care needed for each branch to be full and vibrant. You must tend to the whole tree as a unit, and care for each of the branches separately for the tree to do well. Can you imagine a tree where the gardener took loving care of one branch while feeling dread about the other ones, and only giving them attention occasionally? That's what I often see purpose-driven entrepreneurs doing when they are pouring all their attention on their client branch, dreading their marketing and sales branches, and only doing the bare minimum on their finances and operations.

There's a deeper instruction here as well. Run a business that contributes to the unity of humanity. Does your product or service help with class, gender, or race inequalities? Good. Empower others to step into their highest selves? You're on the right track. The Baha'i would have you use your business to pour out love, compassion, and unity to the world.

The Baha'i faith believes each person has their own relationship with God. We have eyes and ears—and the gift of reason—to recognize truth for ourselves. We are not meant to live our lives through the eyes or ears of another. This gives us all a high level of personal responsibility: to know God, follow his creative plan for us, do work that is useful to

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society, and to seek moral and work education that supports us in doing that.

With Baha'i adherents, education in trades and morality is compulsory. The Baha'i teachings promote moral and spiritual education, in addition to arts, trades, sciences, and professions. The emphasis on education is a means for the improvement of nations, and ultimately, the world. This helps the Baha'is in their duty to do work useful to humanity.

If you're a successful entrepreneur, chances are you are already doing both these things—taking a high level of personal responsibility for your path and getting ongoing training you need, both professionally and personally, to do so. If that training is addressing you spiritually as well, I believe that you and your business will soar. I've met many successful people who wonder if success is all there is, and why they worked so hard to get there. Rarely is that person spiritually fulfilled. Likewise, I've met many who are spiritually fulfilled, but materially longing for their needs and comforts to be met. Why not combine these for the best of both worlds?

On the topic of seeing things both ways, since the Baha'i see religions as progressive, and theirs as the latest progression, there is no conflict between religion and science in this faith. Abdu'l-Baha, the son of the Baha'i prophet and living embodiment of the faith, said religion must conform to science and reason, otherwise, it is superstition. The Baha'i believe God created man with the mind, or reason, to discover truth. Therefore, scientific knowledge and religious belief must be conformable to the analysis of this divine faculty in man. This aids in meeting the goal God had for creating humanity—that each of us would come to know and love Him.

I love this earthly, rational approach to the divine. You could be well served by bringing this into your marketing: a bit of divine guidance, mixed with practical realism in your business is a recipe for success.

### Buddhism

Buddhism is an ancient philosophical system that follows the teachings of the Buddha. The system — a meditative, esoteric practice that often functions as a religious system — has an estimated 350 and 500 million practitioners and believers, worldwide. Buddhism emphasizes the cultivation of mindfulness, and values a spiritually minimalistic worldview, eschewing dependence and worldly attachment. Different schools of Buddhism emphasize different aspects of the tradition. Some focus on the practice of Samadhi, or meditation and mental development, and Prajna which is the discernment, insight, and wisdom that will emerge if your mind is pure and calm. It is believed that developing one's mind is the path to wisdom, which in turn leads to personal freedom and helps us maintain good conduct.

There is an Eightfold Path to follow in Buddhism, and number five of this path is Right Livelihood. This certainly indicates your work life has a definitive place in this religion. At the time it was created, *rightful* meant any occupation that did not cause unnecessary harm to other living things.

The Dalai Lama expands on the idea of right livelihood, saying that for regular people, right livelihood comes from abandoning the five wrong livelihoods—hinting, flattery, bribery, coercion, and hypocrisy—and procuring requisites truthfully, honestly, and in a non-harmful way. He says we cannot overcharge customers and clients, or exploit others. He believes we should engage in work contributing to the healthy functioning of society, and the welfare of others. He goes on to say that right livelihood is also a lifestyle free from the extremes of asceticism and luxury.

His words about avoiding “hinting, flattery, bribery, coercion, and hypocrisy” remind me of the kind of marketing we all dislike. Don't you just hate it when you feel coerced to join now before time runs out? Or, the hypocrisy of ads

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proclaiming the quality of something only to read the details and find a total mismatch? How about when you are falsely flattered by someone who wants your sale? These approaches are why marketing has a bad name. There's also a nugget in here about pricing. He's explicit about not overcharging clients or exploiting others. This can certainly inform our actions in setting our pricing to be of value, and to pay our vendors fairly.

I like the deeper instruction the Dalai Lama gives to look for work that contributes to the well-being of the world. But I am especially struck by his mandate, that we live not in asceticism, which is severe self-discipline and avoidance of all forms of indulgence and luxury, but rather, in the middle. I know too many purpose-driven entrepreneurs who feel bad about earning money or guilty about pursuing money. So, here we have a clear instruction on the right place to aim—in the center. This can mean you can have enough for yourself, and enough to help others.

Vietnamese Zen teacher, Thich Nhat Hanh wrote, “To practice Right Livelihood (Samyang java), you have to find a way to earn your living without transgressing your ideals of love and compassion. The way you support yourself can be an expression of your deepest self, or it can be a source of suffering for you and others.” He has expanded the teaching on ethical conduct this way:

*Aware that great violence and injustice have been done to our environment and society, we are committed not to live with a vocation that is harmful to humans and nature. We will do our best to select a livelihood that helps realize our ideal of understanding and compassion. Aware of global economic, political, and social realities, we will behave responsibly as consumers and as citizens, not supporting companies that deprive others of their chance to live.*

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Most purpose-driven entrepreneurs—with their passion to make the world better in some way—have businesses that could fall under this idea of right livelihood. What could be a better way to express your deepest self than to offer your gifts to others through your business? Getting that business up and running to support you and your community is surely a divine practice.

### Christianity

Christianity is the world's largest religion with approximately 2.4 billion adherents. But, Christians are a diverse group. About half are Catholic. Protestants, broadly defined as historical, Anglican, or independent, are a little over one-third. Orthodox Christians come in at 12 percent. And, other Christians, such as Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses, make up the remaining one percent of the global Christian population. Each of these believes something different.

Which is only to say I could never come up with one concise way of sharing how Christianity advises us on our marketing. I come at this from the perspective of being a Catholic who converted to my religion later in life. This makes my point of view different from non-Catholic Christians, as well as those who were raised in the Catholic faith. The best I can do here is to try to focus on beliefs common to most Christians. If you don't feel your version of Christianity is reflected here, or are just curious about other Christian viewpoints on business, there are plenty of places to look. Start with Google, then dive into the various articles and books, until you find the version that most resonates with you.

Generally, Christians believe God is the creator of the universe and life itself. That man and woman kind were created in his image. And, that he did all of this for nothing but his glory, and the happiness of his creatures. I believe this is good news for those of us who have created a business.

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When you build a successful business for the happiness of yourself, those you serve, and the community you are part of, you are stepping into the role God created for you—to live in his image. When you invent services and products that serve the world you are imitating, which is another way of praising, God’s role as a creator. When you serve with the idea of creating accomplishment, magnificence or beauty, to contribute to the world God made, you are reflecting his glory.

This is different from what capitalism has led us to believe, which is that humanity is at the center of the business world. That human progress is what will move the world along, and ultimately, create personal freedom. The Christian point of view would reject that we are responsible as the sole agents in our business. As Christians, we are in business to glorify God and his intentions.

This isn’t just our role; it was Jesus’ role also. Jesus says he “must be about my Father’s business” (Luke 2:49) and his nourishment “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work” (John 4:34). Since most Christians believe Jesus’ actions and life were a guideline of sorts as to how we should live our lives, we can relax a little. If Jesus came to do his father’s work, can’t we be content to do the same? Jesus’ life was an amazing example of ongoing service to those around him, under the guidance of his father. I believe if you set up your business to do the same, you are working in accordance with God’s will.

Christians also believe the Bible is a guide. Bible verses abound around working and stewarding that which we are given. They start in the beginning with “The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it” (Genesis 2:15). It doesn’t stop there. Look up Bible verses on work or business, and you’ll see what I mean. Over and over, we are bid to take care of that which we are given, to work diligently, and to take care of those around



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us. How better to do that than to have a successful business? Your business can literally touch the lives of many—you, your clients, vendors, family, and community. Success means you can also donate money and services to those in need. When done ethically and in line with God’s teachings, your business success is exactly in line with the Bible’s teachings.

Another common belief among Christians is the belief in the power of grace. And, all denominations believe in the power of prayer. It seems to me it doesn’t matter if your style of prayer is different from another’s, whether you repeat the same prayer over and over, or pray only through Jesus or pray as on ongoing conversation directly with God. It matters that you do it in regard to your business and your marketing, so that you can be in grace with these endeavors. For me, it’s the Catholic style of ritual prayer and consecration that fills my heart with grace. Find out what it is for you, and be brave enough to do it.

I’ll leave this section with the scripture of 1 Peter 4, which asks us to live according to God, rather than human standards. To love each other, and offer each other hospitality—yes, even in our businesses. That “each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” So, step into marketing the gifts you’ve been graced with so that others may receive them.

### **Confucianism**

“Instead of being concerned that you are not known, seek to be worthy of being known” is a quote from Confucius I particularly like for our marketing adventure. Isn’t that a wonderful sentiment? If all my clients came to me asking how to increase their worthiness of being known, I’d think I was living heaven on earth for sure. What a powerful way to ask for visibility via the capacity to serve.

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Sometimes viewed as a philosophy, by others as a religion, Confucianism is a way of life taught by Confucius (Kong Fuzi) in China in the 6th-5th century BCE. He was a teacher and philosopher whose rituals and traditions shaped Chinese social relationships and moral thought. Confucianism revolves around the pursuit of the unity—to create harmony on earth, among all people. All who studied and practiced this philosophy aimed at harmonious relationships, believing it would result in greater peace in their countries. Confucians do not believe in, seek consolation from, or pray to gods. Instead, they believe people need to be grounded in the present. The attention of Confucius was solely focused on practical considerations of this world, and on everyday concerns. He was seeking a solution for the challenges of his time, a way to cure a society that was rife with political strife. Confucius said heaven was beyond our understanding so instead, we should concentrate on doing the right thing in this life. He did not provide many rules, rather, he taught a respectful attitude toward others. He encouraged his students to honor others' cultural beliefs, and to learn from every person they met.

This is striking to me because I work with purpose-driven entrepreneurs who, although want to enact change here in the physical world, often spend a lot of time contemplating the spiritual. While I think this is important—obviously, this whole book is about that on some level—I cannot emphasize enough, how important acting in the physical world is. Praying and seeking consolation from heaven is not remotely enough to have a thriving business, though I see lots of people hoping it's so in the spiritually oriented entrepreneur communities. If you instead concern yourself with taking practical steps in this world, scary though they may be, while maintaining an attitude of faith, you're enacting the divine formula of heaven on earth.

Confucius maintained that his philosophy and teachings spring from a single principle called *shù*, which is akin to the

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English word *empathy*. From this came the original version of the Golden Rule: “What you don’t want done to yourself, don’t do to others” (Analects 15:24). Though Confucianism could be summed up with this single encompassing principle of empathy, there are several important virtues within this one Confucian practice I think are informative for our marketing.

The first of these is *rén*, which can be described as benevolence, humane, and being human. It includes a sense of dignity for all living things and humans. *Rén* is about mercy, love, and humanity. Confucius focused on individual development, which to him, happened within the context of human relationships. People who practice *rén* are motivated by a deep empathy for others, and show this with their care and humane attitude. Confucius also defined *rén* as: “wishing to be established himself, seeks also to establish others; wishing to be enlarged himself, he seeks also to enlarge others.”

This is the perfect way to describe authentic marketing. If you can be so moved by wanting to support another—and hold that as equal to your desire to grow yourself—telling others about your business becomes easy. It’s when one of these gets skewed that marketing gets hard. If you slide to the side of wanting to serve others, but not holding your own growth as equal, you’ll avoid your marketing efforts. If you slide to the other side and make it all about your business’ growth, you can come off as aggressive or pushy in your marketing.

The second virtue, *lǐ*, can be translated as rite or reason, but as it relates to social behavior, it can be termed *customs* or *rules*. *Lǐ* is the means for life to be ritualized and made sacred. In this way, society can be properly ordered and harmony is established. Confucius saw it as embodying all things between humanity and nature, a sort of natural law. Its Confucian meaning ranges from politeness and etiquette to proper practices to governance, with the emphasis on performance.

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Lǐ can inform people about their duties to others, and of the expectations society has of them.

It's not quite like a law, though, as we might see here in the west. Rather than the kind of law that punishes after an illegal action, which makes it an external authority, Confucius argues for a ritual system connecting patterns of internalized behavior that exert influence before actions are taken. In this way, people behave properly because they believe they should, and to avoid shame or losing face.

I'm not a fan of a lot of rules and shoulds when it comes to our businesses, but I do see the value in knowing best practices, especially in marketing. Too many entrepreneurs follow their own beliefs, despite massive evidence to the contrary. There is a lot of dreaming that clients will just magically appear, people will understand your message right away, and you can avoid doing things you don't care for and still thrive. When deciding on the kind of marketing you need to do for your business, take the time to understand what experts or people who've had success suggest, or research to find suggestions for best practices. If repeatedly you find there is marketing advice for your situation that you don't like, you can't just avoid it. Rather, consider doing the inner work you may need to do on your resistance to the suggested path. In my experience, seven out of 10 times, our own issues are in the way of following practical marketing advice. Those other three times? That's truly not the path for you at this time. Knowing that and making the decision consciously makes all the difference. Then, if you should decide to go a different way, so be it, but you won't be scratching your head in bewilderment if it doesn't turn out the way you hoped.

Yì is a third important concept under this umbrella of empathy in Confucianism. Literally meaning justice or righteousness, it involves a desire to do good, and to do so with skill. Yì brings together the Confucian orientation towards cultivating benevolence, rén, and skillful practice, lǐ. It strives

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to find a balanced understanding, along with the insights necessary, to apply the Confucian virtues appropriately to the situation.

So, too, could be our goal with marketing. You aren't on a path to know everything about marketing, or even the right thing. You are looking for a balance of skill building, gaining insight, and having the insight to apply it appropriately. What a description of grace in action!

We'll leave this discussion of Confucianism with another great quote by Confucius: "When it is obvious that the goals cannot be reached, don't adjust the goals, adjust the action steps." This may be the best marketing advice I've ever heard! If all entrepreneurs could become fluid in this way and adjust their steps as needed, we'd have a lot more business success.

## Hinduism

Hinduism is considered a way of life with guidelines on what you should and shouldn't do. Unlike Christianity or Islam, there is no founder, no one book as its basis, and no central authority or institution managing it. It adapts and changes as the practices and traditions of the times add to it. Its adherents, Hindus—who number about 1.5 billion—call it dharma, or a way to live. In the West, we call it a religion, because that's the closest word we have to describe it.

There are some core beliefs in Hinduism that can support your marketing journey. First, devout Hindus have no separation between their faith and lifestyle. In some sense, the goal of Hinduism is to understand the will God has for you, and to follow it to the best of your abilities. You can lead your everyday life, but God will be central to it and in your thoughts, always. Your profession can be as direct of a path to God as worshiping in temple. This is called karma yoga. Of course, you cannot take sole credit for your accomplishments as all belongs to God. By doing your duty to the best of your

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ability, you can take care of yourself, your family, and your community. If you are on the correct path, you will be met with universal support every step of the way.

This is exactly what I see so many purpose-driven entrepreneurs longing for. To have the right relationship with their spiritual nature, their business, and those around them. Hinduism offers a path for this—make God central to your thoughts and actions. Strive to figure out the plan God has for your business, and fulfill it to the best of your ability. Of course, this means marketing it well. Believing God will meet you halfway—and send support if you need it—could put many entrepreneurs' fears to rest.

Gandhi, one of the most famous peacemakers known, was born Hindi. Though he studied many religions in his adult life, he believed all his life he was faithful to Hindu tenets. He could do this because Hinduism is inclusive, tolerating all other religions, and encouraging everyone to worship God according to their own faith. Although most focus on how Gandhi's spirituality shaped his political views, I want to point out two personal traits of Gandhi's that can help in your marketing.

Gandhi was very much aware of his own personal fears, but through acknowledging them and working with their presence in his life, he managed to transform them. He realized fear would lead him to all the wrong places, so he worked constructively with this negative energy to minimize its influence on his life and his work. From a Hindi perspective, fear is a product of our ego; we are all able to work on ourselves to become more courageous. True to this sentiment, Gandhi believed courage is something that can be cultivated and developed by us all. He said, "There would be no one to frighten you if you refused to be afraid."

Fear is the number one reason I see talented, giving entrepreneurs avoid acting, distracting themselves and otherwise sabotaging their marketing efforts. Is growing your

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business scary? Of course! Is stepping into greater visibility unnerving? Totally. You can develop courage and lessen your fears. I like to remind my clients being brave does not mean you aren't scared—it means being scared and moving forward anyway.

Gandhi was a continual learner, and believed that evolution of ideas, thoughts, and principles was natural. This is another tenet of Hinduism—all things in the universe evolve, and this is a transformation from a beginning state to a manifested state of consciousness. You can see this in Gandhi's lifetime as he evolved his interpretation of his principles. Because of this, many inconsistencies can be found in his writings, though he readily admitted this.

*I would like to say to the diligent reader of my writings and to others who are interested in them that I am not at all concerned with appearing to be consistent. In my search after Truth, I have discarded many ideas and learnt many new things.... What I am concerned with is my readiness to obey the call of Truth, my God, from moment to moment, and therefore, when anybody finds any inconsistency between any two writings of mine, if he still has any faith in my sanity, he would do well to choose the later of the two on the same subject.*

Imagine the relief you could feel if you held your work with the same loose grip. Not worried about how the work or writings or speech or video or social media post you did today would look in the future. You, too, are in process, and you are evolving, just like everything else in the cosmos. So, where you and your business are today is good, and where you are going is even better.

### Islam

Islam is the name of a monotheistic religion whose adherents are called Muslims. Islam started in the 7<sup>th</sup> century when Muhammad began receiving divine revelations that would later form the Qur'an, the central Islam text. Muslims believe Muhammad was sent by God, whom they call Allah, to confirm the monotheistic teachings of earlier prophets like Jesus, Moses, and Abraham. The three major parts of Islam are the beliefs, ritualistic practices, and the effort to improve oneself.

Muslim people make up a majority in 50 countries and a minority in many more, and there are two divisions within the tradition—the Sunni and Shi'a. As a result, the customs and interpretations of being Muslim are colored by the history and culture the followers are part of. So, like many other religions, finding common beliefs is not straightforward.

Many Muslims practice what are called the Five Pillars, which include ongoing professing of their faith, practicing five daily prayers, making annual donations to charity, fasting during daylight hours during Ramadan, and making a pilgrimage to Mecca, a holy city in Islam where Muhammad was born, at least once in their life. And they live by laws called Shariah, that govern all aspects of their lives, including food and clothing. Clearly, Islam is a way of life, not just a religion. Here are some of the practices or beliefs I think can inform marketing.

Praying five times per day is an obligation in Islam, called Salah. Each prayer includes a series of movements and recitations from the Quran. Muslims consider prayer to be both spiritual and physical, with various standing, bending, and prostrating postures, symbolizing devotion to God. Though each prayer can be done in little time, maybe even five minutes, it is a way of totally submitting to the will of Allah, and showing your love and gratitude for him. It



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is a reminder throughout every day your relationship with Allah is at the center of your life. It's also a chance to reflect. Are you living in a righteous way that is pleasing to Allah? Muslims believe strongly in judgment after death, so this is a safeguard to help one live a life leading to favorable judgment in the afterlife. Although the prayers can be done anywhere, alone or with others, on Fridays, it is required for Muslims to pray together in groups at their mosque. This is to create congregation and to foster good relationships among families and communities.

Marketing, too, is a series of postures and actions that must be taken daily. You might sit down to write copy for your grand opening, stand at a networking meeting sharing with someone about the work you do, pick up your phone to follow up with three potential clients, and pencil out costs for an estimate for new work—all in the same day. If you could move through these various tasks with an idea that you are being of service to others and pleasing God, Goddess or whatever you believe is around us, you could view your day as divine. Way better than our typical day of dreading these activities.

Another major tenet of Islam is hospitality. Mona Siddiqui discusses this in her book, *Hospitality in Islam: Welcoming in God's Name*. Based in part on the story of Abraham sharing with angels, that inspired a sense of hospitality among Islam, Judaism, and Christianity, which all share Abraham as a founding person in their religions, Siddiqui says hospitality goes even deeper in Islam. She points out that the Bedouin society that preceded Islam already placed hospitality as central to a honorable character, and fundamental to the harsh desert environment where everyone receiving food and drink in a timely way, meant the difference between life or death. Besides hospitality being an honorable, charitable way of life, Siddiqui explains all the commandments are to share food and blessings with others, to give to charity, and to look

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after others are “because this is how God is and God’s giving knows no limits.”

Charitable acts then, including hospitality, are a way a Muslim can receive favor with Allah. They are also a way to create relationships beyond one’s family or friends. This is not only about growing the number of those you associate with. Siddiqui makes the point that what we eat and whom we eat with has the theological significance of connecting an ordinary life with a higher one. There are also limits on hospitality, as it is a time and resource demanding act. In this way, both the receiver and the giver of hospitality must know the rules of a successful interaction. Be a good host, but also be a good guest.

Many purpose-driven entrepreneurs could benefit from this idea of being hospitable within their marketing. Content marketing is based on this very idea. Give away your best information for free, and be abundant in sharing your resources and in this way, build a loyal following of clients. Too many entrepreneurs focus on getting paid for their expertise up front, and hoard their resources for fear of being stolen from. If you can instead, find a way to share abundantly in a way that also honors your own needs for financial sustenance, you are in a good place indeed. Cause marketing is another piece springing from this hospitable attitude. If you are making good money from your endeavors but not sharing it with causes that make the world a better place, you’re missing a huge opportunity for contribution and fulfillment.

## Indigenous

The United Nations estimates that there are over 370 million indigenous people living in 70 countries worldwide. They are defined as people practicing unique traditions and retaining social, cultural, economic, and political characteristics distinct from those of the dominant societies in which they live. Spread

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across the world from the Arctic to the South Pacific, they are the descendants—according to a common definition—of those who inhabited a country or a geographical region at the time when people of different cultures or ethnic origins arrived. They are approximately 5% of our population and spread throughout hundreds of different groups. Which makes it near to impossible to find a coherent point of view to share with you here.

I'm including this category because it points out something I believe is important in a discussion such as this. The world is a diverse place. Every single one of these groups has its own spiritual approach. Just because we ended up with 12 classic religions doesn't mean that's all the resources we have. Each one of us is a descendant of a long line of people. Going back through your own lineage is a valid approach to informing yourself of the spirituality running through your genes. Or to uncover any spiritual conflicts you may be carrying if you, by chance, are a descendant of two spiritual traditions or cultures that clashed. Imagine if your ancestors were both British and Native American for example. Or Jewish and Muslim. This means that energetically you may have conflicting spiritual approaches in your gene set. Can you see how that could cause some internal conflicts about how you are in the world? Making peace with these differences may be required or you may find yourself wanting to choose one approach over another.

I'm not trying to oversimplify here. My point is that you have some conscious choice about how to proceed; looking to your original tribes approach may help you do that. I'm also pointing out we have a plethora of information to pull from when trying to construct our own spiritual approach to our business. Investigating various indigenous points of view could be helpful in creating a narrative that fits your life.

### Jainism

Jainism is a religion from India in the 6th-century BCE. The creator of Jainism, Mahavira, lived in the same time and age as Buddha, Confucius, and Lao-tzu. Jainism was a reaction to Hinduism, which was caste based. Early on, Jainism accepted people of all castes. Rather than the middle way that Buddha saw between good and evil, Mahavira believed good was contained in the soul as life and covered by matter from the material world which was non-life and contained evil. The goal of life is to liberate the soul from its material confines.

The essence of Jainism is nonviolence (ahimsa). This is, in part, because Jains believe the whole universe is alive and therefore, has a soul. It is considered that each of these souls is equal, and should be treated with compassion and respect. Jains are strict vegetarians and minimize their use of resources. They don't take jobs harming animals and may even sweep the path before them, as they walk in order not to step on insects. It's also because the aim of Jainism is to eliminate all karma from the soul to achieve liberation. By avoiding violence of any kind, they believe it is less likely to add new karma to their soul (jiva). To help reduce the karma they have accrued, they follow a disciplined life path of avoiding indulgences and material goods, along with moral cultivation.

The cultivation Jainism requires is to follow the core practice of the three jewels. These jewels are right belief, right knowledge, and right conduct. If one were to vastly simplify these, you could say instead: believe in the faith, study the faith, and follow the directives of the faith. Of course, there is more to it than that.

Right belief—also called right view, right perception, or right faith—has to do with seeing the difference between good and bad, right and wrong, truth and untruth, as well as avoiding misconceptions, such as beliefs or superstitions, getting in the way of seeing clearly. You must be determined

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to find what is true, and distinguish it from what is untrue. This is the jewel of spiritual development, where one renounces material comforts, and begins to release doubt. It is intertwined with the remaining two jewels because without it, the other two are not possible.

You would be well served if you took this same position in your marketing. You cannot take in all the hype in the marketing world as truth. A lot of it simply isn't. Can you make six figures in 12 weeks of a new business? Not usually. How about get hundreds of new clients with no effort or money on your part? Nope. Grow your business without sweating through creating your messaging and branding? Uh-uh.

Also, not all good advice is true for *your* business. So, you need to wade through, looking for your truth. A big part of this is clearing out your own limiting beliefs and misconceptions that get in the way of seeing this truth. Another part involves living out your marketing plans with the sincere search for truth. This takes some skill building in the art of discernment—which means you begin to understand the nuances of truth that apply to you.

Take right perception, add to it understanding, and you get right knowledge. This second jewel is about having an accurate understanding of the true nature of the universe. There are eight different types of knowing in Jainism, including mental, acquired, distant, paranormal, and absolute, which are good, along with false types that include invalid knowledge, erroneous knowledge, and wrong knowledge.

How I long for us to use more ways of seeing in the marketing world. If you spend some time reading about each of these types of knowing, you begin to see we have many faculties to use in understanding a problem or deciding how to move forward. By consciously choosing a type of knowing, you can both garner the rewards from it while respecting its limitations. In other words, by knowing a lot about knowing,

you can make better decisions. I see many people in the marketing world using only one type of knowing and then, wondering why their decisions don't lead to success.

### Judaism

Judaism is a monotheistic religion developed among the ancient Israelites some 1500 years before Christianity. Today, it encompasses the religion, philosophy and culture of over 14 million Jewish people worldwide. Judaism has a wide collection of texts, practices, beliefs, and forms of organization, with the Torah as its foundational text.

A central practice in Jewish tradition is the observance of the Sabbath (*Shabbat*). The Hebrew word "Shabbat" comes from the root *Shin-Beit-Tav*, meaning to cease, to end, or to rest. It is a day of complete rest and spiritual rejuvenation. But as Ana Levy-Lyons, author of *No Other Gods: The Politics of the Ten Commandments*, states: "To equate the Sabbath with an ordinary vacation is to mistake its essence and its revolutionary potential. The goal of a Sabbath practice is not to patch us up and send us back out to the world ... but to reclaim a full day every week to luxuriate in life's fountain of blessings."

Jewish theologian Abraham Joshua Heschel writes from a mystical perspective in the rabbinic tradition, describing the Sabbath as a gift from God, a "palace in time." Heschel reframed the experience of Shabbat from a day of ceasing the important work of daily life to instead live a full twenty-five hours outside of time. He said "... *the Sabbath is the counterpoint of living; the melody sustained throughout all agitations and vicissitudes which menace our conscience; our awareness of God's presence in the world.*"

Understanding Shabbat as a radical act of freedom is not only a reminder that, historically, the Jewish people had to participate in their own liberation from slavery in Egypt, it

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also challenges us in our modern world to find ways to free ourselves from shoulds, demands and obligations, from our salary and any other form of work. That we have the capacity to say “I’m taking a day off.” And that all the cosmos supports us in this as it mirrors the very way that God created the world. To work hard for six days and enjoy the sweet bliss of just being in it on the seventh day.

Setting aside a day of rest could be the perfect practice for the owner of a small business. How often do we push, push, and push forward, always working, even though we likely chose working for ourselves as a way to have more freedom? What if you looked to the practice of Shabbat instead? How could you organize yourself and your marketing efforts in a way that pushed for completion and asked you to routinely step back to enjoy it? I’m guessing that it would not only reduce any reluctance you have in your marketing, but also bring in divine inspiration and point of view that could ensure your success.

I look to a book called *Jewish Wisdom for Business Success: Lessons for the Torah and Other Ancient Texts* to find another point that I believe is pertinent for marketing.

In this teaching, author Levi Brackman focuses on finding our inner will and bringing about our outer will to match it. According to the Torah, our inner will is already inside us, we just have to find it. The Jewish mystics, the Kabbalists, called it “*pnimiyut ha-ratzon*,” which means “inner will” or “authentic self.” It’s often veiled or wrapped up in what is called the “*chitzoniyut ha-ratzon*” or the “outer will.” This inner will is something that expresses our authentic self. Brackman feels that we will have the most success if we can find that thing which we are most passionate about, the thing which is clearly an expression of our authentic self, figure out the commercial application for it and then, market that. This goes hand in hand with the fact that the authentic self

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always wants to be creative. It gives us the fundamental drive to create a reality that did not previously exist.

Many Torah scholars believe the universe was created by God's outer will, to serve a higher and inner divine desire and will. So, when we find our inner will and use it to shape our outer will, we are again enacting God's creative process. This inner will is powerful in its effect, on the motivation and passion we need, to achieve what we really want in life.

Turning inward to find your true passion is a powerful place to market from. Too many entrepreneurs set up their business around what others tell them they are good at. But if your inner will isn't in alignment with this outer talent, it won't flow well. When you can find your deepest passion, and take steps to figuring out a way to enact that in exchange for money, you've found the winning combination of a purpose driven business. When you share this inner passion, or what I call your deep why, your marketing comes across with more authenticity. Clients respond to this kind of sharing, with delight, rather than feeling they've been sold to. It's a win for you both. And if by doing this, you are enacting a divine process, all the better.

### **New Thought**

Did you know if you believe in affirmations, metaphysics, or the law of attraction you were practicing a religious act? Neither did I. Though, honestly, I've practiced all these things at one time or another. The religion is called New Thought, and started in the United States in the 19th century. It's best understood as a loosely allied group of religious denominations, secular membership organizations, authors, philosophers, and individuals who share beliefs concerning metaphysics, positive thinking, the law of attraction, healing, life force, creative visualization, and personal power<sup>9</sup>.



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It was considered by many to have been derived from the unpublished writings of Phineas Quimby, and furthered by many who studied under him and beyond. Organizations that sprang from this movement include Divine Science, Unity Church, and Religious Science. If you didn't come across them organizationally in the 20th century, you might have read a book instead. Two of the best-selling books of all time, *Think and Grow Rich* by Napoleon Hill and *You Can Heal Your Life* by Louise Hay came from this philosophy. One of the beliefs of New Thought, the law of attraction, gained a lot of attention in 2006 from the film, *The Secret*.

Some might dismiss this religion as being trite and only concerned with positive thinking, but that would be a mistake. This tradition is 150 years old and continuing. Wasn't Christianity dismissed in its early days, too? We might conjecture that any new approach in religion would be questioned as possible heresy, but it should not stop us from considering the ideas and investigating the actual beliefs, rather than dismissing them based on media interpretation.

Working from April Moncrieff's *The Principles of New Thought*, I found these points for our discussion on how this approach might inform marketing.

First, the basis for New Thought is a metaphysical understanding of the world. This means it focuses on the world outside our objective and physical understanding. Traditional Christian teachings are seen as symbolic, rather than literal. New Thought adherents see the characters and places in the Bible as an outer representation of the conditions and states of consciousness within us. In looking at Jesus' life and experiences in the Bible, they understand it as living symbolism representing a universal human experience.

This metaphysical approach includes views of God going beyond the idea of God as a human-like, fatherly figure. It posits that God is infinite and everywhere, in all space and time. The best relationship we can have is direct and personal.

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The goal of prayer is not to ask for outside help in solving this or that problem, but rather, to merge our human selves with the divine. In New Thought, there is an emphasis on this inner attunement, of quieting the conscious mind and transcending the “ceaseless torrent of thoughts, by developing the art of focusing the awareness inwardly, for impressions and guidance, from the higher Source.” This higher state of consciousness is not reserved for a select few; it is a path available to all.

I’ve seen people be in heaven with their marketing or the other place, where it’s pure torture. Dread, doubt, resistance, and outright terror rear their heads around standing up to speak in front of others or making a follow-up call. If, instead, they could quiet their emotions and attune with the divine mind, they could avoid many of these bad feelings. I doubt your creator wants you to feel sleazy while marketing your business. Maybe you could get tuned in and check.

The ability of consciousness to recreate the body and restore it to its rightful pattern as the image and likeness of God is taught, embraced, and practiced throughout the New Thought movement. On a deeper look, you can see that New Thought practitioners believe in a unity of the body, mind, and spirit as necessary for good health. Rather than the simplified version in the media that portrays as practitioners who refuse traditional medical treatments (that could cure their disease), many New Thought practitioners are busy practicing preventative medicine, taking good care of their bodies with diet, exercise and supplements and are highly involved in their medical care when there is a breakdown. They are just as likely to pray for guidance in their approach as to listen to only one voice of an MD, who ignores their spirit in his/her treatment<sup>10</sup>.

It’s the same for your marketing. You can bring your marketing efforts into alignment with its rightful pattern of unity with your body, mind, and soul. That’s healthy

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marketing that gets good results. Also, it's never too late. No matter how it's gone in the past, you can always step into new, better behaviors, and get better results. If you can just keep your divine mind in your business, pay close attention, and act daily, then it will happen. Most successful people you meet have a trail of failures behind them. If they can do it, so can you.

### Paganism

Modern Paganism includes reconstructed historical religions in the modern world and modern blended traditions, such as Wicca and Druidism. Keep in mind that before the 20th century, Pagans would have never called themselves Pagan. This was a word used by early Christians to define someone who was not part of the Christian church. These historical religions then, are really a collection of many types of spiritualities, indigenous to a variety of places and old ways of worshipping. These were generally from Greco-Roman, Celtic, Germanic, Slavic tribes. Modern paganism is currently practiced in Europe, North America, Australia, New Zealand, and Iceland.

Because of its diversity in origins and practitioners, it's hard to say exactly what all Pagans believe. There are some themes that stand out in regards to a spiritual informing of your marketing. The first is that Pagans generally honor both God and Goddess. That means both the masculine and feminine divine sit as at least equal. There are some who believe the Goddess gets even more emphasis. I believe this kind of gender equality can be a powerful way to approach your marketing, indeed even your whole business. It means feminine ways of promoting and working are just as valid as the traditional masculine ways we've been taught to embrace. It also respects receiving intuition, taking care of others, and using transformation as fine tools in your marketing. You can

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nurture relationships, meander a bit, follow your hunches, and still succeed. It's not all about a straight line that you forcefully follow forward. It's also not that only one form of the Goddess is revered. Maiden, mother, and crone are all revered aspects of her nature, meaning young, free ways of being are encouraged alongside the caring, supportive mothering role, and the wisdom that comes with experience.

Gods, too, are multifaceted. From managing fertility to all of nature, Pagan Gods create, protect, and cherish. They are both old and young and strong. This is not to pit women against men, as we humans have both a feminine and masculine side. It is to recognize the power of claiming *both*. Paganism suggest to do our marketing well, we must be whole.

Paganism believes that both the God and Goddess are spiritual, sexual, and human. This gets at the total of human nature—we are not just one thing but multifaceted beings, with human connections and desires, along with erotic sides and spiritual longings. This suggests that you can be real in your marketing, and still be well received by others. Indeed, I've seen many people shy away from working with someone who seemed too perfect or too together, opting instead to work with someone who sits in their vulnerabilities, mistakes, and longings while still striving to be their best.

Paganism sees divinity as inherent in nature and humanity, and views all things as interconnected. This often creates a connection to ecology and the environment, and an interest in the natural life cycle and seasonal patterns. I would strongly suggest you take this on in your marketing: There are times to act and times to rest. Because everything is connected and nothing exists alone, then every action has a consequence. There is no concept of sin or forgiveness in Pagan ethics. The consequences of one's actions must be weighed before acting to prevent harm; if harm occurs, then reparations are made as necessary. As a result, pagans enjoy personal freedom within

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a framework of personal responsibility; they have few rules to follow except the main one: harm to none. This creates a focus of equitable and just ways of being in life and in business, suggesting pagans would run their business not only for profit, but also to better society, support the environment, and treat others equitably. I can think of no better recipe for a winning business for any purpose-driven entrepreneur!

### Shinto

Sometimes called Japan's indigenous religion, there is no record of when exactly Shinto started or who it was founded by. I culled my knowledge of Shintoism from a third-generation practitioner, Motohisa Yamakage, in his book *The Essence of Shinto: Japan's Spiritual Heart*. Let's look at what Shinto can offer our marketing journey.

Yamakage says Shinto is a religion evolving out of the life and experience of the Japanese island people, shaped and nurtured by countless unknown men and women, over the centuries. He feels this illustrates one of the first premises of Shinto, which is that it is nature, not human beings, who teach. The Shinto religion could be defined by its reverence of nature.

Shinto believes everything comes to existence as a child-spirit of the great original spirit, Kami of the universe. Kami then, is the sustaining life energy from nature. This means humans, animals, and all natural matter, in their innermost essence, are children of this original spirit, called Naohinomitama. The meaning of ceremonies, food rituals, and prayers expresses followers' awareness that they owe their lives and sustaining life energy to Kami, the great source of nature. As they increase their awareness that they receive everything as a grace of Kami, they get a clearer perception of Naohinomitama, as the child-spirit of the great original spirit dwelling within all.

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If everything is received as a grace of Kami, and we have this spirit within us, then our marketing, too, can be filled with grace. We can learn to ways of being visible more successfully from nature. My clients and I often feel better when we take a marketing question or problem with us outside. Whether it's a quick walk, a breath of fresh air, or a deep sojourn into the wild, we often find our answers with the spirit of nature close by.

With no founder, there is no system or writings connected to a founder's teachings. Though the Kojiki and the Nihonshoki chronicles have many Shinto themes, they are not sacred texts like the Bible or the Torah. In these Japanese writings, history, myths, and theology are blended with political thoughts and embellishments, and so, need to be read and interpreted with care because every word is not necessarily considered sacred. Additionally, books written by Shintoists do not attempt to set out doctrine for the whole of Shinto. No explanation then is absolute, but when we put the different explanations together, we can begin to see the essence of Shinto philosophy.

I teach marketing in this way. No memorized elevator pitches, as there are no perfect set of words. When you try to get it right in your sharing, you are cut off from the essence of the moment. Instead of being perfect or right, there is only your embodiment of your experience and your authentic effort to be what you are marketing. Then you can respond in the moment, rather than use canned, memorized stuff.

Shinto then, is a religion in which there are no absolute codes, orders, or laws. It has no founder, no doctrine, no commandments, no idols, and no organization. This sounds a lot like marketing to me, and possibly why it can feel so absolutely confusing for someone who doesn't have much experience with it. Not trying to go broad, but rather, trying to narrow it down to what works for you.

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There is an underlying philosophy in Shinto of purification, which has four aspects. These can be understood by the terms clean, bright, right, and straight. The first three are about purifying and cleansing one's physical body of sins, faults, low energy vibrations, and unclean spirits. All these things get in the way of being in the physical world in a beneficial way.

The fourth—purification of the mind—means purifying our words and thoughts to think and experience reality in a straight way. This will help us not to be affected by low vibrating spirits. To do this, we must put our chaotic thoughts in order and focus on finding truth. This can come from reading inspiring spiritual books, or listening to teachers or masters who have undergone disciplined, spiritual training. It is not good enough to understand these books and lectures with only the brain, but also, with the heart. It is important to take time to examine one's own heart and mind, one's feelings and motives to cultivate cleanness and brightness. We must keep our mind firmly at the center of our body, the center of our true self, to avoid it falling out of balance.

I like the holistic approach Shinto uses to keep on the correct path. Authentic marketing, too, comes from this holistic path. Truly, it is your state of being and purity of intentions bringing about marketing outcomes. To get the results you want, you must be clear and straight in your thinking—and inspired in both brain and heart.

Even though human beings are tainted with mistakes, faults, or uncleanness in this world, they can rise to the status of Kami by showing continuous improvement and progress on their individual journey. It doesn't happen by natural growth, but rather, with spiritual training and exercises, such as misogi, along with practicing the work of love and charity to cultivate a clean and pure character. In Shinto, the process of creating and birthing life and spirit is described as musubi, and is held in very high regard. In the end, Shinto professes

the belief that there is no absolute and final salvation. There's only the ability to continue growing, maybe even to grow so far as to become Kami.

So, too, is marketing a path for growth. Continuous improvement and progress is possible. In fact, when you reach for greater visibility within your business, it's demanded. To reach these new heights, you'll have to shed former limitations and fears.

### **Sikhism**

Sikhism is the fifth largest religion in the world. It is a monotheistic religion, and was founded in the 16th century in the Punjab region of India during a time of conflict between Hinduism and Islam. It was first created as an alternative to these two religions by Guru Nanak, and developed further by the nine gurus who followed him. Sikhs regard the 10 Gurus not as divine, but as enlightened teachers through whom God revealed his will. Guru Granth Sahib is the religious scripture of Sikhism, written by the Gurus with their teachings along with some traditions and teachings of Indian saints. This scripture is regarded by Sikhs as the final and eternal living Guru, coming after the lineage of the 10 human Sikh gurus.

In Sikhism beliefs, there are three duties every Sikh must do in their lives. The first is Nam Japna, which is always keeping God in mind by repeating and focusing the mind on his name or identity. This is done by meditation, vocal singing of Shabads, hymns from the Sri Guru Granth Sahib, or the chanting of the various names of God. This act of singing, quiet meditation, and listening to sacred text or sacred words is a very important activity in the everyday life of a Sikh. The second is Kirt Karna, which is earning an honest living. This doesn't just mean avoiding crime; Sikhs avoid gambling, begging, or working in the alcohol or tobacco industries. They are supposed to carry out good deeds and earn a honest,



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pure, and truthful livelihood by exercising their God-given skills, abilities, talents and hard labor for the benefit and improvement of the individual, their family and society at large. And the third, Vand Chhakna, is a practice of giving to charity and caring for others.

Any one of these three practices would make your marketing stronger. Do all three and you'll be unstoppable. Chanting or praying to God or source continually keeps you in divine mind. This is a perfect state to do your marketing from. Exercising your skills and abilities in service to the world is a fulfilling way to spend your days. And giving to charity through your work is a strong component of authentic marketing.

Now, let's turn to the work of Dr. Upinder Jit Kaur in her paper *The Role and Status of Women in Sikhism* to understand how the Sikh concepts of equality, married life, and women can influence your marketing approach.

Sikhism believes God is gender neutral, and seeks to transcend ideas of caste, creed, clime, sex, and color. The Sikh Gurus strove to create an egalitarian and progressive society. They advocated principles of universal equality and humanity for all. The founding Sikh Gurus even held the woman equal to man in all respects. They pleaded for equal rights and privileges for her, both in religious and socio-political fields, they also placed women in positions of power within their community. They even let them fight in wars. This started in the 15th century, roughly 350 years before the women's emancipation movement in Europe. In an age when the inferiority of women was given, the Guru insisted women must be treated with respect as her mothering is the source of man's very existence and the entire life of society.

Feeling a sense of equality is a powerful platform from which to market. Too often, entrepreneurs feel not as good as others they perceive to be more successful, more talented or luckier than they are. This less-than feeling keeps them

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thinking small, or that they don't have what it takes. So, too, their marketing has a small voice and is done in a way that doesn't convey confidence.

Beyond equality, Dr. Kaur explains a Sikh is ordained to be an "ascetic within and secular without." They are asked to conduct themselves in the worldly surroundings with a spiritual inside. Dr. Kaur notes the householder's life—what we would call family life—is an essential element of social life and social structure in the Sikh religion. By combining these two, a Sikh shares in the riches of life, but never loses sight of the highest reality of the divine.

This idea of creating and well managing a household is foundational in Sikhism. They believe it is a means by which the souls grow spiritually. In Sikhism, spiritual freedom does not come from suppressing human desires but instead, by engaging in them moderately. It downplays uncontrolled appetites, and looks to households as a practical way for taming and controlling the biological instincts. Self-restraint and self-control are stressed, over and over in Sikh scripture. Besides creating growth for the people in them, Sikhism believes healthy households helps people to fulfill their obligations to society more effectively.

I like this practical approach for your marketing. It calls for a careful organization of your personal life in a way that supports you in marketing your business. Whatever household may mean to you, it's important to manage it well, and grow within it. So often we are stressed out at home and that spills into our office or networking event where we are expecting ourselves to be on and perfect. Why not instead, just be a human, set in a community, and creating partnerships supporting our growth to spiritual achievement, both personally and professionally?

## Spiritual But Not Religious

According to a study conducted by Pew Research Center, one fifth of the U.S. public and one third of adults under the age of 30 are reportedly unaffiliated with any religion; however, they identify as being spiritual in some way. Of these religiously unaffiliated Americans, 37% classify themselves as spiritual but not religious, while 68% say they do believe in God, and 58% feel a deep connection to the Earth<sup>11</sup>.

Given the lack of belief in the traditional, you might expect this group called Spiritual But Not Religious (SBNR) to be made of so many differing beliefs that no coherence could be found. Linda Mercadante, who interviewed hundreds of these people for her book *Belief without Borders*, has instead, found startling similarities. While it's not a formal religion, the spiritual approach of this group can offer some insights on approaching our marketing. Let's take a look.

Laughing at her chapter nine subtitle, *A Mobile Home In The Spiritual Universe*, I nevertheless found it descriptively accurate. What could better explain attitudes like wanting a morality that realistically responds to our diverse, changing culture and brings with it tolerance and harmony among people? Tired of religious conflict, SBNRs want compassion and peace to sit alongside individual rights, personal responsibility, and self-determination. They long for us all to find the sacred in the ordinary, even that "they are calling us back to the awe and mystery we should feel in the face of God." They insist caring for the planet is necessary. They are also open to scientific discoveries about consciousness. It's hard to imagine a more "distinctly American brand of spirituality" as Mercadante describes them.

One of the main common beliefs of this group is what Mercadante calls a shift in authority. This is "moving authority, trust, belief and divinity itself from 'out there' to 'in here,'" essentially moving the spiritual authority from God,

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or the church, to oneself. She maintains that it is possibly not the death of God but rather a shift in where spiritual instinct resides. They believe that everyone has the freedom to decide their own beliefs and practices with teachers or group practices as optional. It's up to each person's own inner voice to find spirituality and enlightenment.

It's hard to conjure up a better fit for an entrepreneur, especially those who left corporate life to hang their own shingle. Of course, you can do this while maintaining any religious affiliation, but if you're not part of an organized way of worshipping, take heart. You aren't alone, and here's a model for making the move to market yourself—shift your center of authority from corporate to personal.

Corporate forms of marketing rarely work for the solopreneur or tiny entrepreneur business. You must find the styles of marketing that work best for a micro business. Toss out the advice you see in *Forbes* or *Entrepreneur* magazine; they are meant for much larger companies. You now have the role of sorting through all the marketing options available to you, and determining what is best for your unique business. Yes, you can find teachers or experts to give you advice, but in the end, it's up to you to find the right mix for the person you are and the business you are trying to create, which is as unique as your fingerprints.

In general, most SBNRs find religions constricting, confining, and/or unethical. Since they don't believe religions are necessary for spiritual development, most wonder why they should deal with groups who don't meet their expectations, or behave in ways they don't always agree with. From their point of view, all religions are essentially the same, meaning they are different views of the one truth. If that's the case, why not choose what works for them from each and leave what doesn't?

I am reminded of many purpose-driven entrepreneurs, who feel such a distaste for what's happening in the business

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world today. Tired of unethical behavior and unsavory marketing tactics, they have a real longing for what is authentic and caring in our business lives. But take heed: Mercadante found that many SBNRs never found the place they were craving for within their spirituality. From my perspective, it's because they get stuck in the judging. In your own business, you cannot spend a lot of time in distaste for the business world and expect prosperity to descend. You can, however, use your unease for something to propel you toward a path that *does* work for you. By digesting what's not working and consciously working through it, you can create something new. Look at what you *don't* like in these business practices, and create a way you *do* like that feeds your soul. Prosperity and peace will follow.

SBNR's see God as a divine consciousness or energy that is all around us, and, in fact, in everything. This means there are no distinctions between our world and the spiritual. It's all one. We are God, too. But many take it even further. They see the divine as not independently conscious, but rather, that our experience gives experience to this consciousness. In other words, our growth helps the divine consciousness grow.

Good thing because overwhelmingly, the SBNR crowd's "primary spiritual commitment was to themselves and their own growth." They are mostly sure that well-being, comfort, and happiness are the standard measures for human achievement and assessing human action. If this, in turn, feeds the divine consciousness, it's a win-win. For many, this growth has helped them find the inner peace, happiness, self-knowledge, and stress reduction they were not able to find elsewhere. Living in a world that seems to border on chaos and be overwhelming, SBNRs look to their inner experience, rather than looking outward to society-based standards.

A parallel I see to marketing here is that this approach must begin with *you*. As much as you may want to serve others, you can best do so by being well-seated within

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yourself. This is the airplane adage to put on your own mask before assisting others. In my experience, the entrepreneurial journey pushes your buttons. This means that as you move your business along, personal issues will arise. This offers you the chance to clear out old limitations and beliefs making you feel less than who you really are. In this way, you are contributing not only to your own growth, but to the growth of divine consciousness. It doesn't have to stop here. As your own well-being grows, you are more and more in the position to give to others.

Finally, SBNRs tend to see human nature as inherently good. This may be a reaction against Western religious view of original sin and fallen man. Most were hard pressed to believe humans were evil or even bad, preferring to believe that people make choices that serve their evolution—or don't. They have a strong sentiment to live and let live, though they hope people will exercise their inherent nature oriented toward good for themselves and others. SBNRs often used psychological explanations such as poor parenting, deprivations, or the environment people finds themselves in for pushing them to do bad things, even while believing free choice could help them make better or worse choices.

I especially see this playing out with my clients who have experienced stress, trauma, or abuse. Too often, entrepreneurs are not seated in their own sense of goodness. In fact, they are pretty sure there is something wrong with or bad about them specifically. This perspective offers another viewpoint. What if you *are* inherently good? What if circumstances you found yourself in—stressful or dysfunctional environment, unskilled parents, abusive people—were responsible for shaping some of your reactions and actions in the world? It's possible that you can now choose differently. Healing and embracing your goodness and all that it entails, such as success and contribution, may be possible not only by grace, but by your own actions.

## Taoism

In stark contrast to the active-on-your-own-behalf approach of the Spiritual But Not Religious, the concept of non-action (wu wei) is foundational to Taoism. This may be a difficult concept for us to grasp here in the West. Wu wei tells us the correct way to act is precisely *not* to act. That doesn't mean not doing or acting only in moderation, but rather, not forcing the situation or finding effortless action. To practice wu-wei is to orient with the Tao, so much so, your actions are hardly noticeable.

Taoist philosophy suggests the universe works when left to its own ways. When people exert their will against the world in a manner out of rhythm with the cycles that exist, they may disrupt the harmony. As a result, unintended consequences may develop rather than the goal they were striving for. However, Taoism does not identify people's will as the root problem. Rather, it asserts they must place their will in harmony with the natural universe. Thus, a potentially harmful interference may be avoided, and on the wings of grace, goals can be achieved effortlessly.

This reminds me of some of my more spiritual colleagues. It's common in my circles to hear them say they've delayed this or that project because it didn't feel right or didn't seem to be the right timing. Often, this decision turns out to be correct, and the project comes about in a better way at another time, or is replaced by something else ultimately a better fit for the entrepreneur or the business. Or, they regret not listening to their inner knowing when the client they had a hunch not to work with turns out to be a bad fit. Tuning in and acting on what you sense between your business and the unseen world is a powerful way to make business decisions.

It needs to go both ways. To be successful, people also need to act when they get the green light (and not just listen to the don't or delay energies). The unsuccessful ones

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often start questioning whether the green-light guidance is accurate at that moment, and they let anxiety and worry overshadow their capacity to move forward. Although it can be unnerving in modern day society to follow this path, I believe this concept of wu-wei can serve you well if you allow it. When you link up with the universal cycles and harmony that exist, you are giving your business a powerful ally.

Taoism is a religious tradition of Chinese origin from the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Lao-tzu is purported as the author of the *Tao Te Ching*, which is considered the cornerstone text for Taoism. It's unclear whether he lived as a contemporary to Confucius in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE, or 200 years before that in the 4<sup>th</sup> century—or existed at all. Some scholars think the *Tao Te Ching* was compiled by a number of Taoist monks. Unlike Confucius, who sought harmony in the ordering of social life through rigidly defined ritual, Lao-tzu's philosophy looked to nature as life's ultimate guide and put the focus on the individual, rather than the societal.

Taoism holds that the goal of life is for each person to find their own harmonious alignment with the rhythm of the natural world, and to follow the Way, or the Tao, of the universe. It is based on the observation of the patterns of change in nature happening outside of us in the physical world, as well as inside of us. It emphasizes a theme of naturalness, which is considered primal to being human. If you can come into alignment with the elemental patterns of change, you will find spontaneous and creative ways to be with your actions that produce health and happiness. This demands freeing yourself from desire and selfish interest, and learning to appreciate simplicity.

We've all seen people who seem to get this natural way of living. They seem to spontaneously follow the correct path bringing them success and happiness. We all want that; so, isn't it nice to think there might be a way open to each of us to find it? And, that it's not just for a special few, but



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available to all who seek it? When we quiet our inner desires and observe the patterns of change in and around us, we find a guidance system for making our way. It's not complicated, but rather, comes through focusing on the simple. Though, I'm not saying it's always easy! Simple guidance sounds pretty good to me when it comes to marketing. By tuning both inward and out, and setting aside complicated, and often contradictory desires (I want to make tons of money AND only work when I feel like it) we are left with simple, where we might find our spontaneity and creativity to support us in our marketing path.

Taoism can be thought of as a path of spiritual cultivation. Besides following the Way, there are three treasures one should cultivate. The first is about having the capacity to empathize with others. It is compassion springing from the understanding that all things are interconnected. This can be described as compassion, tenderness, mercy, kindness, or benevolence. The second could be translated as frugality, moderation, restraint, or simplicity of desire. To be sparing and not excessively pursuing material wealth, stature or prestige will lead to a joyful life. The economy of nature does not waste anything.

The third, *Bugan wei tianxia xian*, translated as “not dare to be first/ahead in the world,” could be translated as humility or modesty. This can either be a way of loving life or avoiding early death. To be out in front, pushing beyond where others are is a vulnerable position that can expose you to destructive forces in the world, while remaining behind gives you time to fully ripen and bear fruit. This is the humility to help or set an example from behind the scenes. Lao-tzu says this quality is especially important in leadership. Good leaders are those that people barely know exist. When good leaders' work is done, their people will say that they did it themselves.

Good marketing feels similar. When done well, customers will feel they made their decision based on their own desire,

never experiencing buyers' remorse. It's easy to put yourself out there and market your services when you approach it with a simplicity and modesty. Wanting to serve with humility and to bear fruit for your clients, is attractive indeed.

### Zoroastrianism

Zoroastrianism may be the world's oldest monotheistic religion. This religion was one of the most powerful religions for 1,000 years when it was the state religion of the pre-Islamic Persian empires, from 600 BCE until 650 CE. After it was suppressed and reduced in size by a Muslim conquest, and because it does not take converts—rather, one must be born into the religion—it is now one of the smallest religions with fewer than 200,000 adherents.

It was founded from the visions of the Persian prophet, Zarathustra, who was later called Zoroaster by the Greeks. It is thought that Ahura Mazda (Wise God) appeared to the prophet, Zoroaster, in the form of a vision that revealed to him secrets about creation, and gave him instructions for humanity. It is believed the teachings given to Zoroaster are in the *Avesta*, the sacred book of Zoroastrianism.

The beliefs in Zoroastrianism may sound familiar. It's possible this religion influenced the later-founded religions of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. Concepts that originated in Zoroastrianism include: monotheism, prayer, the cosmic struggle between good and evil, heaven/ hell, celestial angels and archangels mediating between God and humanity, free will, judgment after death, the coming of a Messiah at the end of creation, and an apocalypse ending in the final triumph of good.

The Zoroastrian believes the world has two forces: good and evil. Arrogance, injustice, and fear represent evil while truth, honesty, justice, and purity represent good. All humans are asked to choose between these forces, either following the

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laws and teachings of God, or following the evil ways of the world. At the end of life, they will be judged by their choices. Ahura Mazda provided people with the knowledge of how to live a good life, and how to cleanse sin. But, in the end, those who have sinned will face the consequences of their actions.

Marketing is similar— choices we must make, over and over. It's a rare business owner who doesn't need to keep making marketing decisions. What to do, how to get started, how to do it again, or whether it needs to be adjusted. On and on, the process goes, and in the end, our results are an outcome of those choices.

The basic principle of Zoroastrianism is expressed in the phrase “good thoughts, good words, good deeds” which are humata, hukhta and huveshta, respectively. In this way, a person with their actions, rather than their fate, can bring the divine to the physical plane. This phrase serves as a practical guide for day-to-day living. Whatever the task—from drinking wine and eating food to working and spending time with the family, the guiding principle is always whether such acts are impairing someone's ability to think good thoughts, speak good words, and do good actions.

So, too, in marketing, this focus can serve you. The next time you are writing copy, or planning a campaign, consider whether you are doing it from a place of good thoughts, good words and good actions. Don't let doubt or dread guide your activities. Likewise, don't exaggerate or act arrogantly. Come from goodness, and you will create the same.

Fire plays a big role in the rituals of Zoroastrianism. Fire is a source of light, and light represents wisdom, while darkness represents ignorance. The temporal fire is the fire of creation. Not only is it considered one of the sacred elements making life possible through creation and the home hearth flame, it is also the spiritual fire within us that illuminates the path of asha, or righteous living. The spiritual fire will be diminished with bad or negative thoughts; so, it's important

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that the spiritual fire is kept free from anything that will dampen the flame.

Of course, I believe you are more effective in your marketing when you keep your spiritual fires burning. You may not share the same beliefs that fuel the Zoroastrian, but this concept will support you if you tend to your spirit and nurture it. When you allow order and honesty to dominate your thoughts, your marketing efforts will reflect that with authenticity and effectiveness.

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# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Meet Linda—a transformational leadership coach with a marketing background—that supports entrepreneurs in growing their businesses, their impact and their revenue. Bringing together business and spirituality, Linda inspires clients to change expectations and perceptions, and step into profound personal power and excel in business. Her warm and engaging approach show just how powerful connection and simply being human in our marketing can be.

For 23 years Linda was in the visual design and marketing industry, where she created brands and campaigns for companies like Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants, Domaine Chandon, Jamba Juice, Disney, Coldwell Banker, Xerox, and many small businesses. She's received a Silver ADDY award for her brand work and has helped her clients win many awards and placements in publications such as The Wall Street Journal, TIME Magazine, and the front cover of WIRED magazine.

Linda holds degrees in graphic arts and leadership. She happily resides in Sonoma County with her husband and children.





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Now that you've read the book, take it a step further. Join Linda Basso and her community in exploring the topics within *The Reluctant Marketer* in private coaching, online classes and online support groups. It's so much easier to overcome our reluctance when we are in community, rather than going it alone. Hope to see you there!

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# ENDNOTES

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