



Creating Wealth as a Speaker with Jane Atkinson

Episode #38

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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 (00:24):

Hello, my lovelies, my chickadees, my friends. How does one properly introduce a podcast so it's not so boring and typical? I hear all kinds of things out there and I'm not quite sure what to say. Send help. I need to know how to do this so that it's interesting and engaging.

Lisa Larter (00:44):

This is Lisa Larter and today I am speaking with Jane Atkinson. Jane is one of the most sought after speaker coaches in the world and I adore her. I wanted to talk to Jane about the business of speaking because in today's COVID world, what it meant to be a speaker only a few short years ago has really drastically changed or has it? Do some of the things that applied in 2019 still apply today? So on the show what we're going to do discuss is how long does it really take to build your platform as a speaker? Why that boring word, consistency, really, really matters? And the reason most speakers struggle to earn a decent living. And I will tell you that that starts with firing before they are ready and aiming.

Lisa Larter (01:47):

You'll also laugh and I'm sure you'll be able to relate to what Jane has to say about being paid in rubber chickens and her one statement from her newest



book, “not willing to fail means you're not ready to scale”. I think it's going to leave you thinking about how you approach failure and maybe how you identify with failure. Jane has written several books. Her most popular is *The Wealthy Speaker 2.0*. She runs The Wealthy Speaker School and her newest book called *Scaling Your Speaker Business* is about to be released.

Lisa Larter (02:28):

Jane is a wealth of information. She's very process-oriented, systematic thinker, kind person, dog lover. And if you're listening and you're someone who wants to become a professional speaker, even if you have no speaking experience, maybe you just want to add it into your existing business, or maybe you're a speaker who wants to get paid more, you want to figure out how do I get on those big stages and earn those five and six figure paychecks, well, this episode is for you.

Lisa Larter (03:02):

Jane is one of those rare people who is so incredibly talented and she just loves people. She loves to help people. And my experience over the years of knowing Jane is that you get 10 times more than what you expect in everything Jane does. So let's get to the show. Jane, I am so glad you're here. It's so fun talking to you before we actually pressed record. It's great to have you.

Jane Atkinson (03:35):

Well, I'm so excited to be on She Talks Business.

Lisa Larter (03:40):

I remember when we first met at the CAPS convention and we were doing our talk together and I had to go after you and you were such a hard act to follow. I had such speaker envy because you just did such a great job that day.

Jane Atkinson (03:58):

Well, there's also the home field advantage. You hadn't been around those people for 30 years and I had, and so Rhonda put us together. She's like, "You're going to love Lisa Larter." And she was so right. We connected immediately and you really rocked the stage. So I want you to make sure that

you... It's an interesting conversation just to talk about how you have bolstered my self-doubt at times and likely I have bolstered yours. So-

Lisa Larter (04:29):

Absolutely.

Jane Atkinson (04:29):

... it's not something that any of us goes... That little green monster gets us all at some point in time.

Lisa Larter (04:35):

Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. Well, I want to talk to you today about the business of speaking. I find we live in a really interesting time with COVID. People are not able to speak on stages the way they once did. Lots of people are rethinking, I think, their speaking profession and how to make money speaking. I think a lot of people have really, maybe unrealistic ideas around what it takes to be a successful speaker. So why don't we start with one question, because I know you have worked with some really talented speakers and you have worked with speakers who are just starting out. What does it take to become a million dollar speaker?

Jane Atkinson (05:26):

So I would say that there's a couple of things that it would take. Number one is to build your platform and expertise in what we call picking a lane. Really becoming known for one thing can be incredibly helpful when it comes to building a platform for yourself, becoming known for one thing, becoming great at one thing. And there are speakers out there who are just really, really amazing speakers who could speak on lots and lots of different topics. It's harder for them to get to the seven figure mark I think just because they're not being booked for the same thing over and over and over again. They reinvent the wheel every single time.

Lisa Larter (06:10):

Right. So you need to be a specialist, not a generalist. Is that what you're saying?

Jane Atkinson (06:14):

That's what I would say. And I'm sure you talk about that in business, in general, all the time. If you are selling fur coats at your dairy store, you

probably have a problem, right? We want to be congruent and we want to see... It doesn't mean that you can never add new topics to the mix. The goal is that they all intersect somewhere that people can easily align the dots and understand why you're doing that. So building a platform is one thing and that's just like a slow build. I don't know that anybody can go and do it overnight. Typically, we say it takes about three years.

Jane Atkinson (06:58):

The second piece to that is then consistency. Putting your word out there on the various platforms that we have to put them out. You have a podcast, I have a podcast. I do mine every Thursday at 1:00 PM Eastern. We put out our blog and have for 10 years at 1:00 PM Eastern every Tuesday. We've been doing that for a really long time. And so being in the right place at the right time is how you get hired. Social media, what's your schedule? Is there something that people can expect? We have a new platform in Clubhouse. How are you going to be consistent out on Clubhouse? It's like any of the other. There's no magic potion. It's just be consistent. And I see people out on that medium and all different mediums becoming known for 10 different things and I just don't think it helps their brand.

Lisa Larter (08:00):

No, I agree. I think it confuses the brand and I think consistency is underrated. I think people are looking for a flash in the pan. They're looking for a quick win. They're not really thinking about the grind of the consistent monotonous things that you have to do to build that platform, to elevate your expertise, to stay in, as Alan Weiss would call it, the public arena so that people see you and you also can't... I don't think you can abdicate responsibility for your presence by hiring someone else to do all the heavy lifting for you, which sounds a little bit hypocritical because I have a team that does marketing implementation, but in the marketing implementation that we do for our clients, we are very direct with them in that they need to be responding and engaging and interacting with people. They can't just set it and forget it and not be there because then it doesn't work either.

Jane Atkinson (09:04):

And I think COVID is a great opportunity for people. If any business is in a slump, what we do is we circle back to what we did in year one and that was hustle. We want to be engaging with our content and we want to be engaging with clients on just a regular basis. I think the best way to get

yourself out of a slump is to talk to prospects and just make one offer after another, after another, after another. I have a new book coming out called *Scaling Your Speaking Business* and we have a phrase in there, "If you're not willing to fail, you're not willing to scale or you're not ready to scale. If you're not willing to fail, you're not ready to scale."

Lisa Larter (09:49):

I love that.

Jane Atkinson (09:50):

And that's about making offer after offer, after offer. And I think engaging with your prospects and talking to them about how you can help solve their problems is the best way to get anybody out of a slump.

Lisa Larter (10:04):

Absolutely. I love that. I love that statement. Not willing to fail, not ready to scale. It's so true. People who have scaled have fallen down and failed so many times along the way, right?

Jane Atkinson (10:16):

Oh, and the two of us included. I think I'm going on 18 years in business. How long for you, Lisa?

Lisa Larter (10:22):

It's been since 2006. So 15.

Jane Atkinson (10:26):

15. Yeah. So we've definitely both had bumps along the way. And this is another little interesting just side alley, is don't compare your year one to somebody who's been in it for 18 years, people are always saying, and our goal in our industry of speakers is to be an example, to set the bar high. We have a school that I think is the best learning academy in that market, in the space that we live in. And we continue, we just moved our platform over to Thinkific. We made it better. It's stronger. We only launched it a year ago and we've already done a major revamp on it in order to lift the bar even higher. And so I think it's our goal to be a role model for people and that's why our team always needs to set the bar high. Your team is the same. The quality

that comes out of your backend provider is amazing. And it's the same. We try to do something similar.

Lisa Larter (11:32):

So let's talk about money. So one of the [crosstalk 00:11:35] things at least... I know. Mine too. I love making it, I love spending it and I love helping other people make it.

Jane Atkinson (11:41):

And I love talking about it.

Lisa Larter (11:44):

So when you first start speaking, typically you will speak anywhere and everywhere and most speakers will do it for free. And the first time somebody asks you what your speaking fee is, people get tongue tied, these professional speakers can't speak.

Jane Atkinson (12:03):

That's right.

Lisa Larter (12:03):

So what is your advice to the emerging speaker in terms of how do you set your fees and how do you know when you're ready to up level your fees? Because I got to tell you I'm pretty loosey-goosey about my speaking fees. It depends on what is the topic? How much work am I going to have to do on that topic? Where do I need to travel to? Is that my audience or not? And depending on the answer to those questions, there's an extra zero added to the end or not.

Jane Atkinson (12:35):

Well, you and I could have a coaching session and we would definitely be putting a fee schedule on paper so that there's consistency in that as well, right? You don't want somebody talking to somebody else and saying, "Well, I got her for one zero less than that." We don't want that to be out there in the market anyway. So we used to call it the rubber chicken circuit, is when people go out and speak for free. So it used to be that the hotels would serve you a nice chicken lunch and we called it rubber chicken back then, right?

Jane Atkinson (13:06):

So when you're moving from free to fee, let me tell you a step that you can make in between is that when you're doing your freebies, you start to only accept freebies that are in your targeted audience. So if you decide that insurance is a perfect topic or insurance is a perfect industry for your topic, then you might decide, "Okay, I'm only going to do freebies in the insurance space." So we might start at the local insurance association and our goal is that a freebie does not beget another freebie. Your goal from doing that is to say to that local association, "Hey, if I agree to do this, will you do an introduction for me at the state level or the provincial level?" And so we want [crosstalk 00:13:59]-

Lisa Larter (13:59):

And teaching people to negotiate something back in return.

Jane Atkinson (14:02):

Yes. And we also want to make sure that there's confidentiality around that free fee. We don't want people sharing your name with other people and telling them, "Well, we got them for free." "So can we agree that confidentiality and can we agree that you are going to do something for me?" And different people want different things. I remember one of my clients, Kindra Hall, she went out and said, "We'll speak for video," in the early parts of her business. And that got her amazing photography and amazing video on big stages long before she was charging the big stage fees.

Jane Atkinson (14:39):

And so I just thought that that was a great tactic. So have something in mind and know that one freebie should not be getting you more. It should be leading to paid engagements. And a great way to do that is during your presentation. And when you're doing a free presentation, you have a little bit more control or I guess-

Lisa Larter (15:05):

Leeway.

Jane Atkinson (15:06):

... leeway to make a bit of a pitch. And so we have this thing in the book, *The Wealthy Speaker 2.0* book called the help me speech. As you can see, I'm very passionate about blah, blah, blah, insurance regulation, insurance leadership, whatever it might be. If you know of anyone who could benefit from this, please come and give me your business card after the presentation. That's for live. What I've seen missing in virtual is people not asking for the business. So I would recommend that no matter how you're delivering your presentation, you do and ask for business, especially if it's a freebie and that will then lead you to fees.

Jane Atkinson (15:45):

And fees, Lisa, I think you should set them. You have a local fee, okay, then you have your get on the plane fee. There's just two fees. And then you might have a full day fee. Let's say they want to use you to open a conference and then maybe stay on to do a breakout session later in the afternoon. So maybe you have three, local, which is also your virtual fee, by the way, get on a plane fee and then full day fee. And that's it. You've got three fees.

Lisa Larter (16:15):

Yeah, mine has been local, it's been get on a domestic plane, get on a plane that's going to drain me fee. So when I was living in Nova Scotia, if you wanted me to fly to California to speak, and it was not the right audience, that's where the extra zero would come in because it would literally take me a full day to get there and a full day to get back. And so I look at that as basically needing to 10 X my fee, so to speak, to make it worth my time.

Jane Atkinson (16:45):

But the goal is that you're just really intentional and that you lay down a fee under those circumstances. So maybe there's four for you instead of three, that's fine. You just plan it out in advance so that it's not coming out of your butt depending on who calls. You want to just lay it down.

Lisa Larter (17:06):

I'm not a professional speaker in the sense [crosstalk 00:17:09] that I speak here and there. So it's a little bit different for me in the sense that I don't

think that many people are talking about me speaking, but let's talk about money.

Jane Atkinson (17:21):

Okay.

Lisa Larter (17:21):

So I think the very first time I spoke and I was asked what my fee was, I said \$500. And then somebody else asked me at one point what my fee was and I think I said \$5,000 at that time. And I remember the person looked at me and they said, "Yeah, but what do you actually get?" And I was shocked. I'm like, "What do you mean what do I get? I get what I ask for." So can you talk a little bit about... Because there's this belief that what your fee is, isn't what you'll take. And there's also the question of where does a speaker start and how does a speaker know when to go from \$500 to \$5,000 to \$15,000 to \$50,000? How do you move up that curve? What needs to happen?

Jane Atkinson (18:10):

So there's a lot there to unpack. So your starting place, we said in *The Wealthy Speaker 2.0* that \$1,500 was when you were in the game. So that's the goal, is just start charging that just as a baseline to say, "Okay, I am a "professional speaker", I'm getting paid." But there are lots of my clients who come out of some sort of either job description that has them being famous, they're CEO or global vice president of a Fortune 100 company or something like that, we'd probably start them more like \$10,000. And the way that you continue to raise your fee is simply based on supply and demand. If you are like, "Okay, I want two a month at \$10,000," and you've been getting that consistently, all right, let's bump it up to \$15,000. Let's bump it up to \$20,000.

Jane Atkinson (19:10):

If you become famous for some reason, if your book goes best seller, that might be another fee jump. You might go from \$10,000 to \$20,000. So for most people's speaking history it starts at \$1,500 and for some people... I have taken a speaker who had a full-time job. His name is Ryan. And he went from probably doing \$1,500 SHRM events to \$30,000 Fortune 100 events. And that was over a span of time, let's say seven years for him. Some people could do it in four. He took the slow road. He had some diversions along the

way. And he would be the first one to tell you that the reason why his path took a little bit longer was simply self-belief.

Lisa Larter (20:06):

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah. That's a really important part.

Jane Atkinson (20:09):

Yeah. I think [crosstalk 00:20:10] I believed in him far before... I said \$10,000 way before he was ready to charge \$10,000. Way before it could come out of his mouth comfortably.

Lisa Larter (20:21):

Yeah. And that's so important. It's so important to have somebody believe in your value before you're able to see it yourself. I had that happen for me with Alan Weiss. I had reached a point in my business where I needed to remove myself from some of the monthly marketing calls that we do and create another layer of... Another fee for access to my advisement on the marketing on an ongoing basis. And I had a really hard time wrapping my head around how to charge for this because this advisement was just basically open. It wasn't hours for dollars, and so I couldn't really... I struggled to figure out what was the right price. And so for a six-month period, I was going to charge... You're going to laugh at me. This was years ago. I was going to charge \$3,000 for six months. And this would be \$3,000 on top of the \$15,000 that the client was already paying.

Jane Atkinson (21:26):

Right. Right.

Lisa Larter (21:27):

And Alan said to me, "You need to charge \$3,000 a month." And I said, "I can't do that." And he said, "Yes, you can and you will." And I thought, "Well, I have nothing to lose." And so I did what he told me to do. And the client said, "Yeah, let's do it. Let's do it all." And I was shocked. So I think that there's tremendous value when you have someone who believes in your value like you do with Ryan and other speakers, or I do with you and/or other people.

Jane Atkinson (21:59):

You did that exact same thing to me, Lisa. And we had this conversation later on and I wrote about this in the book that you were my scaling mentor. We sat down in Florida after one of my live events and mapped out, I hired you to help me map out what my strategy was going to be. And you wrote down some numbers that I wasn't there with in my mind. I think you said, "You should charge..." I don't know what it was, \$15,000 for a year of coaching or something like that. And my brain wasn't there. And so I just sat on it though and eventually I think three years later you said to me, "Hey, I've got our notes from that Florida meeting," and you sent them to me and everything we had mapped out that day came true.

Lisa Larter (22:48):

I love it.

Jane Atkinson (22:49):

Everything had come true. It's just so powerful to have someone else believe in you more than you believe in yourself. And I think that's just an advertisement for coaching.

Lisa Larter (23:03):

Yeah.

Jane Atkinson (23:03):

If you don't have a coach, get a coach.

Lisa Larter (23:06):

It's funny, Christine Kane and I were talking about this on a previous show and she says it's when you can't access your brain function. And so the example that she uses to tell her story is about doing pull ups in the gym and how when she first tried to do pull-ups, she couldn't access her brain function to teach herself how to pull up, so she would hang there. She said laundry. And she just got used to hanging and then gradually she was able to do the movement to pull herself up. And so I think when someone like myself plants a seed in your brain about what your value could be or Alan plants a seed in mine, or even you see someone else charging a ridiculous fee and

you think, "Well, I'm just as good, if not better at what I do than that person," it takes time for your brain to actually agree to try it out.

Jane Atkinson (24:10):

And that could be the path to building a belief. That could be the path to building a new belief about yourself. And I think that that's a really interesting concept, is what do I need to do to really step into this next thing that just scares me a little bit.

Lisa Larter (24:32):

Do you know what I did years ago? Years and years and years ago, I spent \$1,000 on an hour of someone's time. And at the time I thought I was absolutely crazy to be spending \$1,000 on an hour of someone's time. And I didn't know you then, but I spoke to this person about speaking, because I was about to speak at this big event. And it used to be when I spoke I would get nervous and I would get all phlegmy in the back of my throat. And this individual taught me about throat coat tea. And so I left that call and it was \$1,000 [crosstalk 00:25:12] and I now know about throat coat tea.

Lisa Larter (25:15):

I also know something else. The only difference between her and I is self-confidence because what I just paid \$1,000 for wasn't worth \$1,000, but I know that I can give more value than that in a call with me and I'm charging significantly less. So I think sometimes part of the way that our brain has to catch up to the money belief is by investing the money ourselves in something that's out of reach.

Jane Atkinson (25:43):

That is so very true. So I have invested in coaches. I have invested in you. I've been a part of Dan Sullivan's Strategic Coach for many, many years. I just paid \$18,000 to become certified by The Life Coach School in this particular type of mindset coaching because not... After 17 years, I didn't need this. I was already a very successful coach, but I thought if this mindset coaching can make me and my clients unstoppable, how much is that worth? And so I'm prepared to invest... What I just gave you was probably \$30,000 a year. I'm prepared to put a budget together for professional development and I think it's just really, really important.

Lisa Larter (26:32):

It's hugely important. I used to always tell my clients that... Because I have some coaching clients that have worked with me for seven, eight years. And I used to always say to them, "Someday you're going to want to break up and it's okay. It's okay. At some point you may outgrow our coaching and you may look for something new. And I want you to know that when that time comes, I will support your decision and you don't have to feel bad or awkward about telling me if you are going to move on." And I have this one client that says to me, "I tell all of my patients..." She's a psychologist. "That as long as the medication is working, they should not stop taking it." And she said, "You're my medication. It works and I'm not going to stop taking it."

Jane Atkinson (27:18):

I love that.

Lisa Larter (27:19):

And then I had another client say to me, he said, "Lisa, I'm not sure I believe you." He said, "Let me tell you why." He said, "You are constantly investing in your own learning. And I feel like I am constantly trying to keep up with you. So unless you stop learning, I think there's going to be a lot of time for me to learn from you." So I think what you did in investing in the life coaching is really an important tool that you can bring to the table to help your clients.

Jane Atkinson (27:49):

It's so good. And I've been doing little pop-up webinars for them, for the people inside the school, like, "Surprise, we're going to have a mindset coaching call tomorrow. Anybody who wants to get coached, come," and they're benefiting from it. And I think I am best and happiest when I'm learning and growing and changing and evolving and I'm least happy when I'm stagnant. And I'm sure we're both the same that way.

Lisa Larter (28:19):

Absolutely.

Jane Atkinson (28:19):

It's interesting, I don't want my clients to become dependent on me, but at the same time, if I'm continuing to grow, then we're just doing it together.

Lisa Larter (28:32):

Yeah, I agree. If you're doing the same old, same old thing year after year after year, then that becomes boring and not fun. So let's talk about fire, aim, ready, which we know is not the way you're supposed to do it. So one of the things that I loved the most about your work is you are someone who really spends thoughtful time mapping out an easy to follow process for your clients and your speakers to set them up for success. And one of the tools that you have is your ready, aim, fire process. Can you talk to us a little bit about that and talk a little bit about what happens when you reverse the order? So I did a video on Facebook a couple weeks ago and I talked about how a tactic in isolation of a strategy is likely going to fail. And I feel like your whole methodology around ready, aim, fire really supports that.

Jane Atkinson (29:42):

It does. It does for sure. And it was born out of the writing of the very first version of *The Wealthy Speaker* book. And I thought, "Well, okay, well, what's the framework? What's the path to getting there." I had represented in my business life three very successful speakers. We doubled their businesses year over year and I tried to figure out, "Well, what had I done?" So in the ready stage we get crystal clear on what we're selling. And I think we have this saying at The Wealthy Speaker School, clarity equals confidence. So once we get crystal clear on what we're selling and what the value is for our prospects and our clients, then we develop maybe some marketing language. We call that a promise statement. A key part of ready though, is picking a lane.

Jane Atkinson (30:36):

You might be good at lots of different things. There might be lots of things that you could talk about, that you could get paid to speak about, but we want to try to choose one so that our path is the easiest. That's the easiest way to go. So once the ready box is checked, we can move into aim. And we want to take that same clarity and make sure that all our marketing materials include that. So when I come onto your website, boom, I get immediately how you're going to help me. I don't have to search around and try to figure that out. It's right there. So then once we have our marketing materials and

all of our other channels, social media, et cetera, our speech is set up, then we move into fire and we start rolling it out to the markets.

Jane Atkinson (31:21):

And some people will start firing before they have gotten that clarity. And when you fire without clarity, you're giving a mixed message to your buyer and it's often not successful. And you know what? I'm not judging anybody who's done it because I have done it myself in my own business. Even last year I would've done it. It's just something that you constantly are going, "Hey, wait a second, I have to remember ready, aim, fire."

Lisa Larter (31:49):

Yeah. And I think it's hard for entrepreneurs because entrepreneurs are wired for creativity. And so entrepreneurs have no shortage of ideas. And I feel like in a lot of cases, entrepreneurs are chasing ideas that they think are going to help them be successful. And sometimes they end up running after butterflies or falling down rabbit holes that are not necessarily helping them, but it's like they're trying to get that next sale or get that next opportunity and so they're throwing all this stuff and they're hoping something will stick instead of being really focused on that whole ready aim, fire process.

Jane Atkinson (32:36):

Have you ever done the Kolbe Index?

Lisa Larter (32:38):

Yes.

Jane Atkinson (32:38):

In Kolbe, a quick start is someone who gets off the mark very quickly, makes a decision and moves forward with something. The key is implementation. Who's going to take this idea from where you have it to fruition? And a leader who is a quick start, which is me, can often keep their team spinning if they're not just staying the course. And I think-

Lisa Larter (33:07):

And if they have a team that is all quick start and nobody has a follow through skill, then you will spin each other.

Jane Atkinson (33:14):

Yes, exactly. So we definitely need the implementers on the team to help make sure. And I've got an amazing team of implementers and you know what? I should really encourage them to push back more because I think that I have this mission in my brain and really what it's going to take to get to the mission is this slow and steady growth, consistency, doing the things that we've been doing. It's really interesting when you feel like there are moments in time when there's a lot of business coming your way, a lot of eyes on you and then there are other times when you feel like you're in a lull. And I think when you're in a lull are the times when you're like, "Oh, I need to add something new."

Lisa Larter (34:02):

But you have time to think.

Jane Atkinson (34:03):

Yeah. You don't necessarily need something new. You just need to stay the course and be really clear about how many initiatives you can possibly... I do wonder, Lisa, whether or not your list gets tired when you have too many initiatives coming out at them.

Lisa Larter (34:24):

Yeah. Tired or maybe they get confused and feel like there's always something different, so there's no urgency to act because there was something new next week.

Jane Atkinson (34:34):

That's right. That's right.

Lisa Larter (34:35):

But as the entrepreneur who gets bored with staying the course, it can be hard to consistently aim and fire on your own initiatives.

Jane Atkinson (34:48):

Yeah. Going into fire and just sitting there for a good period of time is a good-wise move before, a lot of speakers will come to me wanting to reinvent and I know some who would barely keep a brand for 12 months and then they'd want to reinvent. And I'm not sure how often you feel that it's

prudent to reinvent, but if you're changing every single year, I think it's hard for people to really understand what you're all about.

Lisa Larter (35:17):

Yeah, I agree. And I think that sometimes one of the things that I'll say to people is business can come in the side door and the back door too. And just because you can do 10 things doesn't mean that you need to have all 10 pony tricks on your website. And when you have a conversation with somebody, you might have your three biggest opportunities on your website. And when you're having a discussion with somebody, you can mention a couple of the other opportunities. But it's like going shopping at the dollar store, right? It's just overwhelming and messy and there's so much stuff in there. You don't really go in there looking for a valuable experience. You don't want your website to be that experience for your buyer either.

Jane Atkinson (36:05):

Right. Right. The more focused, I think it can be a beautiful thing. We've been talking a lot... I just did a webinar yesterday on how to sell... A big chunk of it was how to sell virtual. And moving from the transaction where you go and you do one virtual speaking engagement, they pay you the fee and that's that, to selling a package, moving from transaction to transformation. So you're selling a package that really helps them get from point A to point B, which is oftentimes why they hire speakers in the first place. And so we laid out a lot of options for people, but I think where you would use that is in a proposal to a client, you say, "Here's option A. This is exactly what you've asked me for. I'll come and do one webinar on such and such a date for this fee." Boom, that's option A. But should you choose option B, then we have this whole smorgasbord of ideas and the outcomes are really what you're selling.

Lisa Larter (37:08):

So talk to me about this whole virtual speaking world that we are in. And if you are a new speaker who has not had a lot of stage time and/or you are a speaker who's only had stage time, and maybe you're not super comfortable in front of the computer, or you're not comfortable with the technology that you need to create a set, what should people be thinking about right now? What are the biggest priorities? What would you say the top three priorities are for anyone who wants to speak virtually and do a good job at it?

Jane Atkinson (37:48):

Well, I think that the technology has just come so far. We're seeing each other on Zoom today, and I know we're only going to use the audio, but Zoom has come a long way and they're going to continue to improve. A lot of people will have what we call a switcher. So Ecamm is a switcher, Prezi Video has a switcher built into it, are a couple of ways that you can have. So I'd be looking at you, but I'd have my slides up over my shoulder. And I could go back and forth between me on full screen, me with the slide or just the slide, like three options. I like Prezi Video because it's so easy. But my hope is that Zoom will come out with something soon. Just this week I was interviewing somebody from my podcast on how to leverage Zoom.

Jane Atkinson (38:49):

And she talked about them introducing lower thirds, which means across the bottom of the screen you could scroll a message or you could have your name in some... Like they would on a newscast. You could introduce lower third. So if Zoom keeps up, that may be all that you need. And so for yesterday's webinar, I was doing some new material and I didn't want the complication of Prezi Video. I just really wanted to do my material. So I just did my PowerPoint, I shared my screen, my little video. They could still see me. And then I went back and forth to me being full screen and that was plenty. They got a lot of really... It was probably my best webinar that I've ever done, because I was just so engaged with the material and not thinking about the technology.

Jane Atkinson (39:43):

So we want to keep it as simple for ourselves as we can so that we can show up with great material. There's lots of different ways to do a presentation. One of the great investments that I made not that long ago was a standing desk. So my desk can go up and down, which gives me the opportunity. If I want to stand up and teach, I have a big board, I could be writing on the board, or if I want to stand up and do a keynote, that gives people more of a full body kind of approach. And I think that that can be helpful for people to being able to see you move around. Depends on what you're getting paid to do. A lot of people are used to just a straight up kind of Zoom webinar.

Lisa Larter (40:26):

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Now, if you were speaking, how do you feel about your set? Meaning, you're having this conversation with me in your office. Is this the type of thing that is okay for a speaker to have, their office, or do they need to have a green screen set up with a fancy backdrop studio? What are you advising people to do right now?

Jane Atkinson (40:53):

I would say, just make it look pretty, whatever's going on behind you. If you have a really messy bookshelf, just clean it up. Make it look pretty. Take a bunch of books away and put some nice pieces that make it all look balanced and even, and really just take a screenshot of what the person is seeing, who's watching you do your thing, and that will allow you to see, "Okay, well, I can see my phone is there. I don't really need that. Let me just change my screen slightly. And oh, yeah, I'm going to include that instead." I can really frame up my shot ahead of time.

Jane Atkinson (41:33):

I've been using Zoom for years, as I'm sure you have as well. Every morning I come down, turn on Zoom and just look at what my shot looks like. Okay, I need to go outside, do something. Usually I have my door open all the way to the back of the house and okay, I need to close the basement door and do a couple of things and then I'm ready to go. Just look at your shot, make it look pretty. I mean, that's a pretty low bar, but I think people maybe just need to be more intentional about it.

Lisa Larter (42:02):

Yeah. Yeah. Absolutely. So tell me about your new book, who is this book for and what should they expect to get from this book?

Jane Atkinson (42:15):

So the new book is called *Scaling Your Speaking Business*. And if I have the cover, which I do, fairly handy, *10 Strategies for Earning More While Doing Less*. *10 Strategies for Earning More While Doing Less*. If we have emerging speakers who are listening in, *The Wealthy Speaker 2.0* is really book number one. It lays out that ready, aim, fire framework. It gives you everything you need to get started. This is the next one for the intermediate to seasoned speaker who really wants to scale. That said, the book could be used for scaling any business really. We do have a big chunk in there on selling virtual

and developing the revenue streams that you love. But there are a lot of things in there that are just great for scaling any business, like setting up systems and getting the right team in place and you know how to make money, but do you know how to keep money? That type of thing.

Lisa Larter (43:17):

My favorite topic, keeping money.

Jane Atkinson (43:19):

I know. Mine too. The next book might just be about money.

Lisa Larter (43:24):

So this book is book number three or four for you?

Jane Atkinson (43:29):

Well, it's actually book number five or six for me. I have a journal and a daily success planner and I wrote *The Wealthy Speaker* twice. So the 2.0 version was an entirely new book. I have *The Epic Keynote*, which is also about presentation skills. And then I wrote an off brand book about *The Frog Whisperer*, about finding love, which is only available on... I don't even own a copy of it. It's available on ebook only.

Lisa Larter (44:04):

That's awesome. So I heard something interesting about you that I didn't know.

Jane Atkinson (44:09):

Oh.

Lisa Larter (44:10):

I heard that you bought a \$15,000 trailer when you were in your 20s to fix it up and that you wrote your first two books there.

Jane Atkinson (44:21):

That's exactly right. So when I was still single, I came home from Texas after 9/11 and started my business. I came back to London, Ontario to be closer to my parents. And my deal with myself was if I'm going to live in London, Ontario, which there's no mountains or ocean or anything really close by, so I

thought, "Okay, my deal would be I would get a place up near Lake Huron." And so I actually bought a little shack and fixed it up, made it my own. I'd be sitting there writing on the front porch and the hummingbird would be right there keeping me company.

Jane Atkinson (45:02):

And I was close to the lake, so I could go walk at sunset on the beach. And eventually I met and married my husband John and we ended up having that place for another, probably eight years after that. And then fast forward, we gave it up, probably had a couple of years off, and then we ended up buying a lake house up north. So now we have to travel three hours instead of one to get to our lake property. But we just did a major renovation on it and we cannot wait to get up there in the spring.

Lisa Larter (45:39):

That's awesome. Great story. So talk to me about books. Does every speaker need to write a book?

Jane Atkinson (45:47):

I think it helps you get really clear on your content. And for me it was a game changer in terms of leveling up my confidence in my fees. So I believe not everybody is going to have a best selling book. I think that for people to think that they have to have a best selling book in order to be a speaker, that's not true. I think with self-publishing, anybody can publish a book. I would suggest that you want it to be the best book that you can possibly put out. And if you end up liking it, you might find that you're due for a new one every three years.

Lisa Larter (46:28):

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah, I'm in the process of writing my second one right now, and it's hard. It's hard to stick to it and write every day and be okay with writing something that's not great. But I think that when you write your first draft, right? It's not perfect. And if you try to edit as you write, it'll take you forever. And so trying to just do the work.

Jane Atkinson (46:56):

It's funny, I realized that my editor and my interior designer, jacket designer and I, we got on a Zoom call this year and we had been working together for over 20 years.

Lisa Larter (47:09):

Wow.

Jane Atkinson (47:10):

Yeah. And we just have this level of trust now that in the end there's going to be a good looking book.

Lisa Larter (47:20):

Yeah.

Jane Atkinson (47:20):

And it's going to be good. And there have been times when I've gone to my editor and said, "Is this any good?" And then I started getting the reviews in and I'm standing taller and taller and taller. And so now I'm at the point where I'm like, "You've got to read this book. It's really good." But there have been moments where I was like, "Is this any good?" I really let the process draw out over a long period of time. And so it lost its luster for me. And as soon as I read it back the last time I was like, "Actually, yeah, this is really good." And I think you'll probably end up doing the same thing.

Lisa Larter (47:55):

Yeah. Yeah. All right. Well, Jane, this has been fantastic. I feel like I could talk to you all day and... I have so many more questions for you about your academy and how you got clear on what you wanted to put in there and all this stuff. But like I said to you at the beginning, you definitely have to come back and have [crosstalk 00:48:18] another conversation with me later on. So what I'm going to do is I'm going to put all of your social media stuff and your website, and your free offer that you have for speakers and all of that stuff into the show notes to make it super easy for people to find.

Jane Atkinson (48:40):

Great.

Lisa Larter (48:40):

But as we wrap up, is there any final piece of wisdom and advice that you would like to leave the audience with if they are considering a career in speaking? And if there's one thing that they should do as a result of listening to this interview in relation to you, what would it be?

Jane Atkinson (49:02):

Well, we actually have something that helps people. It's a PDF called "How hard is it to get to \$1 million". And so it takes you through all of the different income levels. If you want to earn \$100,000 or \$500,000 or \$1 million, it walks you through you're going to need this and this and this and this. And so if people want to grab that, it's speakerlauncher.com/million/. And I think we said it early on, that whole PDF keeps coming back to consistency. Just being willing to put in the time, there's not anybody that I know of who was an overnight success. There was 10 years of hard work that went into a flashpoint that then took the person to the next level. So I would say, be willing to do the work.

Lisa Larter (50:02):

Yeah. And I would say that also includes be willing to do the work on becoming a good speaker. A lot of times when you first start speaking... At least I know I was terrible when I first started. I think I'm okay now, but I'm definitely [crosstalk 00:50:14] not as good as some people.

Jane Atkinson (50:16):

Oh, you're really good now, Lisa. You don't give yourself enough credit and yes, work the craft. That is your best form of marketing, is a great speech.

Lisa Larter (50:25):

Absolutely. Thank you so much, Jane. Always a pleasure to connect with you. I really appreciate you sharing your wisdom with everyone today.

Jane Atkinson (50:33):

Thanks, Lisa.

Lisa Larter (50:35):

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 and until next time remember, done is always better than perfect.



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

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