

# BOOK MARKETING MENTORS

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## BOOK MARKETING: How to Use the Best of Michelangelo's Top Entrepreneurial Skills Interview with Jeff Goins

**Susan Friedmann:** Welcome to Book Marketing Mentors, the weekly podcast where you learn proven strategies, tools, ideas and tips from the masters. Every week I introduce you to a marketing master, who will share their expertise to help you market and sell more books.

Today, my special guest is a thriving artist, expert, and coach. Jeff Goins is a writer, keynote speaker and award-winning blogger with a reputation for challenging the status quo. He's the bestselling author of five books, including the Art of Work, which landed on the bestseller list of USA Today, Publisher's Weekly, and the Washington Post. His latest book, Real Artists Don't Starve, shares the powerful message that we all have a creative gift worth sharing with the world, and that's our art. He's dedicated to helping his clients get their work out and into the world while convincing them they don't need to starve to do it. On average, he publishes one new article and one new podcast every week. All the way from Nashville, Tennessee, Jeff, welcome to the show, and thank you for being this week's guest expert and mentor.

**Jeff Goins:** Oh, thanks for having me, Susan. I'm glad to be here.

**Susan Friedmann:** So Jeff, as you know, many writer write a great book, but then are scared of actually marketing or selling their work. Talk to us about this whole concept that you have of the thriving artist mindset.

**Jeff Goins:** I know so many creative people living in Nashville and being a writer myself. I know so many creatives, whether they're musicians, graphic artists, visual artists, writers, creative entrepreneurs, people who are making things and wanting to share them with the world. And I consistently hear this thing that creatives say, which is, "I love doing blank, but I'll never make any money doing that." And it's almost as if we assume that because we love it so much, because it brings us so much life and joy and happiness, that we shouldn't make money doing that. Because work and fun shouldn't go too closely together.

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And so, I wrote this book just because I wanted to debunk that for a few reasons: One, I think it's possible. I've done it for years now as a writer and creative entrepreneur. I've made a living doing mostly things that I really enjoy. I mean, obviously any job has ups and downs, but for the most part for the past six, seven years, I've been doing what I love and getting paid really well to do it. So, I'm tired of hearing talented, skilled people saying, "I love blank, but I'll never make any money doing that," especially when it comes to the creative arts. Because I just think it's not true.

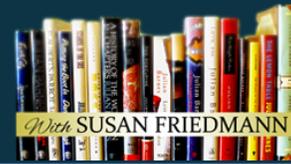
And in the book I try to disprove this by telling classic, timeless stories of creatives, artists, and [inaudible 00:03:04] people who have made things for centuries and thrived as a result of it, and then also telling more contemporary stories of a growing group, sort of an underground secret class of people that I call the new renaissance of thriving artists, people who are making things, doing what makes them come alive and using their creative gift and sharing it with the world, and thriving from it. Making a good living, having profitable businesses, and thriving in every other sense of the word as well. It is possible, and I actually think now is the best time to share your creative work with the world.

Susan Friedmann: I love this whole idea of the new renaissance. Tell us more about that, because that sounds fascinating to me.

Jeff Goins: We live in this age of unprecedented opportunity and connection. So, what, back in say, the first Renaissance, what did you need as an artist to help your art succeed? You needed a few things. And I spell this out in the book, and I used Michelangelo as an archetype. He was one of the most successful artists of all time, and he was in his lifetime the richest artist that had ever lived. So, when he came on the scene, he did things that no artist had ever done before, and he died a very successful, very wealthy artist. He had something like 50 million dollars in today's, US dollars, to his name when he died. So, very successful, very wealthy. And what he needed to achieve that success, first of all he needed the appropriate mindset. He had to think not as a working-class artist, because most artists at the time were blue collar workers. They were craftsmen. They were artisans that had shops and were selling their wares at the local market. And he changed that. He began to act like an aristocrat, because he thought like an aristocrat, because he grew up with this narrative as a child that he had come from a noble family. Which ended up not being true, but it just goes to show you that if you believe something about yourself, it can come true.

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Anyway, so he had the appropriate mindset. In addition to that, he had the right connections. He went and apprenticed under [inaudible 00:05:22] who was a very connected artist in the Renaissance. And this relationship connected him to the Medici family, which was his first patron. And when he lived in the Medici household, he created a network of people that allowed him to sell his work to popes and princes for ten times what other artists were making at the time, and really set him on a path where nobody could quite compete with him.

And so, we look at these things, you go, okay, he's got the mindset. He's got the right social connections. And now he's got really good marketing channels where he can go to the richest, most elite members of society and sell his art directly to those buyers without having to really go through any middle men. And became the most successful artist of his time, and actually changed what was possible for artists after him.

And so, the new renaissance is this idea that at some point between when Michelangelo died and today, we lost that, because after Michelangelo, there were many, many successful wealthy artists in the Renaissance. He changed what was possible for artists to achieve at that time. And before, and nobody had really done that after, but many people had done it. And then we come to today where for the past 50 to 100 years we've had this different narrative about the starving artist, about it being okay even, not only acceptable, but expected that if you're a creative person, you probably aren't going to make a living writing books or selling your music, unless you get really, really lucky. And that's just not true.

And so, the idea that a renaissance is all the things that made Michelangelo and those who followed after him so successful, we have more access to those opportunities than they did. We have more access to opportunities to change our mindset, change our situation than these men did. We have more access to the tools that allow us to connect with influential people than they did. It's not just luck, you don't have to be born into it. You can make these connections happen. And I talk about specifically how to do that in the book.

And then finally, we don't have to fall into the right channels that allow us to market our work. We can create those channels. The Internet makes it very easy to do this if you understand how this sort of thing works. And so, we're seeing that. This isn't just an idea. We're seeing this. Creative people are finding ways to change their destiny, to go from starving artist to thriving artist. And authors, writers especially,

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have more opportunities than they've ever had before with self-publishing and hybrid publishing opportunities where they can spread their ideas without somebody coming and picking them and saying, "Okay, now it's your turn."

Susan Friedmann: Breaking out of that whole starving artist paradigm, and then how do we actually physically go about mastering the marketplace so that we can explore those incredible opportunities, as you say exist out there?

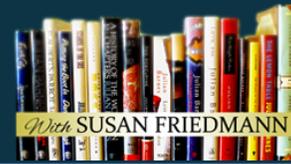
Jeff Goins: The process that I talk about in the book, it's sort of a sequence. So, the first step, and this is what Michelangelo did, this is what I do, it's what a lot of people trying to break into a market have to do, is to earn the attention of a patron. So, a big tipping point for Michelangelo is when he is able to connect with Lorenzo de Medici, and when he connects with Medici, that changes everything. He brings him into his household, he becomes one of two household artists. He is brought up by another master artist as a teenager. And he connects with some of the Medici children who go on to become princes and popes and people of position and power. And it's all because of a connection with a patron. Right?

So, we read this story and go, well, it must have been nice to be Michelangelo. In the book I argue that patrons are no longer the highest standing members of society. They're no longer the most elite, wealthiest one percent of the one percent. Patrons, in the day that we live, are the people around us. Patron is the teenager with a YouTube channel that has two million subscribers, right? And she's just getting on there, talking about her day. Patrons are the self-published authors who are making \$100,000 a month on Amazon because they have this tribe of readers who just will read anything that this author writes. The patrons around us are our neighbors and friends and people who are not princes and popes, but they have their own particular spheres of influence.

And so, if you want to break into a market, the first thing you need to do is earn the attention of a patron. And I call this the case study strategy. And the worst way to go get a mentor or a patron, and a patron by the way, these days, they don't necessarily give money, they give influence, right? They vouch for you. And when somebody who is a leader of an industry vouches for somebody new, that changes things pretty quickly, pretty drastically. And this is what Lorenzo de Medici did for Michelangelo. He introduced him to all his friends, and his children and his family, and it was the difference maker for his career. We have unlimited options to do that. And instead of there being one patron,

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there's a multitude of them. And so the best way that we can begin to cultivate this habit of earning the attention of patrons is simply to reach out to the people who have already influenced us.

And the case study strategy, if you don't get anything else from this conversation, I think a very helpful tool would be to memorize this little exercise that I'll walk you through, which is, I call it the cast study strategy, and what it is, is when you want to earn the attention of somebody influential, you want them to vouch for you, the worst way to get their attention is to say, "Hey, look at me," or "Hey, will you do this for me?" Or manipulate them into doing something. It's so common, and the worst way to do it. And you want to stand out, do something different, and I call this the cast study strategy.

And so, it's very simple. Send them an email or write them a letter or whatever, but in the letter, say this: Dear so-and-so, whatever the person's name is, thank you for X, something that you've traded, something specific. It helped me do Y, again, something very, very specific. Now what about Z? Thank you for X, it helped me do Y, now what about Z? The X is, dear Susan, thank you for this podcast episode 123. I learned how to self-publish my book without needing a publisher, and so as a result my book will come out next month. Thank you so much for that. It was huge. I was wondering if you had any other resources or things that I could find about how to market a self-published book?

What you're trying to do here, dear so-and-so, thank you for X, it helped me do Y, now what about Z? Z is the piece of advice that you're asking for. And it needs to be something small. And if you get in the habit of reaching out to influential people, letting them know how they helped you. Letting them know what you've done. Not just how they've helped you, but what you've done as a result of them helping you. And then you say, is there anything else I could be doing? What you are doing is you are showing up and saying, "I'm already doing the work. What else do you have for me?"

And if you do this over and over and over again, it becomes a form of digital apprenticeship. And not everyone will take notice of you, but if you do this with ten different people, someone will. Several someones will. And I know this from experience and seeing how this fleshes out, and they'll go, "Hey, look at her. Look at him. They're doing it. They're actually doing it because the greatest fear of anybody who has any influence or gives any advice or shares anything about what works in

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their own world, is, "Is anybody listening? I mean, really listening? Is anybody going to do this?"

And so, when somebody writes to me and says, "Hey, I loved your book. It changed my life." First few times I got that, I was like, "Oh, this is cool." After a while, I thought, "These are just words." And now what I love to hear is, "Dear Jeff, thank you for the book *Real Artists Don't Starve*. It changed the way I thought about my creative work, and now I've started selling my prints online and I'm making \$25.00 a print. I just sold my hundredth print. Thank you." I go, "Wow, I want to hear more about that. I want to talk to this person. I want to give more to them, because they're actually doing it."

And so I think, I mean we can talk a lot about marketing and how to break into different channels, that in my mind, is the first step, the first way to go from zero to one. Go from nobody knows me to how do I get in front of a large group of people in a short amount of time? Become someone's case study and cultivate the habit of reaching out to influencers and mentors from afar and saying, "Hey, you have helped me with this, here's how. Is there anything else that you have for me?"

Susan Friedmann: That's brilliant. I love that. And so, would you say that this is sort of like the beginning of building your tribe, or would you put that in a different bucket?

Jeff Goins: A tribe is an audience, and the way you build an audience is off of other people's audiences. I don't build an audience by going door to door knocking on other people's doors. I mean, I could do that, but that's not really how it happens. Typically, people become a part of your audience because they heard about you somewhere else, right? So right now, I'm talking to your audience, Susan. And some of those people may go, "Oh, I like this guy and I'm going to go check him out." And now they become part of my audience. Now they're part of both of our audiences, right? So like, it's not like the pie shrinks when you take one person from somebody's audience and you add it to your audience.

So, a tribe is just a collection of people from other audiences. And you could go door to door and find those people. The faster way to go about it is to go to existing influencers, plug into their circle of influence, have them vouch for you, and then try to attract some of that attention that they already have back to your platform, back to your books, back to where you do your thing, so that they can become a part of your tribe. So yeah, this is how a tribe begins to be built.

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- Susan Friedmann: So, one of the things that I find and talking to many of my authors is they get gripped with different fears: Fear of rejection. Fear of failure. Fear of embarrassment. How do you counsel, coach people around getting to grip with their fears?
- Jeff Goins: I don't. I think we spend a lot of energy going how do I stop feeling afraid so that I can do my work? And I just don't think it works that way. I wrote a book called *The Art of Work* which was about finding your calling, figuring out your purpose, becoming the person that you were meant to be, and connecting that with your work in a meaningful way. One of the fun things about that project was I interviewed hundreds of people who had found their calling. I think I interviewed something like 700 people who said, "I have found the work that I was meant to do."
- I asked them all this question basically, which was, "When did you just know? When did it all fall into place for you and you said, eureka, this is what I'm supposed to do?" And almost every single one of them said, "I didn't. I never just knew. All I had was some inkling of an idea, of an inclination. Some sense that there might be something more. And I continued to chase that until I got to a point where I realized, of this is happening. But every step of the way was marked with confusion and fear."
- I learned a couple of things from talking to these people writing this book. One was that we all are waiting for clarity before willing to take action. And the truth is, clarity comes with action. You have to act your way into clarity, into understanding, into knowing what the next step is. You take a step to know what the next step is, instead of going, "If it could just be spelled out for me, the heavens could open, and a voice can shine on and tell me what to do or be that I would do or be that." And it doesn't quite work that way.
- The second thing that I learned is there are different types of fear. Not all fear is bad. Bad fear is the kind of fear that prevents you from doing what you're supposed to do. Unless that thing is going to kill you. Right? At a biological level, this is what fear is for. Fear is meant to keep you from danger. I want my children afraid of running into the street because that is a dangerous place for them to be. But I don't want them afraid of getting a B on their report card or losing the soccer game, because those things aren't going to kill them. They're going to learn from those things. And it's been widely proven, it's fascinating that when your brain feels fear, the chemicals that it releases, what it tells your body to do, if you're afraid that your Mom or Dad is going to yell at

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you or that Amazon reviewer isn't going to like you, is exactly the same, biologically, as a lion is chasing and I'm going to die.

And so, bad fear, is that first kind of fear where you're like, "I'm going to die." Your body's saying, "I'm going to die," and you're not going to die. You're not going to die by trying to write this book or doing this brave thing or quitting your job. It's going to be okay. You're going to learn from it. So, there's just the realization that this won't kill me, so it's maybe worth trying.

But there's also, so that's bad for you, good fear is what somebody told me, a woman named Jody Noland, who reached about 58, 59 years old and decided to reinvent herself after her husband had died, after she'd experienced a bunch of tragedy. And she tried to launch a business. She wrote a book and started an organization called Leave Nothing Unsaid where she worked with people to write letters to their loved ones before they died, so that they would know how they felt about them. And it initially started with people who were terminally ill and just kind of trickled down to companies, organizations, individuals who wanted to tell their loved ones in written form how they felt about them. Leave Nothing Unsaid. Really beautiful, amazing cause and organization.

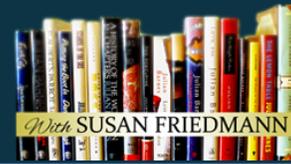
And when she started it, it failed, because she started it with her husband who was dying of cancer. And he refused to write a letter. And so she goaded him and coaxed him and nagged him into writing a letter to their children, and he would not do it. He never did it. He was in denial of his imminent death. And he died. And she thought, "If I cannot convince my own husband to do this, what business, what right do I have to try to convince somebody else to do it?"

Long story short, she sold all her books, got rid of everything, started grieving the death of her husband, and a year later some friends reached out to her and said, "We need help. Do you have any of these workbooks left?" And she had saved one. And she sent it to them. The mother who was dying wrote some letters to their daughters, died a few weeks later, and they called Jody and said, "Our mother just passed. We got the letters. Thank you so much. They mean so much to us."

She started to weep, and she realized that she had to do this not because she could guarantee her success, but because she knew she had to try. And when I asked her, I said, "When did you just know?" She said, "I didn't just know. But I knew that I had to do this because I became more afraid of not trying than I did of failure."

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And so, when you're feeling fear, the question is what is the greater fear that pushed out the lesser fear? What is the thing that I'm more afraid of in this? Because we're all afraid of rejection or people not liking us or failure or whatever. But what is the things you're more afraid of? For me, when I was starting out as a writer, I didn't know that I was going to succeed. So, I was afraid of embarrassment, failure, rejection, whatever. I was also afraid of responsibility, what if this works? I was afraid of a lot of things. But I was more afraid of not trying. I was more afraid of coasting into middle of my life and realizing I had wasted 20 years chasing something that I wasn't excited about.

Susan Friedmann: What a beautiful story. Oh my goodness. It gave me goosebumps just listening to that. I love talking about mistakes. My listeners always know that I ask my guests about mistakes. So, what are some of the top mistakes that you see artists make? And I know that you sort of implied quite a few as we've gone through this interview. But maybe there are a few more that you could share with us.

Jeff Goins: The biggest mistake that I made and that I see other people make is not feeding your art. So, the books that you write, the speeches that you give, the ideas that you share, not treating it like a business. Pretending that it's not a business. And I get that. You didn't get into this to look at profit and loss statements, probably. And I didn't either. But if you don't at least pay attention to the business side of your art, then you'll have no art. You'll have a hobby, and that's fine, but at a very early stage in this journey of becoming an author, creative entrepreneur, speaker, coach et cetera, I knew that I wanted to be a professional. I didn't want to be an amateur part-time hobbyist. There's nothing wrong with that. There are lots of famous artists and authors where this is their part-time gig.

However, I think one of the beauties of the age in which we live, this whole new renaissance thing, is it has never been easier, there has never been a better time for you to make a go at being a full-time artist, author, and so on. But, you have to understand that this is a business. You have to be willing to accept the business side of things. Well, what does that mean? I've got to market the work. I've got to sell the work. I've got to run a business. I've got to worry about income. I've got to charge for what I'm doing. I've got to pay attention to expenses. This is something more than just a frivolous, fun thing. Some people don't like that, they don't want that. That is fine. Then you accept that this is a hobby and do not be bitter or frustrated or angry about not having more attention, getting paid more, and getting all the things that your

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friends are getting who are treating this like a business. Understand that it's a hobby and you need to have the appropriate expectations with it.

The mistake that I see, Susan, is people sort of straddling that. Business and hobby. Right? Like full-time and part-time. I was talking to an entrepreneur who's a blogger, a person who is a writer. She's creating a lot of content online, and she's sort of straddling this line saying, "I want to make more money. I see all these people who are not as good at writing, who have smaller audiences and are making more money than me. What are they doing that I'm not doing?" And she went on to say, "By the way, I don't like [inaudible 00:24:18], so when I sell something that I've written or created, I sort of bury it in the email because I don't want to push people too hard." She's like, "But those people over there, they're making more money and they don't deserve it. What am I doing wrong?"

And I said, "Well, they're trying. They're trying to make money. And you're not. And you're making money too, but you're not making as much as they are." Either be okay with that, like it's not a competition. You can decide whatever the scoreboard is. You decide who's in first, second or third place. So, pick a game that you can win, that that's your deal. There's that, like learn to be okay with it. Or do the work. Try. If you want to sell something, try to sell something. Be okay with some people not liking you or thinking you're being sales-y because book sales matter more to you than everybody liking you.

It's just a decision, Susan. People can decide whatever they want. And they go, "No, I just want people to get my work for free, and I want them to like me." And that's fine, I don't disparage that at all. But what I cannot stand is when somebody wants to have their cake and eat it too. Or they go, "Well, I want everybody to like me, and I don't really want to have to worry about business or marketing or income or any of that stuff. I just want to do this for fun. But now I'm mad that my book didn't sell 20,000 copies." Or, "I'm mad that I can't pay my rent." It doesn't work that way. You've got to pick one.

Susan Friedmann:

You're painting that picture so vividly of so many of the authors who I speak to that, exactly that. They're fearful of being sales-y, but yet they want to be discovered as this brilliant artist and they have a message for everyone. And it's really tough, because they're not treating it like a business, as you rightly say. So yes, thank you for pointing that out.

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If our listeners want to get in touch with you and find out more about your services, how can they do that, Jeff?

Jeff Goins: Thank you for having me, Susan. I am honored to be a part of this, and love the work that you're doing. And it's appreciated, it's much needed. If you want to learn more about me, go to my website. I think all of this stuff hinges on audience. That's what I teach is that you need to build an audience if you want to sell more books, if you want to reach more people, if you want to know that your message is resonating with other people. Whether you're an artist, a blogger, a writer, creative entrepreneur, whatever your thing is. I write for a lot of writers on my website. Having an audience is essential.

I've got a free guide that you can download. It's called The Beginner's Guide to Building an Audience, and it's my story and the lessons that I learned from working with now tens of thousands of writers and bloggers over the past several years, of what it takes to build an audience quickly and effectively. And you can get that on my website at [goineswriter.com/audience](http://goineswriter.com/audience).

Susan Friedmann: And I encourage all listeners to get a copy of that. It's a wonderful piece. It's a lovely free piece. And people are always looking for free. So, thank you for that. Thank you for that generosity.

Jeff Goins: Yeah.

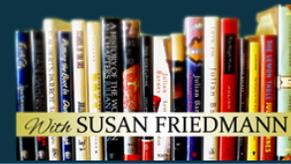
Susan Friedmann: And Jeff, if you were to leave our listeners with a golden nugget, what would that be?

Jeff Goins: Going back to this jealousy thing, I talk about this a lot because I am the worst at this. I am the worst at comparing myself to other people and envying other people without actually wanting to do the work to get there. And at the same time, I've noticed that some people just get lucky, or they seem especially talented. It just seems unfair, right? Like you look at what people are doing and you go, "That's not fair." And so, I had to sort of develop a mantra for myself to help me figure out, well, I can compare myself to other people all day long. Like I didn't get those breaks, I didn't get that luck, I didn't get those genes, and I wasn't born with that talent. What can I do?

And so, I gave myself this little mantra. Just, I grew up lower middle class. My Dad worked blue collar jobs most of his life. And so, I have this sort of "put your head down, do the work" philosophy. And so, I began

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to tell myself this little phrase, which I think is a little helpful thing for people: You can outlast those who are lucky, and you can outwork those who are lazy. So, some people may get lucky. What is that to you? Some people may be especially talented, but they tend to be lazy. Laziness follows talent a lot of the time, because it's just easier for them. And so, I can't get more luck, I can't get more talent. What I can do is I can always outlast those who are lucky, because luck eventually runs out. And I can outwork those who are lazy. I'll just keep going.

Susan Friedmann:

What sage words, what incredible wisdom, because that sounds just like me. So, thank you Jeff, for sharing your wisdom with us. And thank you all for taking time out of your precious day to listen to this interview. And I sincerely hope that it sparks some ideas you can use to sell more books. Here's wishing you much book marketing success.