

Ep #21: Power Scripts for Introverts



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With Your Host

Rachel Cannon

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Welcome to *Loudmouth Introvert*, a podcast for helping creative introverted entrepreneurs thrive, despite living in a world that's designed for extroverts to succeed. If you're ready to make more money and build the creative business you've been dreaming of, you're in the right place. I'm your host Rachel Cannon.

Today's topic was a direct request from Pamela Durkin on Instagram, who wants to know "How can we deal with conflict without withering?" Well, Pam, that is a fantastic question, and certainly a situation that we have all, at some time or another, been thrown into – often with less than satisfactory results. I definitely don't like to paint with broad brushstrokes, but I can't imagine anyone actually enjoying conflict. Except maybe trial attorneys? Personally, I hate it with the fire of a thousand suns. I can't really move on unless I feel things have been resolved, so an ongoing conflict is a no-go for me. As much as I don't want there to be a confrontation, I also can't let things linger because it will just eat away at me. So over the years, I've had to figure out my coping mechanism, and that's what I'm sharing with you today, including an awesome resource that you can find in the show notes, but more on that later.

Right now, I want to know: have you ever found yourself in a situation where you were caught off guard - either by a request, or a suggestion - and you felt obligated to "perform" for someone? Like, you didn't really know the answer right then, and you wanted more time to think about it, but it seemed like the only acceptable thing to do was to offer feedback right there, on the spot? This is one of my least favorite kinds of scenarios, because I feel like I end up being in a codependent position - I don't want to look incapable, but I also don't know what I think right then. So in weighing the options, in the past, I've erred on the side of "appear capable, answer now" so that the other person doesn't think less of me. I know...crazy, right? Because of course, what happens in those situations (always with clients) is that once I have time to think about it, I want to change my answer. And sometimes they are frustrated with me. I've agreed to

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something I know isn't right for me in order to keep the other person happy, but in the end neither of us was happy (that's codependence, just FYI).

In my evolution as a business owner, I eventually had to put a stop to this practice because it was eroding my confidence. As much as I didn't like being put on the spot, I also didn't like feeling like I'd disappointed someone. I was tired of having to explain myself after the fact that, yes, I know I told you X when you asked me, but now I think Y is actually the right answer. I wanted to feel collected and in control of my thoughts with clients, rather than feeling like I was constantly changing course.

It started with me being willing to say "I'm not sure, let me think about that and I'll get back to you." I was shocked and amazed when clients accepted that as answer. How could it have been that easy all along? I'd been torturing myself, playing this little mental game where they said "jump!" And I said "how high?" When all along, I could have been saying "I can't jump right now, but when I can, I'll let you know."

Remember this: we are business owners and experts in our fields. However, when navigating the landscape of client relationships, many of us are intimidated when we think about how to establish our position as leaders on a project. We're open to collaborating, but we don't want to become the court jester, there to fill the silence with quips and quotes. The great news is that maintaining your role as the authority in your field is as simple as identifying your boundaries, effectively using your voice, and changing the language that you use.

Have you ever started an email that read something like "Hi Jane! I was just checking in to see if..." Sounds completely normal, right? But did you

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hear the little word that weakens the whole phrase? We sprinkle in phrases like “I’m just” as a way to soften our message. (Because we couldn’t possibly be direct and ask for what we need, right?) What if the email read “Hi Jane! I’m checking in to see if...” That email came from the Alpha, did it not? Whereas the first one came from the submissive position.

AND THAT’S THE ROOT OF THIS WHOLE DISCUSSION. We don’t even realize we’ve adopted that codependent behavior because it’s disguised as politeness, not wanting to sound too harsh, not wanting to come across as abrasive. But what we do is demonstrate that we are in the “cowering” position when we unnecessarily fill up space with those kinds of words and phrases.

I’m sure you’ve heard the saying that we teach people how to treat us, and many of us understand what that means on a broad level - we wouldn’t tolerate abuse or unkindness - but because we are building businesses, we can fall into a trap of signaling to the client that we are the “lesser” in this relationship. And if you’ve ever had a client who really thrives in that dynamic, you know how awful that can turn out. They’re on an ego/power trip, and you’re just trying to do a good job and hopefully end on a good note.

Sometimes, we need help articulating what’s in our heads. When we really examine what this is about, we discover that what we want is to uphold our boundaries, express our need for more time to process, and empower ourselves to effectively communicate our ideas. And for some reason, all of that feels wrong to creative introverts. We think that when we can’t “think on our feet” we appear weak and foolish. No doubt because this is often a trait used to describe someone who is intellectually agile - lawyers are often able to think on their feet. Politicians. First responders. But y’all - we’re

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creatives and introverts, and in our line of work, no one's fate, including the country's, or life is hanging in the balance!

What we must do, from the onset, is assume the role of director. The relationship will progress according to our methods, and sometimes that involves setting boundaries. This is a tough one, I know. If you remember Episode 3 of the podcast, we spent some time talking about how important it is for us to stop saying yes to things we hate. Or things we don't really want to do. Or things that drain us. So how difficult is it for you to say no? Probably pretty difficult, as our unwillingness to use it is ingrained in us almost from the time we learn to say it. But if we allow ourselves to use the word "no" as a way to set boundaries, we discover that all it means is that we've looked at our options and made the choice that something else is better for us. It doesn't have to be a negative, which is where I think creative introverts get their hesitation in using it with clients; on the contrary, just deciding that you're not going to step out of your wheelhouse to appease someone is actually a win-win for everyone involved. You want to deliver the best service and experience, and that's exactly what they want too. Sometimes, that means having to say no as a way to set a boundary. I love this quote by Lori Deschne that says "You can be a good person with a kind heart and still say no."

On many occasions, it's less about saying no or setting a boundary, and just asking for what you need as a way to show the client that you're giving them your best effort. Back to my previous example of feeling like I should have all of the answers, all the time, to really prove my value to my clients. However, I usually need time to mull it over when the consequences of my answer could have heavy or long-lasting impacts on my clients. I no longer feel like you have to have an answer on the spot, because I discovered the power of saying "I don't know right now. Let me think about it when I can really focus on it and I'll get back to you with my thoughts." Avoiding asking them can come at a high price for creative introverts. We can hope they'll

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get the hint, but what usually ends up happening for me is that I'm not delivering my best work, and the client begins to regularly make me doubt my choices, and that is all about them maintaining power. But maybe in your case, it's not that serious. Instead it's something like asking them for some time to work alone, where you can really be creative and focus without distractions. This again establishes your role as the creative director by indicating that you work a certain kind of way, and in order for them to get the best result possible, you'd like the opportunity to give that to them. In the end, that means you're more effective and able to deliver your creative service in a way that dazzles them.

I'm sure by now you've learned that effective communication is key in building your business. But when it comes to communicating our ideas, too many of us chicken out at the last minute, opting instead to give a light presentation of our thoughts. We do it for several reasons, but the biggest one is that we don't want to seem pushy or inflexible. You know, you don't want to be one of those insufferable creative geniuses who thinks it's her way or the highway, so you water down your thoughts with words that weaken your ideas. We even do this when asking for the money we're owed for our services! And yes, I've been guilty. "Just sending a friendly reminder that your invoice was due 10 days ago! Please let me know if you have questions!" There is an attorney who still hasn't paid the measly balance on her bill from 8 years ago because I was too chicken to call her out on it. Sidenote: avoidance is not an effective strategy. What it amounts to is this - we're taught that direct communication is vulgar and off putting, and that the power all rests with our clients. But we have to be willing to shake off the watered down language in order to get the best outcome - for both us and our clients. When we can communicate our thoughts and ideas concisely and directly, it means we're being effective in our role as the director. And that is a big part of why clients seek our help - they can't direct this thing on their own, and they want someone who can take the reigns!

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So, while navigating all of these nuances in business can be tricky, it's obvious that by not preparing for them, they're not going to go away. When we know where and why our boundaries exist, it becomes easier to balance competing demands on our limited energy resources and creativity bandwidth. We must be willing to ask for what we need, because ultimately it's the difference between a career that has forward momentum, or one that is stagnant and disappointing. And while it's easy to continue to show deference in our communication because it "feels polite," direct communication allows us to have a commanding (not demanding) presence in a room, which leads to respect.

All of these tips will help you preserve your creativity and energy, and if you want even more help, you can find an AMAZING resource in today's show notes. Just go to rachelcannonlimited.com/21 and look for the Power Scripts for Introverts resource. It's an incredible asset that you'll use again and again - with scripts ranging from a "hard pass" to others where you're willing to concede or negotiate. Being prepared with what to say, and how you'll say it, can be a life saver for introverts when we're put on the spot. The rule we must live by is that energy out = energy lost. Arming yourself with these power phrases will help you preserve your energy, thus helping you maintain your creativity. When we lose energy, our creativity also suffers, and that leads a feeling of loss of control. Ultimately, to be a better entrepreneur, clear, direct communication is key!

And of course, don't forget to go to rachelcannonlimited.com/workshop register for my 6-Figure Secrets for Creative Introverts workshop in March! We'll be doing more deep dives like the one we did today, and I can't wait to see you all there. In the meantime, if you'd like to interact with me more, you can join our private Facebook community! To request access, just go to my Instagram account ([rclinteriors](https://www.instagram.com/rclinteriors)) and tap the "Podcast" highlight under

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my bio to find the link to join! We do all kinds of fun stuff there – sharing funny introvert memes, some Facebook live sessions, and more. I'd love to see you there soon!

Hey, y'all, if you love the show and you find it useful, I would really appreciate it if you would leave me a rating and a review on Apple Podcasts, or iTunes if you're an Android or Windows user. Your feedback helps other creative introverted entrepreneurs find the show and it helps me create an awesome show that provides tons of value.

So, visit rachelcannonlimited.com/podcastlaunch for directions on how to subscribe, rate, and review.

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