



EPISODE 43

The Middle Finger Project with Ash Ambirge

SEE THE SHOW NOTES AT: jenlehner.com/043

Gary Vee:	00:03	Hey guys, it's Gary Vaynerchuk and you're listening to the Front Row Entrepreneur Podcast with our girl, Jen.
Jen Lehner:	00:14	Our guest today is an internet entrepreneur, creative writers, speaker, and advocate for women being brave and doing disobedient things with their careers in their lives. She's the author of the middle finger project, which is both the name of her blog as well as the title of her recent book. So the front road podcast is all about taking a front seat in life and business. And I don't interview people on every episode, but when I do, they're always people who have made it a point to claim their spot in the front row in some way, the front row in life or in business. They aren't afraid to be seen and say, Hey, I, here I am. I'm sitting in front. Check me out. I can't think of anybody more front row than our guest today. Welcome to the show. My best friend, Ash, Amber J. Listen,
Ash Ambirge:	01:01	I'm definitely sitting in the front row at the pizza parlor too. For what it's worth. That's, that's the best place to sit in front now. Okay. So, so actually

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Jen Lehner:	01:12	Ash and I don't really know each other, but I had to introduce her as my best friend because after I read this book, Ash, I felt like you were my very best friend. You said all the things I needed to hear in the moment that I needed to hear them.
Ash Ambirge:	01:26	Thank you. You know, that's the highest compliment I can receive. Honestly. So many people have been like, gosh, it's like you're spying on me in my bedroom or something. I'm like, I'm definitely taking that as a compliment.
Jen Lehner:	01:36	Okay. Okay. The perfect segue into this. So I told all my, first of all, I made it required reading for everybody in my, in my group coaching program. They all freaked out about it. They all loved it. Uh, and I told all my friends about it. And this is, um, this, hopefully you can hear it. If you can't, I'll, uh, tell me if you can hear it. This is was sent to me by a friend of mine through Instagram message and then I downloaded it and I'm playing it for you now. So tell me, okay, here it goes.
Teresa:	02:06	Okay. I've been listening to that book and I'm on chapter 19 just started shit. Like there's even a couple of chapters that are like smashes around the head. And the chapter I've just listened to about working too hard. She's literally just described my life. I'm not even kidding you like dying to the number of hours I work and what I do for food and honestly, Oh God, this is good. She's good, isn't she?
Ash Ambirge:	02:39	Okay. So I mean like first of all, I would, first of all British like British friends do have, I'm jealous now, right?
Jen Lehner:	02:49	And she's got the sexy, sultry voice. She's got a podcast too. And I'm just like, guys, such an unfair advantage you have with that voice of yours.
Ash Ambirge:	02:56	But my God, that was so nice of you. Yeah, heard most of it. That was amazing.
Jen Lehner:	03:01	Um, well I'll, I'll insert it, you know, properly. So, uh, in the, in the replay, but basically what she said is you blew her



mind because right down about working too hard. And she said right down to the food I eat. And, and that's the thing. I mean the book is so incredibly relatable. It's laugh out loud. Funny. It's inspiring. It's informative. Let's just back right. Let's just back up here because I don't want to get ahead of me cause people are like, who is, you know the people who don't already know you and how fabulous you are. Let's just back up. What is the middle finger project and how did all this get started?

Ash Ambirge: 03:40

Man, I'm just, this is the best like this is, this is why you write a book. You just get to get on podcasts all day and you're really nice things about yourself. I'm loving the middle finger project book. The book is for anyone who hates their job and they're feeling really disillusioned by the real world but they don't know what to do next. And that's been my career for the last 11 years running a company by the same name. Also called the middle finger project, supporting women to get the guts to do what they actually really want to do. Cause there's always something they kind of wish they were doing and they're not doing it.

Jen Lehner: 04:13

So when was that point for you? When you were like, I'm, I'm just going to do what I want to do and I'm going to I'm going to do what feels right to me. I mean, you definitely have taken an untraditional road to get where you are today. Like where did you start?

Ash Ambirge: 04:33

Yeah, I mean it's, it's, it's so hard. I was so pissed off, Jen, because here I was when I was young, uh, come in from rural Pennsylvania and this trailer park, I never really saw work modeled for me in a way that felt normal and right. And I never understood. So I set off on this grand mission when I was a kid to basically go to the big city and become somebody answer the question of what does it mean to do work that I, I'm proud of and have a life that I was proud of because up until then I wasn't very proud of my life. And so, right, like you go to the city, I think a lot of us can relate to that. But when I got there and I started



doing all of the stuff I was supposed to be doing and I was ACEing it,

- Ash Ambirge: 05:19 I had lemon pepper, chicken baby, like I could go in and target and fill up my car. It was awesome. I was living that middle-class life. I started the middle-class project way before the middle finger project. I love it, right?
- Ash Ambirge: 05:36 Killing it. And then I realized that that normal was the most disappointing thing that ever happened to me. And so he who had been betting my whole life that this was the key. I was extra pissed then I think most people were because I was like, what is this?
- Ash Ambirge: 05:52 Very upset and just kind of like distraught and disappointed and disillusion. And so I think
- Jen Lehner: 05:58 since day one it has been a mission for me to figure out, well, what does it mean then to do work I'm proud of and live the life that I feels good to live. And I think that, I mean you break it down in the book and you know, and, and just hearing you say that I know is like music to people's ears. Like, you know, wait a minute, I don't, you know, I don't have to just accept mediocre and boring, but it's a whole other thing to actually like do it because you had all these sunk costs, like you had spent all this time and you did all the right things and you landed really good jobs. It wasn't like there was anything like terrible, it was just, it was terrible in how just disappointing I like is this, it is what you said like is this, is this really all there is? And then, and then what? So like how did you actually shift from your middle class life to having this glamorous life that you have right now? And it is pretty glamorous.
- Ash Ambirge: 06:58 You know, I just, I have to comment on the sunk cost piece because I think that does hold everyone back, especially folks who have spent eight years of their life going to med school or going to become a lawyer and everyone feels like they can't waste these things, but I just can't imagine looking around me and then wasting the next 60 years instead just because I didn't want to



waste eight. The math doesn't add up for me. So I think that that was one thing. But really the key for me was getting to know all of the people that were my managers and my bosses. And you know, the guy working down at the DMV, all of these adults who are supposed to be in charge of stuff

- Jen Lehner: 07:40 and realizing that half the time I was smarter than them, it was really bad.
- Ash Ambirge: 07:46 But I think that most of us just assume that by default, people who are ahead of us in line, uh, are there for some reason because they, they are deserving of it. But in reality, Florida really only works if, if you trust that somebody else is smarter than you. So for me it was kind of like, well, wait a minute here. I don't know that those are ideas. Make those ideas make sense. And I thought that some of the ideas I had made sense, but no one was willing to listen to me because this was the way it was done or this is, you know, tradition. And that was just very frustrating because I was looking for way to find no more meaning and more happiness. And even in the work I was doing and no one would let me because of the stupid red tape.
- Jen Lehner: 08:25 Do you have the book in front of you by chance? Huh? What do you want to look at? I want you to read page 50 I mean, it would be better if you read it.
- Ash Ambirge: 08:36 I'll totally read it.
- Jen Lehner: 08:38 Okay. I can wait.
- Ash Ambirge: 08:39 Let's see. I got a galley right here on my, uh, and my computer. Let's see if it's the same page 50.
- Jen Lehner: 08:46 And it's right under, it's like, it starts at create,
- Ash Ambirge: 08:50 let's see here. I've got, yup, yup, yup. Here's page 50. Yeah. Starts at create.



Jen Lehner:	08:57	You want me to do the whole page? Yeah. All the way to better.
Ash Ambirge:	09:00	Okay. so this starts with, yes, the word create because you don't need a license to create. You can create today right now and nobody can stop you. You can do the work you want to be doing simply by starting. You don't need to wait for the new Yorker. Lovely as it is to publish your article. You don't need to wait for somebody else to approve of your skillset. You do not need to wait until you have an official title or you have been given an official role or you are on someone else's official payroll. You can do the work now. What is the most magnificent thing you can dream up? Take that and then figure out how to sell it to somebody and done. You're hired and now you are doing exactly what you want. I promise you it is not as hard as most people make it. Most people over-complicate and overthink everything, but the reality is this. Our entire world is just one big marketplace of people selling things to other people. And that means that whatever it is that you love and that you are good at, that you are interested in, you can also sell. And when you can sell, you can create whatever job you want.
Jen Lehner:	10:15	Wait, where was the end? You guys? Keep going. Keep end it better. Oh, I see. Okay. Yeah. Next page. Sorry. It's a lot. You weren't expecting this, but it's so good. Thanks Jen. No, I mean it really is. It's not about getting hired anymore. It's about having enough guts to hire you
Ash Ambirge:	10:31	self. We were all waiting around with our fingers on our noses for someone else to miraculously show up, point us out of a crowd and tell us that we've been chosen for the job. You're all waiting for an authority to tell us that we're the one, but in today's economy, the way you get your job is not the same as the way you did in the past. Today, the way you get your dream job is by showing up, staking a claim, and doing the work that interests you without being told to voluntarily and with Gusto. If you want to make your very own line of clothing, you go make it. If you want to be an interior designer known for her mad



wallpapering skills, go wallpaper, everything you see. If you want to be a writer, get writing and then share your work over and over again until they can't ignore you anymore. Because while the rest of the world is getting ready, you are out there getting better.

- Jen Lehner: 11:32 Oh, I love it so much and I'm sorry to make you read all that you guys, listeners, as you can imagine, her audio book, which I've also read cover to cover is so good because Ash actually reads it and, and you could see she's, she's really, really good at that. Um, so I love this and that's exactly, first of all, that's what you did. You went out and you created your own thing and you didn't wait anybody and you started
- Ash Ambirge: 11:54 it by how, yeah, I started the middle finger project simply by writing. I mean, that was the thing. I wanted to be a writer. I had this urge. So at first I tried the traditional stuff. I started taking travel writing classes at the local community college and I started, uh, you know, trying to find ways that I can pitch my own pieces to the local newspaper, whatever. I remember I even pitched some literary agents back then and I was like, no, I was a baby. I didn't even know enough to do what I was doing, but I knew I wanted to do this thing. And then I realized, gosh, you know what? I don't actually need anybody to publish my stuff because that's what WordPress is where I can get online and I can make a website and I can publish it myself. It doesn't matter.
- Ash Ambirge: 12:36 I don't have an audience. I can still do what I want to be doing. And I mean, it was just so simple. And so I did three times a week I would get online and I would publish my ideas and my thoughts very similar to what we're talking about now and kind of just depicting and analyzing. Well really the state of the modern workforce looked like and was this the best we could do? And then one day you heard something on the re on the radio about, I think it was Rhianna's album was dropping. Yes. That's exactly what happened. Yeah. I mean I wasn't, I didn't, you know, come out swing in with my brand new



freelance career. I didn't even realize that the internet was a way that I could make money. I was just trying to write at the time and so money wasn't a huge concern for me, which means that eventually I ran out of it and then weird.

Ash Ambirge: 13:31 And then, you know, kind of in a couple of moments of desperation, I did find myself just going like, Whoa. And I was in my car one night and I heard this radio announcer just, and he was just having a regular day and this guy gets on and he's like, all right, everybody, uh, today the new Rihanna album is available for preorder on iTunes. And as soon as I just read the word order, it occurred to me, I just, I realized that a art is worth paying for because that's exactly what Rihanna is out there doing. She is compiling arts with her from music and a B, that art doesn't need to be finished yet in order for you to sell it and exchange it for future value. And so I thought, Oh my God, well if I wanted to be a writer, I mean, isn't this what books are books are no different than a music album?

Ash Ambirge: 14:19 Their ideas packaged together. So what if I took some of these ideas and I packaged them? And what if I actually asked someone if they wanted to exchange it for some financial compensation? I mean, they had been exchanging their attention via my blog for a year by then. So maybe they would also exchange, you know, financial compensation. And that's exactly what happened. I put it together and within 24 hours I had my first \$2,000. It was bananas. It's amazing. And sort of everything sort of grew out of that, right? It did. Because it's addictive. Then it's like, well, wait a minute. This is a much smarter way to, to earn a living if I can package my ideas and uh, and do so in a way that other people want to consume them. Isn't that a better business model than just talking to people one on one? And by golly it really was.

Jen Lehner: 15:09 Yeah, I love it so much. And I think so the first part of the book, you know, you, you tell your story, which is your own personal story, which is completely, it's amazing. Your whole journey really is amazing, especially to be so young and to have had like all this, all this already. You



know that you're already have this book that is biographical and also, you know, educational. It's amazing. But what I got to the second half of the book, I mean that's when I was like standing up and pump him up his and getting on the phone and I'm like, you've got to read this. You got to read this right now because you address imposter syndrome. I mean it's the tagline of your book. So all throughout, you know, is that is the thread of imposter syndrome. And how it creeps in even into your life as competent as you as you are, that sometimes imposter syndrome taps you on the shoulder as it does, I think for all of us at different times.

Jen Lehner: 16:02

But when you start to talk about like marketing and selling and making an offer, that's when I was like, Oh, Oh my gosh, I was like up out of my seat because you just, you just said it also. Well, so I definitely want to try and pull some of that out today. First of all, you talk about, Oh, you know what, let's, let's start here. Let's talk about this in the, in the moment that we're in. Because you know, I don't know about your, your audience. I, I'm hearing a lot from my audience and my people that this is a really hard time to know what to say and how to say it. And in fact, just a couple of hours ago, I got off a call with one of my clients who just launched a podcast and she's like, you know, I, I think I'm gonna, I'm gonna just soft launch the podcast because I just don't want to make too much noise about anything right now because we're in this crisis and then this, this calamity right now.

Jen Lehner: 16:58

And I don't, you know, I just don't think I need to be talking about my podcast. And I was like, my question to her was, is your podcast helpful? And she said, yes. And I was like, is it going to help people right now? And in fact, the subject of her podcast is very much what people need right now, you know? And I was like, so why? I was like, why wouldn't as, would you share this with your, with your mom or your brother or a friend because you thought it would help them? And she said, yes. I'm like, well, you better go out real loud about it because how else are people gonna know about it and it's going to help people.



Uh, it's a good thing. That was my advice anyway, but I'm just figuring this out every day as I go along. So what are you saying to people about making an offer and marketing right now in this time of crisis?

Ash Ambirge: 17:38

Man, I agree. And especially when you've got a podcast that you're not actually charging money for, that's the funny part. It's like, listen, you really are doing a good deed out there getting on the mic. And I think there's something to be said about being a voice of calm and, you know, reassurance because that's what any podcast or is doing right now. They're leading. And I think it's a wonderful thing. I don't think anybody who is getting out there proactively and saying, Hey, here's, here's how I can help you. Here's what I got. I don't think that's bad for any of us at any point in time. But you know, Jen, I did just give, uh, this workshop that I put together, like quick in the Nick of time, the last couple of days, I called it the emergency money workshop. And it's for those same people who are freaked out means they're like, ah, I'm, I'm a small business owner, I'm a freelancer and now I have no idea how to sell anything cause everything just seems so tone deaf.

Ash Ambirge: 18:32

Right, right, right. And like so inappropriate at this time. So we went over and 90 minutes of, well something like 74 different offers that you can make your clients and how to do it in a way that still feels graceful and elegant, eloquent, and also context appropriate. And it all comes down to what you just said a second ago. Instead of thinking about how can I sell this? Or you know, how can I get this person to be my client or buy more for me? Just ask yourself one question, how can I be helpful to this person right now? And when you ask it through that lens, it forces you to put everything that you're asking and doing and saying through a lens that automatically has kind of like a generous slant to it because you're not sitting here saying like, Hey, how can you know, buy my stuff. You're like, Hey, okay, so here's what I got. Here's what I'm really good at right now. I am, I'm doing a special thing this month. Next, you know, whatever, 60 days, uh,



anybody who wants my help, well you've got it for 20% off the regular, you know, rack rate or whatever it is. Anybody who wants my help, here's what I can do. Here's what I got going on. You want my help, I'd be happy to lend it to you. And it's as simple as that. Right?

Jen Lehner: 19:44

I love it. Yup. It is as simple as that. But there's going to be a lot of people right now, her pivoting into areas that they never, where they never thought they were going to go. I've got a, I've got one client who her niche is like education and she speaks from the stage and she messaged me and she's like, Jen, today I lost \$60,000 like in, yeah, this was really early cause she's in Washington state. So this was when Washington got hit. Just like that. She lost \$60,000 all of her speaking gigs canceled and her clients are schools. So hello all clients now gone. But she's, she was immediately ready to pivot and she's like, I think what I'm going to do is I'm going to open a VA agency. She's not a VA, she, but she knows how to do stuff that a VA does is she knows that she can immediately help other people doing backend services for their online businesses.

Jen Lehner: 20:37

So of course I thought that was just a great idea. But what I want to ask you is I love you talk a lot about quitting and quitting often and there are going to be a lot people who are going to be trying on new hats and not all of these hats are going to, we're throwing spaghetti against the wall. Pick one. I don't know. But they're going to be trying stuff and uh, and not everything is going to work out. Like what do you have to say about quitting stuff when you try it and realize like, Hmm, maybe not this.

Ash Ambirge: 21:07

Well, you know, first of all, I think this is a great time for all of us to be quitting because all of us are going to have to pivot in some way or another. I think the story about your friend is a perfect example of that and no matter what you want to do, I mean, it doesn't even matter what it is. I think the key is keeping showing up as a leader for your clients and saying to your clients, okay, don't worry. I know I can't do my gig, but here's what we can do. I got your back. I



know you need this. We need to, we need to figure something out. So here's what I'm going to do. Here's what I'm going to offer you. Um, in that case, like, let me, let me, let me work up something really quick. Let's do some kind of an online version.

Ash Ambirge: 21:44

I'll facilitate it. I'll get it figured out. All you gotta do is get me in front of your people online and here's what it's going to cost. It's going to be a quarter of the price, whatever. This will help you. This will help me, blah, blah, blah, and just keep figuring out ways. I think most of us accidentally approach things from the mindset of a freelancer where we're just waiting for our clients to tell us what they want and what they're doing, but instead taking the approach from an advisor's perspective of, okay, well this client's actually hiring me to advise them on this. So here's what I'm going to say that I think we should do. That would be great for us. And I think if you do it that way, no matter what you're doing, uh, what, whatever you're quitting and then restarting, great. Let's figure out a way that you can help the people that you want to help and get creative with it. Have some fun with it. But I think quitting in general, it's such a healthy thing because anybody can be successful. I really believe that success, oftentimes it's just a function of persistence and it's not, you know, really the most creative, imaginative thing we can be doing. It really just means you've been standing there long enough, ringing a bell, and finally you're like, you know, Hey Bob, I've been running this bill for 40 years.

Ash Ambirge: 22:59

That's not what we want. That's not the goal. Success, fine. But like, that's not really the goal. So I think it takes much more courage to leave that in pursuit of something that does matter to you. Whatever you got to do. And that's why quitting is a great thing because it means that you are trusting yourself enough to say, okay, that wasn't right, but I know that something will be and I'm going to pursue the hell out of it.



Jen Lehner:	23:24	Yeah. And then, and then you talk about, I love what you say about offers and how it's about profitability. Can you talk to us about that because, Oh, it's so good.
Ash Ambirge:	23:35	Yeah. Gosh. When I teach students about getting the guts to sell themselves, one of the things talk about is just simply making one new offer every day, every single day. Because not enough of us do this. We kind of just throw it up on our websites and then hope that people come. And, uh, even though the internet is a big place and it has lots of traffic, that's just not how it works, it's not going to happen. So I think that whether you're using an email sequence to make an offer to new subscribers every single day, or you are actually manually reaching out and saying to someone new every single day, whatever the case, Hey, here's how I can help you. Do you want my help? It's one of the best things you can do. And, and sometimes people just don't realize that you can help them in that way. You have to be proactive enough to keep asking them if they want your help.
Jen Lehner:	24:29	Yeah. And it really is a numbers game, but like how you just are increasing your profitability. But let me ask you this. Do you ever get, what if somebody gets mad at you and they're like, why are you emailing me about this offer? Stop selling to me. No,
Ash Ambirge:	24:41	no, no one gets mad at me.
Jen Lehner:	24:45	Actually, I believe you. I believe you. I don't think anybody ever does get mad at you. But
Ash Ambirge:	24:49	I mean, I had someone mad yesterday because she couldn't pause the webinar. But beyond that, like usually people are not very mad at stuff because I am trying to help you. And that's the whole point. It's like look like I'm, I'm trying to help, I'm not trying to sell you stuff. This is up to you. But the beauty of modern day marketing in particular with email and social media is that it's permission-based, which means that you've opted in to get these emails from me and you've opted into follow



me. So it's not something I'm pushing on you. I view it very, very much the opposite. Like you are here for it and I'm going to give it to you

- Jen Lehner: 25:22 and I think it's worth noting that you have achieved the success that you have completely organically, uh, without paid ads, which is like, it's just jaw dropping. But really when I look at your body of work, not that I've seen all of your work, but it comes down to the fact that like you just put really good stuff out there. And so, and I think that's really why people aren't getting mad at you is because your content really, it really does help them. Your free stuff. So obviously you know, everybody knows your paid stuff is going to help them too. So it's, you've built it. All right,
- Ash Ambirge: 25:56 thank you. I mean I think it's just focused on like, like what would a legend in my space do whatever space you work in. Like what would be legendary to give to somebody right now? And I think the confusion comes in when you think of a word like that you think of like, Oh the biggest and craziest offer you could ever make. But that's not what it means. It means going deep with it and actually caring enough to take the time to figure out, okay, well listen, it's not just about me and my online course. It's about what does this person need to know first and then what do they need to know second. And then third and then fourth, and actually having the empathy to craft your content in a way that is helpful and not just kind of like a exercise and masturbation. Yes,
- Ash Ambirge: 26:45 your podcasts. I love, I love you are the first person to say masturbation in my pocket podcast, so that's awesome,
- Jen Lehner: 26:53 but, but let's talk about legendary for a second because that should not be confused with it being this ginormous Epic thing that bleeds you dry where you have to prove yourself in your value by dumping so much of yourself in there that there is nothing left and you have worked yourself down to enough. Right.



Ash Ambirge:	27:10	Oh, the word nub. Yeah,
Ash Ambirge:	27:12	yeah, yeah, yeah. I agree. I think
Ash Ambirge:	27:18	the key for me when crafting something that I, I've been told has had the most feedback is finding ways to present the information that feels like an aha moment and the light bulb moment, because that does a couple of things. Number one, it keeps your students' attention to your customers, your clients, whoever you're you're talking to keeps their attention. But number two, it really helps them learn the material. Like that's so important. If all of a sudden then make this mental association that they never forget. So they're like, Oh, this is what Ash taught me, that plants and nugget in their brain that then later, I mean they also will remember that you were valuable to them and they didn't just take your course or do your thing and then it was over. This is stuff that they can really actually use. So finding ways to present information that is just like really sticky is one of the biggest keys I think to my own success.
Jen Lehner:	28:19	And what if, and then my other, the other, I don't know, like third arm of this, I'm thinking about selling and making the offer and marketing. So maybe it's the fourth arm leg, whatever is the way that you talk about accepting money. Like a pro and yeah. Can you, how do we accept money? Like a pro.
Ash Ambirge:	28:41	I just love money.
Jen Lehner:	28:43	Money's good fun.
Ash Ambirge:	28:46	And I just launched the book, we were in New York city and I was at some TV studios doing like a radio thing there and it was like some rapid fire questions are throwing at me. And one of the last questions was in one word, describe your relationship with money. And I blurred.
Ash Ambirge:	28:59	It's about healthy. Very, very healthy. Thank you.



Ash Ambirge:	29:06	<p>I don't know why so many people have such a w I mean I know why. Like we've got really weird issues around money, especially women. Women suck at it because they're always being told that they're greedy and uh, self-serving. You know, money, money implies things. What did you have to do to get there? It's got a weird narrative about it, but I think that whatever you want to do in this world, like it requires time and that's great. So if you want to help somebody else out, that's great. But it requires time and that other person understands it requires time and therefore what they have to give you in exchange for that is some kind of financial compensation. This just makes sense to me. It makes sense in the world to me. So I've never had an issue with this. This feels right because what I mean, what else are you going to give me? Right. It just feels like this is the logical thing. And I think just having the courage to say, Hey, here's how I can help you. Here's how much it costs. Do you want my help? I mean it's very straight forward and people feed off of that confidence. When you say things with confidence, they have confidence in you.</p>
Jen Lehner:	30:22	<p>Yeah. And you've mentioned like don't, don't doubt why and after they give you money, don't assume that they're stupid, that they didn't know what they were buying. Like you should give them the benefit of the doubt. They, they know your worth. They know, they know what they're doing, you know, because maybe there's the sense that, okay crap, they just bought it. What happens when they figure out that I don't really know what I'm doing. You know? And then, Oh, go ahead. Well, and I want to ask you about the hot hot dog theory cause I love that so much.</p>
Ash Ambirge:	30:53	<p>Oh, the hot time period. Well, let me just quickly interject and say that I think that this is why one of the best things you can do for your, your money story and the way you view money and how if you have fear about selling yourself, one of the best things you can do is actually go ahead and fill out those client contracts or those terms</p>



and conditions and do it with a level of specificity that is just unnatural. Because if you can sit there in a client contract and say, okay, here is what you're giving me and here's what I'm giving you, like down to the T and really be very, very specific about what those deliverables involve. Then you don't have to feel guilty about anything. It's a great exercise to show a the client exactly what they're getting and so if they are entering into this agreement, it's because they know this is exactly what I'm getting and you don't have to go guilty because you know you're going to deliver exactly what you said you were. It's such a good, healthy thing to do.

- Jen Lehner: 31:47 Yeah, yeah. I love it. And it's a hot dog theory because,
- Ash Ambirge: 31:52 and I'm the hot duck theory of money is if you were a vendor, a hotdog vendor on the Jersey shore and your little hot dog cart selling, selling these winners, um, some guy you know, rolls up and he's like, Hey man, you know how much for a hot dog, you're going to look at the guy and you'd be like two 25, bro. And the is going to either say, okay, cool, here's two 25 or he's going to be like, yeah, you know what? Never mind. Or uh, you know, there's really no other, it's one of those two options. It's going to happen, but you're not going to feel weird about it. You're not going to S you're not going to stutter when he asks you how much the hotdog costume, you're not gonna be like, well, I mean for you. Um, I think we can work something out or know, well, what, what is your budget? Did you have, did you have a number in mind?
- Ash Ambirge: 32:45 Is you don't over complicate it that way because we understand that something, a product like a hot dog has this very simple, you know, path that must take from that cost things, the production of the hotdog and then the packaging of the hotdog, the delivery of the hot dog, the storage of the hot dog. Now they're paying you to be sitting there selling the hot dog. They have to pay for the rent and the, I mean the whole thing. So we get it in our brains like, Oh wow, this hotdog needs to now produce a profit because otherwise we're losing money from all



those expenses. But when you go out to sell yourself like nobody factors in the profit part, they're like, well I mean this could be this. And they just throw out a number and that's why they feel so insecure stating those numbers cause they don't actually have anything to back it up. But if you think through all of your actual expenses and your time and then you actually build profit in as a line item, awesome. It's going to help you say to somebody very clearly. Yeah bro. Cost \$225 you know, that's it.

Jen Lehner: 33:41

Would you like a hotdog? Yeah, I love it so much because these are, these are like examples I can really get behind. Like I could think, Oh yeah, hot dog. Okay, now I know like how to approach this situation because this is what it costs. This is how it works. This is what I require. This is it. It's a hot dog. Like you could take it or you could leave it, but this is the hot dog that I'm selling to you. You know? And what it costs and building in the Brava is so incredibly important because, you know, how depressing is it an I mean, I can definitely remember back to early days and I would charge something that I thought was a fair price, but it really wasn't fair to me because how depressing it was for me to divide that amount of money by the amount of time I actually put into the project and realize I was making like 12 cents an hour, I was like, Oh wow, that's really, that did not build to be profitted to that.

Jen Lehner: 34:33

So, um, all, all such important lessons and you know, you shaved off a lot of years for people if they read your book and they really take your advice, you really have shaved years off of a learning curve here. So, and I can't, I can't let you go without touching on a couple of really cool marketing points. If you could see how many sticky notes I have in this book, we could literally be here for eight hours, but I'm not going to do that to you. I promise. What color are they? They're hot pink and yellow. Yeah. I mean some are hot pink and some are yellow. I love you. Some are the big post it notes with the lines on them and some are like the little ones. I mean it's, and I got writing and highlighting and yeah, in fact like I just, what's this?



Jen Lehner: 35:21 The color pink doesn't try to make itself more green. Hoping to be more appealing to ever as looking at it. Pink is pink and you either take it or you leave it. There are no apologies and no justification. Pink is what it is. I mean, I just randomly opened up the book and that's what it landed on just now. Like the stuff that comes out of your mouth. And that's the thing. It was just, it's like a highlighted every page. So it's no longer highlighted. It's just the whole, it's just the whole book. But anyway. Okay. Marketing. So this, this was so good. I mean, people, if they aren't already, I mean it's just going to be Ash, Amber J quotes all over Twitter, all it turned into memes and everything is, everything is so quotable. But you talk about marketing, like you give this analogy about Brad Pitt and, and you tie that into marketing.

Jen Lehner: 36:08 Can you, can you just talk about that for a minute? Yes. And I will tell you a little insider note. My editor and I went back and forth about whether or not I should use Brad Pitt or M Ryan. Well, Ryan Gosling's in the beginning and then there is a, gosh, what's the other Ryan's name? Amazing. Ryan. I love, what's he in? Uh, he's Blake Lively's husband's. He's funny. He's the guy who does the, I'm sorry, Ash. Nevermind. Argument about who I wanted to insert here and who I wanted to use, cause it was always originally Brad Pitt and then I was like, is this kind of like kind of like old man now? And then we eventually decided like no, because he is the most iconic and also there is lots upon a time in Hollywood when he just took off his shirt in that minute a little while ago.

Jen Lehner: 37:03 Did you see it? Oh, I haven't seen that. Oh, okay. Yes. For that scene alone it was, yeah. I mean it's Quentin Tarantino, so it's super, super violent, but in a almost ridiculous way because it's almost like he's mocking himself at being violent that it's so ridiculous. I mean almost where you would laugh, but I'll cover my eyes for a lot of it. But the Brad Pitt scene, and I was actually never really a Brad Pitt person. I mean I can appreciate his talent, but he was always like too pretty for me. And now it's ridiculous. And now it's not fair either because he's



now in his 50s and he's hotter than ever and he's like kind of rugged and leathery. And then he takes off his shirt. And I think I audibly gasp. I was with my husband. So anyway, I think you referenced the Brad Pitt was just spot on.

Jen Lehner: 37:49

So the other guy was Ryan Reynolds. Do you know who that is? I don't. I'm old. Oh my God. He's hysterical. He is the funniest guy. I mean, he's hysterical. Anyway, I have a huge crush on Ryan Reynolds. If I saw, if I saw his face, I would know who he was. I'd never know anybody's names. He's in that damn movie. I will remember before we get off. Okay. And maybe you've seen it. But anyway, that was, you know, we'd gone back and forth about that, about which guy to put. So anyway, Brad Pitt is the guy in the end and Ryan Reynolds is a star from Deadpool. That's it. That's the movie. Oh yes, yes, yes, yes. And, uh, yeah, I talked about Brad Pitt because we, in this chapter, the

Ash Ambirge: 38:36

whole point of the chapter is helping you feel more comfortable promoting yourself and not taking that approach of like, Oh, well, you know, if it's any good, the right people are gonna find it. Oh, that one don't, were attempted to think that because selling ourselves and promoting feels so icky. But if you think about it, if Brad Pitt, everybody bad pit puts out a new movie, this guy is going to be, you know, going on all of these different talk shows and he's going to be on whatever, Instagram and Twitter, you know, getting everybody pumped up. Here's the release date. There's going to be a movie trailer, there's going to be all this fanfare. He's going to be doing interviews everywhere. And all of that is to say that even when Brad hit puts out something, even this guy has to promote it. He's not exempt. If he asked to do that. What makes you think that? We don't know. Yes.

Jen Lehner: 39:34

And, and, and then, and exactly like no one is exempt and he, you know, he's got millions and millions of hardcore fans and he still has to work his butt off to like promote the movie. And, and then uh, you also talked about like



how no one thinks twice when target releases their new collab and with a new designer, I don't even know. Do they do that anymore? I don't know if they do that, but we don't get mad when target tells us about some cool new thing or our favorite author comes out with a new book. We're excited to hear about it. We want to hear about it and how will we hear about it unless you tell us about it. So you just, these are all good points that you made.

Ash Ambirge: 40:18

Yeah. Or I mean if Brad Pitt does come out with a new movie, I mean I'm not going to be mad when Brad tells me about it. No, I think that it's helpful to all of us to remember that when you go to send out, let's say an email to your email lists, or are you going to make somebody an offer, you have to assume that they are thrilled to hear from you. You cannot get it in your head that you're being a pest and you're being a bother and you have to assume these people are going to be thrilled to hear that it's about this new thing that I'm doing because they love me. Otherwise they wouldn't be here. And it's just so helpful of a, of a reframe when you start doing it that way.

Jen Lehner: 40:56

Yeah, I mean, I think even just speaking for, for women, I do think a lot of it is just really about not wanting to feel like a show off or bragging or me, me, me, you know? And so this, this hesitation to, you know, to do a Brad Pitt movie trailer for our project or, or whatever.

Ash Ambirge: 41:23

Swear to God, I swear to God I'm going to make, I'm gonna make like a some kind of a, I don't know what we would call it, like a finishing school women entrepreneurs just because so much of that like the me, me, me thing, it's just about the way you present it. And I think a lot of us just don't know how to present it in a way that feels, not me, me, me, but actually helpful and awesome. And I think it's, if we could learn to do it that way, like no one's thinking me, me, me. This is a sign of leadership. You are standing up and being a leader. It's so important that you do these things. You're not being someone who thinks the world of themselves like they're self important. Keep



putting the focus back on your clients and your customers and how you can help them.

- Jen Lehner: 42:05 Okay, so do the finishing school please and then bring in Heidi to do our photos. We'll have a little throw in some spa stuff. I, I think that would just be, I think that would be a, a huge success. And I would call it finishing school too. Oh my gosh. I could see the branding right now like books on your head, you know, like it's not what they used to like lock like books on your head and that could be like, I could see you with a book on your head and it's, it's the middle finger project finishing school born right here today on the front row entrepreneur podcast.
- Ash Ambirge: 42:42 I might really do it because I always think of this one client I used to have that I used to, I'll call it coach even though I recoil at that word, I used to coach her on the phone because she was shy and she was the most brilliant woman on the face of the planet. But she was shy and so she would just get anxiety. And as someone who grew up with a clinically anxious mom, I think I just, I've always grown up having that role. So it feels really natural to me to help someone like her learn just how to say things with courage and feel good about it and how to practice those things. We don't have anybody to practice with. So of course it's nerve wracking.
- Jen Lehner: 43:23 Do you have any offers like that right now? No, but I should shouldn't I? Yeah. Yeah. Well, yes. So please, it's, I think it's so needed. I think. Yes, I think I really think you should do that.
- Ash Ambirge: 43:35 Yeah. I mean I have, I have an audio product that's called unfuckwithable sales calls and it goes through 15 different scenarios of like, you know, the awful questions that clients ask you. Like, well, how much does it cost and why should I pick you and how to, how to respond to those. That's kind, kinda just like a small, tiny little product.
- Jen Lehner: 43:52 What is that? Is that on your website?



Ash Ambirge:	43:55	Uh, yeah, it's there. It's, it's bobbing around. So that's, that's like the beginning of it.
Jen Lehner:	44:00	Okay, good. All right. So everybody run over to that. So that's at middle finger project.org and I love that you are.org that was a stroke of genius too. Like did you deliberately do that or was dotcom not available
Ash Ambirge:	44:15	in 2009 when I started. And so, uh, someone, a student of mine about four years ago, gifted me the.com as a thank you for a class. Wow. It was thousands of dollars and she bought it from me. Isn't that, that is an incredible
Jen Lehner:	44:32	gift. I love that. I know I'm still, yeah, I'm still in awe. Her names, her name's tipsy. She's awesome. She's a copywriter now. I know. Topsy, yes. But I haven't seen her in years, but we were in the, in a, in a group to like a Facebook group together like years ago. And she's still okay. Well this is, we'll take it off the air. Well, she's a good, she's a good person. I to this day I'm like, wow, that is amazing. Wow. What a thoughtful, amazing gift. All right, so we've got, so you kept the org, I mean, I guess the dot come forward to the order. Either way you could get there, but I love the org because it's like you're this organization called the middle finger project, which is almost like you're a nonprofit, you know, and um, I mean you're anything but a nonprofit. But you know what I mean?
Jen Lehner:	45:19	I love it. It's sort of, it's very like ironic, but uh, I love telling people what the name is. Yeah, well it's, it's a home run for sure. Well thank you so much Ash. Um, I know I dragged you all over the place on this call, but because like I said, the whole entire book is highlighted. It was just, you know, the other option was to have you read the entire book, so we're going to love you. You are awesome. We are best friends. We are best friends. All right, Ash, thank you so much. Take care. Oh Jen, thank you.



You are awesome. And you guys buy the book, get the audio and the hard copy because the hard copy you're gonna want Mark up like I did and then the audio, you're just going to want it. Go for a walk with your new best friend. Ash for miles and miles as you listen to her, pump you up. Okay, guys. Yay. Yay.

