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## Resourceful Designer Episode 324 You Are An Expert

On the podcast today, I share how being stopped at a police roadblock taught me a valuable lesson about business. Let's get to it.

I wanna share a story with you today. This isn't a story about graphic or web design. It isn't even a story about business. But it is something that taught me a valuable business lesson that I still use today, and it's a lesson that you should hear.

I like to say that I'm an only child with 2 older brothers. You see, I was a, quote unquote, happy accident. Or since my birthday is on September 26th, I always teased my parents that I was the product of a wild Christmas party. You do the math. Either way, I wasn't planned. There are 15 years difference between me and my middle brother, and another 2 years to my oldest brother. Now both of them had moved out of the house by the time I was 4 years old. So as far back as I can remember, I was the only child living at home. Now this had its benefits as I was a mama's boy, and I received special treatment that my older brothers never had. But that's not what this story is about.

My oldest brother, Bob, moved to Vancouver, British Columbia when I was 8 or 9 years old. And I didn't get to see him much since I lived with my parents in Cornwall, Ontario. Now for those of you unfamiliar with Canadian geography, that's roughly 45 100 kilometers or 28 100 miles. Now I did make the trip with my parents to see him when I was 10 years old and again at 15. And it's the latter of these 2 where my story takes place. My brother was getting married on December 27, 1984. And my parents and I made the trip to Vancouver for the wedding. Now I remember it was 1984 because for Christmas, my brother gave me a cassette tape of some dude I'd never heard before.

And I remember being confused when I opened it and wondered, why would I, a Canadian teenager, want a cassette titled Born in the USA? Although, I do admit there were a few catchy tunes on it. Anyway, we had a great Christmas. The wedding was beautiful, and then my brother and my new sister-in-law We're off for a few days honeymooning before their planned return on New Year's Eve. Now my grandmother and uncle lived in Victoria, British Columbia, which is on Vancouver Island. Now they had moved there a few years earlier, and we hadn't seen them since. And nanny, that's what I called my grandmother, she wasn't well enough to attend the wedding, so we made arrangements to visit them while the newlyweds were away. Now Vancouver Island is accessible only by air or water. And since my dad had rented a car for a stay, we decided to take the ferry.

Now it was a beautiful trip. I remember standing by the railing, looking across the water at the waves and the various islands as they went by, and the snow gently falling down. But soon we reach the island. And shortly after debarking the ferry, we encountered a stoppage in traffic. Up ahead, we can see that a few police cars were blocking the road. Now, let me debunk a stereotype of Canada. Yes, we are referred to as the great white north, which is a moniker we proudly support. However, that doesn't mean that the whole country is constantly covered in snow.

We have 4 distinct seasons, And I've often seen the summer weather report indicating that we, here in Canada, are the warmest location in all of North America. And when winter rolls around, not all of our country has to deal with the snow that is synonymous with our great nation. In fact, other than its Olympic grade mountains, British Columbia rarely sees any accumulation of snow in the winter. So my parents and I were on Vancouver Island stuck in a line of cars wondering what's going on. After a while, a police officer came up to our window and told my dad that the highway to Victoria,

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where we were headed, was closed due to an unexpected snowfall. It turns out that the plow that they used to clear the road had broken down, and it would be a couple of hours until one could arrive from another part of the island. Now there was roughly 3 to 4 centimeters of snow on the ground. That's about 1 to 1 and a half inches for my American friends.

And after contemplating this news for a moment, My dad turned to my mother and I and said, I'll be right back, and then quickly jumped out of the car. Now he walked back and caught up to the police officer who was still informing motorists behind us of the road's closure. My mom and I watched as they talked. The officer kept shaking his head, raising his hands as my dad, someone who's always calm and collected, continued to talk to him in a very determined manner. The officer finally put his hand up indicating my dad to stop, then he took out and spoke into a walkie talkie. A few minutes later, 2 more police officers joined them. One of them was wearing a different hat, which indicated that he was probably the superior, and he took the lead talking to my father. My mom and I watched from the car as my dad pulled out his wallet and handed something to the man.

The officer looked at it, showed it to the other 2, and then handed it back to my dad. Then, all 4 of them walked back towards our car, where the 3 police officers circled around the car as if they were somehow inspecting our vehicle. Seemingly satisfied, the lead officer said something to my dad who then got back into our car. Now without saying a word to us, my dad put the car in gear and one of the police officers directed him onto the shoulder of the road where we proceeded to slowly drive past the long line of stopped cars with people staring at us wondering what was going on. When we got to the front, we waited as 1 of the officers got in 1 of the police cruisers and backed it up, allowing us to pass. Then, with a wave and nod to the lead policeman, my dad proceeded onto the on ramp where we continued the 30 to 40 minute drive to Victoria, British Columbia with the whole highway to ourselves. So what had happened? When my father approached the police officer and asked again why the highway was closed, he was told that an inch and a half of snow made it too dangerous to drive on. Calmly, my father explained to the officer that we're from Ontario, One of the provinces in Canada that gets the most snow.

And where we're from, they probably wouldn't even send out the snowplows for this little coverage. That's when the officer called his superior over, hence the discussion that my mom and I had witnessed. And once again, my dad repeated his plea to this lead officer. And my dad showed him his Ontario driver's license as proof of where we're from. Then, they walked back and he showed the officers that our rental car was equipped with all season radials, tires that are rated for driving on snow. It's something that's common nowadays, but it wasn't so common back in 1984. But my dad was always the prudent type, And he had insisted that our rental car have all season radials. Convinced that the road conditions were not an obstacle for my dad, The police officers actually let us proceed.

We drove to Victoria without a problem and had a great visit with my grandmother and uncle. And that's the story. But what business lesson that I learned from this? I learned at the age of 15 that you don't have to know everything to be considered an expert. You only need to know more than the person you're talking to or the person asking the question. I believe there's actually a teacher saying That goes something along the lines of you don't need to know everything, you only need to know more than your students. It's the same principle. My dad was a good driver, but no more than any other driver that you see on the road. And by no means Would I call him an expert driver? In fact, I'm sure those 3 police officers with the various police driver training that they all have to go through Had way more driving experience than my dad ever had, except for one area.

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To those officers on Vancouver Island who were not used to driving on snow covered roads, my father was just that. He was an expert at driving in snow. In that instance, his credentials Put him in a class of driver much higher than those officers were in. And in doing so, it earned him their respect and acknowledgement, and it bestowed a confidence in them that we would be okay driving on their snow covered highway. So many people in life are shackled by self doubt. Maybe you have grand ambitions for your business, but you're afraid to follow through. Perhaps, your lack of experience is something holding you back. You fear that you can't Charge similar prices to what other more experienced designers are charging.

Oh, no. No. No. I can never charge \$2,000 for a logo or no, I could never charge \$10,000 for a website. I'm not that good yet. Well, I'm here to tell you, you don't need to be an expert to succeed or to charge similar prices to what other designers do. That's the lesson I learned on that December day on Vancouver Island. There are plenty of people out there With less knowledge and less expertise than you, we're currently doing much better than you are, and it's because they're not letting their limitations hold them back.

And there are always always gonna be people with better skills and more qualifications than you. If you wait until you consider yourself an expert, You're never gonna go anywhere. You're never gonna succeed. The skills and knowledge that you have today, those are valuable, and they're worth charging for. They're worth charging enough for. You see, clients hire you because they can't do what it is that they want you to do for them. And the fact that you can do it, Even if your knowledge is limited, makes you an expert in their eyes, and they're thrilled to hire you. And they are willing to pay for that expertise.

I recently read a story of a lawyer who like to cross stitch at the end of his busy day. It's the way he relaxed. But he was embarrassed to share his pastime with his peers, So he kept it a secret. Until one day, his aunt visited and noticed all the lovely cross stitch pieces he had around his home. Now she mentioned in passing that she loves to cross stitch, but there's a certain stitch that she has a lot of trouble doing. And no matter how many times she She looks at the instruction book. She just can't get it. At this point, the lawyer revealed his passion to his aunt, And he offered to record a video of him doing the stitch that she was having trouble with so that she could watch the video and see exactly how he does it and finally learned for herself.

So what he did was record himself doing the stitch. He posted it to YouTube and sent the link to his aunt. But to his surprise, he started getting comments from strangers saying that they also had a problem with that stitch, and thanking him for teaching them the proper method. The comments were also asking if he had any other cross stitching training videos. So he decided to post a few more, and they were all met with raving reviews. After a time doing this, This lawyer decided to quit his job. He got out of law, and he now cross stitches full time. He has a website where he sells courses and patterns, and products, and now earns his living doing something that he loves.

Now he's the first one to admit, he's not an expert. He's still learning. He says he constantly messes up, and he keeps striving to master techniques that are currently beyond his skill level. But to his audience, to the people watching him on YouTube, he is an expert, and they thank him for it, and he's making a living doing it. So what's holding you back? You may not consider yourself an expert graphic designer or web designer, But that's no reason not to put yourself out there or not to charge what you should be charging. There are clients out there looking for people to help them. The skill level of the person they hire is of no consequence to them just as long as that person can get the job done. And if you can do the job, then why can't the person they hire be you? And that's what I wanted to talk about today.

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