



## How Knowing your Buyer can Transform your Business with Steve Dotto

Episode #5

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### Lisa Larter (00:01):

Welcome to, She Talks Business. If you're an entrepreneur, business owner or aspiring mogul, chances are you want to learn more about marketing and mastering and monetizing your business. She Talks Business is where you'll learn all of that and more. My name is Lisa Larter and I'm an entrepreneur, high school dropout, wiener dog enthusiast and your host. Let's get started.

### Lisa Larter (00:25)

Hello, hello, hello. Steve Dotto is the guest on our show today. Steve Dotto is Canada's most respected geek and leader of the Gray Wave and a very dear friend and colleague of mine. I invited Steve to come to the show for a bunch of reasons. Some of the things that we talk about today, I think you're going to find really, really interesting.

### Lisa Larter (00:51):

One of the first things we talk about is, what do you do when you start a business and you feel like you don't really have a strategy? You're looking around and everybody else seems to have it together, and you feel you're just floating rudderless out there. We're going to talk about why that's okay when you're starting out and what you can learn from that. We're also going to talk about the importance of connecting to the audience that you start to build when you actually start creating content and why it is so valuable and important to interact with that audience, because that audience is going to lead you to where you can go next and it will teach you how to serve at a better level.



### **Lisa Larter (01:39):**

We're going to talk about boomers and gen X, a little bit about ageism and some of the challenges that that demographic is facing right now, and the huge opportunity that also exists for them. We're going to talk about purpose and identity and why the purpose and identity that you hold on to matters so much. And in the age of early retirement and layoffs, why you cannot sit on your laurels. You have to find something that is meaningful in your life. You cannot give up the identity. You are far too valuable. You have way too many gifts and talents to bring to the table. Last, but not least, we're going to talk about why the gig economy is both a blessing and a curse. On a side note, we talk a lot in this episode about boomers and gen X. And if you're listening to this introduction, you're thinking, well, maybe this show's not really for me.

### **Lisa Larter (02:34):**

I'm not a boomer. I'm not gen X. Here's the question I have for you, are your parents? If your parents are a boomer or part of the gen X generation, you should listen to this. And the reason you should listen to this, is Steve and I have a really great discussion about what you should say to your parents if they are struggling right now, if they think they're too old to learn this stuff, if they've lost their sense of purpose and need something to bring the meaning back into their life. People who are baby boomers have so much value, experience and expertise to contribute to the world right now, the problem is they don't always know how to make that contribution. You're going to learn how to help those people you care about do that on today's show.

### **Lisa Larter (03:24):**

All right, let's get started. All right. I've just received my first podcast lesson from Steve Dotto, which means that this episode probably sounds a little bit different to all of you. Steve, it is so good to have you here. Thank you for teaching me.

### **Steve Dotto (03:46):**

Lisa, if I can ever give back to you as much as you've given to me, you'd be amazed. You helped me out so much when I started out my career, I think you have no idea.

**Lisa Larter (03:55):**

You're too kind. I remember that Social Media Camp, meeting you in Victoria, you and Sue and us having breakfast together. It's a very fond memory of mine, and I love that.

**Steve Dotto (04:10):**

It was a watershed moment for me. I wasn't doing anything on social really at the time, I was dabbling around on YouTube, but I had no direction and no idea how to make money. Your instruction, you weren't actually trying to teach me anything. You were just telling me how you did things. But the example that you shared with me was the moment that I turned from just being a creator, to having a YouTube channel, to a businessman making some money from the content I was creating.

**Lisa Larter (04:37):**

Well, I love that. I remember the one thing that you and I both had a really strong disdain for. We did not like hardcore cheesy internet marketing, neither one of us.

**Steve Dotto (04:48):**

Still do.

**Lisa Larter (04:49):**

Yeah. I don't know if it's because we're Canadians, but neither one of us really wanted to go down that path of funnels and tricks and clicks and upsells and down sells and trip wires, and all of those things. We both shook our head and said, that's not our values. That is why I actually wanted to have you on the show, because I love that you have followed your own path, followed your own heart, in terms of building your platform and building your business. I know from previous conversations that you and I have had, you didn't really feel like you had a master plan or strategy. Can you talk to us a little bit about how you got started without having a strategy and how long it took you to get to where you are now, where you really are more strategic, more clear on your audience?

### **Lisa Larter (05:50):**

Just share that journey, because you are not the only person that doesn't have a clearly defined plan, and I want people to know they're normal. This happens.

### **Steve Dotto (05:59):**

If the truth be told, I have only got clarity on who I wanted to serve about two years ago, even though I started. In 2010, I was still doing a television show in Canada, and I was just wrapping up. I'd done nearly 15 years on the air with my own television show, teaching Canadians how to use technology. When I transitioned and I stopped doing that, I didn't really have a plan, my ego said, you'll be fine, Steve, you've been competitive. You've been successful in a really competitive industry for a very long time. So you're just going to figure it out. And that's shortly about two years later was when we met her, maybe it was three years later is when we met. But life had said, hold my beer, and I'd been taught a lesson in humility by that point, because I wasn't figuring out how to make money.

### **Steve Dotto (06:48):**

What I did was I started to just publish YouTube videos, doing what I knew, which was teaching people about productivity primarily. I was gaining a following because I was good at it. And I knew that there had to be some way to leverage that into business, but I didn't know how. And so for the longest time I drifted in that space. What you taught me, which gave me, actually, if you look at the stages of an entrepreneur, kind of, having success and often those early success that we have that keeps us going and keeps our mortgage payment, is it will evolve over time, so that that is a distant memory. It's like that with me. You were talking about, you were doing a mail list at the time, you were sending out courses by email and you were just writing an email with your lesson in it, because you're a good writer.

### **Steve Dotto (07:38):**

You're great at that. You're comfortable with that. And you said you don't need all of these fancy learning tools and membership sites. All you need to do is send people an email. Well, you didn't say that to me, but it was obvious that that's what you were doing. I had, by that point, established a fairly good YouTube following, and people were really interested in what I

said about Evernote. Anytime I published a video on Evernote, it got lots of views. I thought, maybe they want a course on Evernote. I asked them, because the beauty of YouTube is, you've got this wonderful community forum, this discussion forum, where you can talk to the people who watch your videos.

**Steve Dotto (08:13):**

And as a TV creator, as a person who had done television for the past 20 years, being able to actually talk to the people who watched your show was just amazing. I didn't have to talk to advertising executives and network hacks. I was able to actually talk to the people who I was creating the content for. And it was an epiphany for me to be able to do that. But they said, yeah, we'd love to see a course on Evernote. I thought, how am I going to deliver this? I don't want to put all this technology in place. Then I let Lisa. I created the course as 10 part series that I emailed each lesson. Now I added a little magic spice. I emailed each lesson as a shared Evernote note. So they were using the tool to learn the tool. But regardless, that actually saw me through the first couple of years of my business, that one course was so successful that it saved my bacon, and it comes back to the lessons that you taught.

**Steve Dotto (09:04):**

But, before I fast track to where we are now, I just want to say to whoever's listening, because I know that I was finding some success, but I still didn't really know what I was doing. I don't think it's unusual for us not to have total clarity at that point there. Because while I was interested and I liked what I did, and I had a certain passion for the process, I didn't have a passion for the market. I didn't have a certain person, a certain, call them an avatar. I didn't have a person who I knew I was speaking to. I was just shouting out to everybody. I was showing off on YouTube, look at me, I'm great, here I'm going to show you all this stuff. And I was getting lots of affirmation back, so I felt good, but I didn't have real purpose.

**Lisa Larter (09:51):**

No, but you were delivering real value. And although you didn't have real purpose, I think that sometimes the biggest mistake people make starting out is, they're not clear on who the audience is. They're not clear in the business that they want to create. And so when they create content, they

create crap, they don't actually create anything of value. And you created high quality, high value video content that was useful for people. And that's how you built your platform. You built it by being generous in terms of teaching what you knew.

**Steve Dotto (10:31):**

I did something which might be a generational value that we share, that might not be there for the youngest generations, is I paid my dues. I learned about the space. I learned how social networking works. I learned how online and content marketing works. I learned what I would, could and should do in that space. I gathered this arsenal of knowledge basically just by performing in the space. After a few years of doing that, conversations with friends and other things give me an epiphany. This was, if we go fast forward, maybe six years now to 2018 or so, I started to recognize that I was a bit of an unusual person on YouTube. You'll probably post a picture of me. I'm very gray.

**Steve Dotto (11:18):**

I'm in my 60s now. Finding people that are gray haired on YouTube that are successful content creators is a little bit of a unicorn. You hear about them, but you never actually see them. And as I was having conversations with all of my friends, with my peers, I was starting to see the spectrum of ageism creeping in, in people who I had tremendous respect for, were suddenly having trouble finding a job, or they were being marginalized and they were being pushed out and they still had plenty of miles to go. They were me. They were you. It was just, how could you turn these people down? I realized that ageism was becoming a real factor. That knowledge along with the fact that I recognized that I was doing well on YouTube, despite my age, and that I knew something that the rest of my peers didn't know, was the penny dropping. For the first time in my online career, I had clarity and it wasn't even like I wanted to do this.

**Steve Dotto (12:14):**

It was like, I had to do this. Because I recognize that I know how to build an online business, a platform as a baby boomer and so many baby boomers in here, our experience is our greatest asset, but it works against us. When you started your stores in Ottawa, think about the business plan that you had to put in place.

**Lisa Larter (12:36):**

Oh my God.

**Steve Dotto (12:37):**

Think about the investment that you had to put into place. Think about just how hard it was to start a business, printing business cards, printing invoices, getting signage done, getting the licensing, getting the merchant accounts set up. What a night, how did you ever do it?

**Lisa Larter (12:53):**

I know, hundreds of thousands of dollars, many sleepless nights.

**Steve Dotto (12:56):**

And hours and skills and worry. Today if you start an online business, you basically, if you do a post, that can be the start of your online business and it can grow. Our businesses back in the day were plan and deploy, and you had to plan so aggressively and so intensely before you could deploy. That's the training that you and I had in business. A baby boomer or a gen X-er being marginalized, being pushed out now, who says, I might like to start a side hustle. I might like to start my own business, that's the experience they fall back on, they go, it's so hard. I don't have the energy to do that anymore. I don't know you and I don't even know what the rules are. They don't realize that business today, online business is seed and grow.

**Steve Dotto (13:42):**

You plant a little seed, you water it, you nurture it, it grows, you look at it, you trim it. It might not grow into what you thought it was going to look like, but that's how we build a business. The amount of capital required upfront is minimal. The investment is the energy that you put into it. Baby boomers and gen X, we don't understand that. Once I had that epiphany, as I say, I said, I got to teach this, because it's not just that I want to make money for my own self and build my own community, but the social cost of marginalizing our generation is profound. First of all, we are still the wealthiest generation on the planet, but we also invest so much of our self worth in what we do. And when we're told that we're not valuable anymore in that space, it affects all areas of our life.

### **Steve Dotto (14:34):**

So depression, alcoholism, suicide, spousal abuse, they all cascade out of a loss of purpose, a lack of purpose. They think that to develop purpose again, after they've been let go by the interstate, it's such an ego blow, and it's so hard. They think that they can't do it again. They don't realize that if they just plant that seed, they'll get the passion. It might or might not be successful, we're still going to have a failure rate. It's not a panacea, Steve's plan doesn't guarantee success, but darn it, it does guarantee engagement. It does guarantee passion. It does guarantee purpose of life again, and those are important as well.

### **Lisa Larter (15:09):**

Community, connection, contribution, all of those things. I think that you are a model of what is possible for others. When I spoke at Social Media Camp, the second time I spoke. I remember sharing on the stage, my journey and talking about the fact that I was a high school dropout. When I left the room that day, there was a woman shyly waiting outside the door to talk to me. She came up to me and said, thank you so much for sharing your story about being a high school dropout. It means so much to me to hear that. I'm a high school dropout too. Unfortunately for her, terribly for her, I don't mean this to sound not empathetic. She was being sexually abused at school.

### **Lisa Larter (16:12):**

It made me realize that when we show up and share things and people see us and they see who we are, they see what is possible for them too. And so don't you ever dye that beard.

### **Steve Dotto (16:33):**

Complete sidebar, the barber is not allowed to trim my beard, because you have to wear the mask. I'm responsible for my own grooming of my beard and that I'm not so good at. It's a little bit scraggly.

### **Lisa Larter (16:46):**

But I think when people see you, Steve, I don't know how many YouTube views you have now. I think the last time I looked, it was over a hundred million on your YouTube channel. When people look at you and they look at what you're doing, and they look at the engagement and platform that

you've built, it gives them permission to do the same, but it also creates the opportunity for comparison. Oh, well, he started a decade ago. Oh, well, he's got an outgoing personality. Oh, well, he understands how to use technology. He's good at this stuff. What do you say to that?

**Steve Dotto (17:24):**

Well, first of all, I appreciate the numbers, the numbers close to 30 million views, just so we know, because I did check before. But those numbers are purely ego numbers. They're just self serving. Those real numbers that make a difference with the people who you engage with, the people who you make a difference in their lives. And so, people see us and they see the polished front that we were managing to push forward, but they don't realize that we're like the swan, or a duck, we're paddling like hell under water. We've worked hard. We've made a ton of mistakes and we've had some success, and a lot more failures if the truth be told. I think that if you've reached the point in life where you have built a career, you've served your industry, you've established yourself in your industry. You've got the bona fides.

**Steve Dotto (18:20):**

Everybody doesn't have to be able to stand up in front of an audience and to be able to entertain or educate in order to be successful. The skills that you've developed over the years, if you start to dive into them and work with them, they are profound. We've got a t-shirt that we sell that, experience is not something you can Google. I think we tend to devalue, I know, I don't think, I know we tend to devalue the skills and the gifts that each of us has. It's only when you start to share it. It's only when you start to see it, make a difference with others, that you will start to recognize that. The beauty of the online space is, you can scale from very small, to very large and it doesn't matter. You can be successful in all aspects. You're doing a podcast here right now.

**Steve Dotto (19:13):**

Pre pandemic, there were about nine, what was it? A hundred. I might be off by a factor of half, but I think there was 980,000 podcasts or so, pre pandemic posts. Now, today there's about 1.6 million.

**Lisa Larter (19:33):**

Wow.

**Steve Dotto (19:34):**

So people think, the podcast space is so full. They don't recognize that there are over three billion websites and there are over 200 million YouTube channels, right? It's all a matter of scale and a podcast, for example. I'm going to make this relevant to your question in a moment. A podcast is consumed. I love that you're doing them. A podcast is consumed, 80% to 90% of the content of every podcast, starts playing the podcast, plays 80 to 90% of it. That is absolutely phenomenal engagement. I post a seven minute YouTube video and YouTube thinks I'm a rock star, if people watch three and a half minutes. That's why you need hundreds of thousands and millions of views on YouTube, but you're building this next venture here and it's a podcast.

**Steve Dotto (20:24):**

Podcasts can be phenomenally successful with double digits of downloads. Because if you reach the right person, how hard is it for you to do a 40 minute call with somebody, 20 times, covering the same content? 20 people download this podcast, and they're going to get that 40 minute call with Lisa.

**Lisa Larter (20:46):**

Absolutely.

**Steve Dotto (20:47):**

So scale is, we have to park our worries about scale and instead pay attention to impact, how much impact we have in delivering high value content. It comes to respecting what we teach and respecting our audience. Don't just post something to look for numbers, to look for engagement, post something, because it's relevant. And then all of that engagement carries so much more weight at that time.

**Lisa Larter (21:12):**

Yeah. I think, we all want to look at the numbers and evaluate what we're doing, but start by evaluating the quality of what you're contributing. Do you feel good about what you just put out there? Do you think it's good

enough to make a difference in someone's life? I think that if we focused more on the quality of our own contribution, then the platform will take care of itself. But often people do the opposite. They're waiting for the platform to give the good stuff. And when you're waiting for the platform to grow, to give the good stuff, the platform never grows. It's waiting for the seed to bear fruit, but you never planted it. It's still in the package. You can't think that way, you've got to give good stuff in order to build something of value.

**Steve Dotto (22:06):**

And don't hold a strategic reserve. I love Amy Porterfield. One thing that she teaches, and she says, deliver your best content, deliver your best secrets in everything you do. Put it in podcasts, put it in posts, put it everywhere. But people go, wait a minute, who's going to buy my product if I give it to them for free? Everybody, because nobody wants to go looking for it all. They want it packaged and they want it from the horse's mouth. Not that we're horses.

**Lisa Larter (22:31):**

Exactly.

**Steve Dotto (22:32):**

But that's what they're looking for. You have to establish your bona fides by blowing them out of the water and delivering real value. If it doesn't come down to you wanting to prove yourself, it comes down to that factor of respect. Why would you tease somebody to something that you know, who you care about as part of your community and not share with them the fullness of that knowledge? Why would you just tease them and make them discover it for themselves? That's not what we're about. That's not what building community is.

**Lisa Larter (22:59):**

No, no, it's about contributing meaningful content that can really make a difference. I believe in the law of reciprocity, I believe that the more value you put out there in the world, the more value you attract to yourself. When people are not contributing, but they're rather trying to see what they can get, you can sense that in terms of the way that they show up.

### **Steve Dotto (23:30):**

You know something, how you position it, I think is a small subset of us. But do you think maybe that the reason a lot of people don't put their best foot forward always, or don't release their best content or aren't willing to share it, is often imposter syndrome? Is that they're afraid it won't be good enough?

### **Lisa Larter (23:51):**

Maybe, maybe they're afraid it won't be good enough. Maybe they're afraid if they give away the best information, to your point, people won't buy from them because they've given the expression, why buy the cow when you can drink the milk for free. I think there are some people that have that mindset. I also think that there are some people that don't know how to craft something of value. There's two things that I would say, if I throw my iPhone up on my tripod right now and just shoot a three minute video off the cuff, it's going to be okay. But if I actually take a few minutes and really think about what I want to tell people, what I want to share, what the theme is, and I add, a nice little intro, nice little outro.

### **Lisa Larter (24:46):**

I can take that video and make it a lot more valuable just by being mindful about how I create the content. It doesn't matter if it's a podcast. It doesn't matter if it is a video. If it's a written blog post, a newsletter, it's being mindful about how you're communicating. I think that is one of the things that people don't do. I think part of the reason that that happens is, there's all these internet marketers out there that are saying, that it doesn't have to be good. You have the Gary Vaynerchuks of the world that say, just document, document, document. Just show people what you're doing every single day. And so that's fine, that works for him. But I do think that if you go back to his roots and when he started, even if you look at Wine Library TV, it evolved into something that was really great.

### **Lisa Larter (25:38):**

That's the first thing that I would say. The second thing, which I think is, potentially it could contribute to the imposter syndrome, but I think it also prevents people from doing a good job, is they consume too much. They consume, every person in the space is content and they lose connection to their own voice and their own insights. It's like going to a buffet and

having a full plate of everything and wondering why you don't feel well. I think that happens online when we are on the quest to learn, you are better to follow one person, two people, follow Steve and listen to everything he does until you get to a point where you've got nothing to learn. But when you follow 20 Steves, you can't hear your own voice inside your head anymore.

**Steve Dotto (26:34):**

I think there's another insidious aspect of that particular, of over consumption. Since it's the area you're interested in, you believe that that area is saturated and there's no other voice that could possibly be heard in that space. That's not true. That is absolutely not true. When I coach people and they're starting a podcast or they're starting a YouTube channel and they go, but there's six grand good channels in that space. I tell them, great. That's really good. That means there's lots of people interested, because your voice is going to be different. Trust your voice that's different, and trust that you're going to attract your audience. That's a huge part of it, is we think that there is no marketplace in the online world that is overly saturated.

**Steve Dotto (27:19):**

There's still room for another True Crime podcast. There's still room for another tech YouTube channel. There's still room for another mommy blogger out there, there's room for it all because your voice, your perspective is totally unique and you will attract a different group.

**Lisa Larter (27:33):**

Right. I think sometimes it's a rationalization tool for not starting.

**Steve Dotto (27:38):**

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah.

**Lisa Larter (27:39):**

It's unfortunate because you're right. I just came back from a meeting, an in-person meeting in Miami beach with members of the trust. These are all women that run seven and eight figure businesses. It was just incredible to listen to these women and hear their perspectives and hear the different things that they do in their business and how different we all are. There's

definitely opportunities for new people to be heard out there, and people are looking for that too. I just think you have to be discerning. Don't follow too many people, because you can easily lose sight of your own voice and don't discount what you have to contribute, because somebody else is already in that space, you have to start to learn.

**Steve Dotto (28:31):**

Yeah, absolutely. And you don't just have to publish everything you create as well. I'm doing a webinar, I've got a big webinar coming up and I've recorded it twice, just for myself. Nobody else gets to see it. I get to look at it and I get to look at it critically. And then I get to go back. You don't have to publish everything.

**Lisa Larter (28:47):**

Right. You were actually practicing your webinar, no.

**Steve Dotto (28:51):**

Which comes back to your point you just made a few moments ago, is when you publish, publish with purpose, make sure you're on point.

**Lisa Larter (29:00):**

Absolutely. Steve, you talked about, you found your audience by accident. You found your audience by doing, you found your audience by getting out there. Tell me what it feels like when you finally zone in on who you really want to help and how that impacts your business.

**Steve Dotto (29:24):**

That's a great question, Lisa. Because there are a few things which I'll share. I don't think I've told anybody this. One of the things, again, maybe it's the Canadian thing, the reason I didn't like being thought of as an internet marketer, is I hate doing sales. It's a terrible thing for somebody in our position to do, but I just freaking hate sales. But once I recognized who I wanted to sell to, and once I built the community and I started to get feedback from the community, that it is good, and we're getting this overwhelming sense of, thank you, Steve, this is what we needed. It's serving the purpose that you presented to us. There's real value here. I needed to hear it from them. Once I heard it from them and they're renewing and paying and it's generating revenue.

### **Steve Dotto (30:12):**

I suddenly became a far more comfortable, I wouldn't say more aggressive, but far more comfortable sales person, in selling my product. Because I know that if you are in my demographic, if you're a baby boomer, if you're a gen X who is looking to start a side hustle, build a platform and you want to find, and you want to learn from other baby boomers and gen X who share our ethos, share our value system, because their generations have completely different value systems. But if you're in that camp, we're the place you want to come. I'm comfortable with that, because I know there's nobody else doing it. Which, even if there was somebody else doing it, that would be great. I hope somebody else does it.

### **Steve Dotto (30:50):**

But I know for a fact that we have a great chance of delivering exactly what you need, because that's what I'm focused on. I became a far more confident sales person, which makes me better, and I guess in a way more aggressive as well. But I will, if you're on the fence in the past, I would say, you decide. If you're on the fence, I say, no, no, you've got to come in.

### **Lisa Larter (31:13):**

I don't think that's aggressive. I think that's just being confident. I think sometimes selling gets a bad rap and I look at selling as serving, I look at selling as helping somebody make a buying decision. If you're helping somebody improve the quality of their life, you're helping them find purpose again and meaning, and you're helping them build a business. Then it's a disservice to them to not be bold in your ask to have them join you.

### **Steve Dotto (31:42):**

I also might have a slightly different goal in mind for my community than they have. I don't think this is necessarily a bad thing, because you can't guarantee success in business. All I can guarantee to my community is I will give them the tools, but the subtext for me is, I give them energy back. I give them purpose. That sounds very full of myself and very, but it does. When they start to imagine, when they start to daydream about what their business could look like, when they start discovering tools, when they get excited, because they built their first landing page and they're sharing with us and asking if it's good or not, these are people who just maybe months

ago were living in fear. They were afraid of the future, because they didn't have a path that they could follow. This fat path might not ultimately be fruitful, but they're enjoying the journey again.

**Lisa Larter (32:40):**

Do you think that you're seeing a bigger spike in terms of people wanting to start side businesses because of COVID, and because people are realizing that they don't have as much job security as they thought they had to?

**Steve Dotto (32:56):**

Absolutely. Without question. You realize how quickly things can change, completely change. Entire industries have been wiped off the face of the earth, almost, and people recognize that and they now have fear. But there's also another side, which is we don't have to necessarily look at all the negative. They also realize that there's a lot more to the online world that's beneficial, if you choose to find it. They realize that they are making more decisions online. They are buying more online services. They are engaging more online. They see it more as the marketplace as well. That's viable. I think it's that combination. There's definitely insecurity, which is rampant. And there's also now, an increasing realization that this is the one thing you can do. It really bothers me, the gig economy which most people hold up as this wonderful thing.

**Steve Dotto (33:51):**

And so many baby boomers, when I go to so many sites, they say, if you're going into retirement, now you can engage in the gig economy. For some people that's great. But not if you have to. If you were the controller for a truck rental company, and you've got all of these mad skills around finance and management and in distribution and all of these things, and you get forced into retirement, because there's no business there anymore, you're done, and you're 62 years old. Aren't your skills really wasted delivering for Amazon? That's what the gig economy is. Increasingly the workplace looks at baby boomers coming into the workplace as import labor that's super cheap. We can get them cheap.

**Steve Dotto (34:42):**

And so while it's really great, if you've retired from your job in construction, you're comfortable. You want to be busy. You're looking to engage with people, so you decide to drive Uber, because it lets you meet people and you can make a little bit money on the side. That's an entirely different thing. That's the pretty picture of what the gig economy is. The dark underbelly, is that, we are cheap labor that they can get access to and we have to take those jobs. And so that really concerns me. But in a lot of people's eyes, the gig economy and side hustles are melded into one, and they're not. A side hustle, you own, you're building the business. It might be something that you do as a gig where you're taking consulting contracts or that sort of thing, but it's not part of that gig economy.

**Steve Dotto (35:30):**

It's you setting the rules and you setting the price and how you're going to work. It's very different, but I think people are being, that combination is also a part and parcel of it.

**Lisa Larter (35:45):**

There's so many opportunities for people if they just stop and think about their skills and what they can contribute, even just fractional work, fractional, executive work, consulting, coaching, online models. The sky is really the limit, if you're willing to go there and you're willing to try. To your point, if you're the only person in this space teaching right now, one of your best students could start teaching somebody else what they know about building a business as they learn too, right? There's room for different-

**Steve Dotto (36:21):**

You've got people in our community who are trying to recreate our community.

**Lisa Larter (36:25):**

Of course there are.

**Steve Dotto (36:26):**

I think that's fine. I don't have any issue with that.

### **Lisa Larter (36:39):**

Right. But you're leading and people will always follow the leader. Look at Marie Forleo and B-School, everybody and their dog has a version of B-School, because they're trying to be like her. That is okay. A lot of those people are doing okay by doing that. So to your point, there's billions of people on the planet, there is enough room for everyone. One of the things that you talked about is purpose. I think the other thing that is important for people is identity. We label ourselves based on our work. My husband is former law enforcement, and I know that there's a staggering stat on the number of people in law enforcement that pass away within five years of retirement.

### **Lisa Larter (37:23):**

That stat is pretty high. I believe it's because they've lost their sense of identity. Purpose to me it's a little bit higher level. Identity is, I'm a police officer, I'm a nurse, I'm a mother, I'm a father, I'm a sister, it's something that we have to be able to hang our hats on. And so when people are not able to find a job or create a business, they're missing that identity. I think that identity is one of the things that really creates the spiral downward for people in their lives. It sounds to me like you're helping people spiral upward.

### **Steve Dotto (38:14):**

What you just said completely resonates and it's my why. One of the reasons that I started as an entrepreneur is my experience with my father, who used to be, just a quick little story. He was the patriarch of our family, everything he was just like, his hands were in everything, whether we wanted them or not. A few years before he passed away, we were at a family dinner and my brother was talking about mortgage and it was a unique financial situation. I looked down at the end of the table and I saw my dad was lost. You also know that you look at a loved one and you can just sense what's happening inside. Words can't explain the emotion that they're doing, but he was in real pain. I just had a flash of recognition that he didn't really understand what we were talking about, so he couldn't contribute.

**Steve Dotto (39:03):**

His value as a part of our family, and he couldn't provide that service anymore. He couldn't be engaged. That sense of loss to him, irrelevance, was devastating. As I pondered that, because it bothered me obviously. I thought about it. I recognize that that's why I do what I do. I want to be relevant to my last breath. The example that you gave of police officers, they see their relevance as the service to the community. And if that's taken away from them, they lose their sense of purpose, which is exactly what you're saying. That is indeed the underlying principle, that giving people access to doing a side hustle, starting their own online business, realizing they're still contributing to what they want to contribute to. And they still have value. That is a big, big part of it, for sure.

**Lisa Larter (39:55):**

Steve, tell me where, if somebody is listening to this show, I tend to attract a different audience than you do. Most of my audience is female. They may not be baby boomers. They may be a little bit younger, even though I am gen X. I think I'm gen X, born in 70.

**Steve Dotto (40:16):**

You are. Yeah. Yup.

**Lisa Larter (40:19):**

I look at my own mom, who's a boomer. She's in her early 70s. There's no way on the planet she'd be starting a business online. If somebody is listening and they have a parent who is a boomer and they are noticing that this parent is not as engaged, they're noticing that this parent has lost their sense of purpose, identity. What should they do to help them and encourage them? Obviously the simple answer is, get them to follow what you're doing. Right? That's easy. But you need buy-in before they're going to do that. What kind of conversation would you say that a child should have with a parent, an adult child should have with their boomer parent to open the eyes of possibility for them?

**Steve Dotto (41:19):**

Not being always the best at, I was the best in my family at delicately approaching different topics. I might not be the best person to give advice on this, but let me try. I would think that if it was my child talking to me,

that they should honestly say, dad, you are so good at this. It's a real shame you aren't doing it. People need that help. For our generation, I would play on their sense of responsibility, of honor, of community service, of helping others and give us a purpose, give us a reason to do it. I know we've said that word purpose in lots of different ways. I should've come up with a different term, but challenges. Because you know what your parents are good at. And now typically speaking, kids don't recognize all that well, what their parents are good at.

**Steve Dotto (42:08):**

And so you might have to do a little bit of voyage of discovery yourself and look at your parents in different eyes, to really understand and respect what they've done and the tools that they have to contribute to the world. But if you can get yourself to that place, that you can talk to them honestly about it, you could probably create, first of all, an impetus for them to think about it, because they have to be jarred out of stasis. They have to start, first of all, recognize their own internal value, and then also recognize that we aren't at the end of the road. If you're 65, you still got 20 years left in this day and age. Right? When we were kids, when I was a kid, you weren't born.

**Steve Dotto (42:52):**

When I was a kid, in 1965, a man retiring at 65 years old had a life expectancy of 68, three years. Today at 65, you have a life expectancy of, not quite 20 years. It's about 18 and 19 years right now. But that's also growing constantly as health improves and all those sorts of things, who knows how COVID will affect it. But the bottom line is, the reason that we retired at 65 was, you were going to die soon. Now there's no reason to retire at 65, because you're not going to die soon, so you better do something. That would be... Go ahead.

**Lisa Larter (43:32):**

What is your answer to, I'm too old for that?

**Steve Dotto (43:36):**

Bullshit. Are we allowed to say that?

**Lisa Larter (43:39):**

You're allowed to say it.

**Steve Dotto (43:40):**

Don't bring that crap around me. I don't believe it. I'm not going to play in the NHL, there are some real world limitations, but no. How long does it take to build a business Lisa? Back in your day, back in the old days, it would take what, eight months, 10 months to establish yourself on the street, three years to be profitable.

**Lisa Larter (44:03):**

Yes.

**Steve Dotto (44:04):**

We can cut that in half today or more. So you got plenty of time.

**Lisa Larter (44:09):**

Yes. It's funny, my coach and mentor is Alan Weiss and yesterday was his 75th birthday. And he's already planning an event for next year when he turns 76.

**Steve Dotto (44:20):**

I got it. I got something for you. Why don't you tell him he's too old for it and then to record the response.

**Lisa Larter (44:25):**

Yeah, that's a great idea. I'm sure he'd have something interesting to say to people. Steve, what I'm hearing you say, is that anybody who is interested in starting a business today shouldn't necessarily worry too much about having the strategy, perfect start. What they should really focus on is quality contribution and connecting with their community, so that they can, have these conversations and learn about their community and that if they contribute regularly, they connect regularly and they pick one simple thing that they can sell. Whether it's an email course or a 60 minute phone conversation, pick something simple that they can sell. Then from there, they can start to identify better who that audience is long term, that they really want to serve.

**Steve Dotto (45:22):**

You are bang on, and I will give you one other foolproof starting point. People are going to get stuck with what value they're going to give, the very first step. They don't know what they should share. And there's must reading in our space. It's Marcus Sheridan's book, *They Ask You Answer*. Go out and look for the questions. Once people are asking you questions, you answer those questions. But if you want to start contributing in a space and you don't know what to share, go to a YouTube channel, go to a LinkedIn group and see the questions that people are asking. It doesn't matter if somebody else is answering them. Look at the questions that people are asking, and then think about how you can answer those questions and use that as an inspiration for the content that you're going to create.

**Steve Dotto (46:03):**

Getting those first things out is the hardest. Other than your model, Marcus Sheridan's book was the other watershed moment in my career, when I understood that process.

**Lisa Larter (46:19):**

I have his book. It's really good. I agree. I have said that to people for years. I didn't write a book about it, but I've said for years to pay attention to the questions that people ask you, because if one person is asking you that question, there are hundreds or thousands of other people out there that have the same question. But we often think that what we know isn't important, because only one person asks the question. It's like, we think, we're fish and water. We don't realize that, we can breathe in water and most people can't, and the questions are really, those are the seeds, right? They're the seeds that are going to grow into something spectacular.

**Steve Dotto (46:55):**

Seed and grow.

**Lisa Larter (46:56):**

All right. Steve Dotto, thank you so much for being here. It's always a pleasure talking to you. I could probably talk to you for another hour, which just means you'll have to come back. Where is the best place for

people to go if they want to learn more about what you do and/or they want to send their parents to learn more about what you do?

**Steve Dotto (47:20):**

Well, dottotech.com has all of our content. For your audience, certainly our podcast called Grey Matters, which is my podcast dedicated to baby boomers and gen X who want to build business. Or you can also look us up on Facebook at, wearethegreywave.

**Lisa Larter (47:36):**

Wearethegreywave. I love it. Awesome. Thank you, Steve. I really appreciate you being here.

**Steve Dotto (47:43):**

Thanks Lisa.

**Lisa Larter (47:45):**

Thank you for joining me for this episode of She Talks Business. If you enjoyed the show, you know the drill, leave us a review, tell someone about it and join the conversation on social media. Thanks for listening, until next time, remember, done is always better than perfect.





Lisa Larter is a Business Strategist, Digital Marketing Expert, Author and Speaker.

The Lisa Larter Group helps their clients to formulate marketing strategies that support their business goals and objectives. Lisa provides consulting & advisory services, and implementation services including: social media & content management, book marketing, and website design.

Steve Dotto is a Canada's most respected geek.

For over 16 years, as host and executive producer of Dotto Tech, a nationally syndicated TV show, Steve entertained and educated millions of Canadians on all aspects of technology. Steve's YouTube Channel (30 million views) focuses on traditional How To content, teaching productivity and content creation.

Steve has a passion for understanding the social impact of technology and his Podcast, Grey Matters with Steve Dotto teaches Baby Boomers and GenXers how to remain relevant in the digital age.

