

## SELL FROM LOVE PODCAST -Transcript



### Episode 6: Understanding You. Using your Brand to Pave you Path to Success with Amber Hurdle

**Finka:** Welcome to the *Sell From Love Podcast* Amber, I am so excited to have you here.

**Amber:** I am beyond excited to be here and that you have a podcast!

**Finka:** To be honest and completely truthful, it has been a project that has been on the back burner, came into the front burner, went back into the burner for two years now. Life and priorities, and other projects seemed to take precedent, until now!

I'm excited that you're one of our first guests and truly honored because we've known each other for a number of years and I admire you as a wonderful human who stands for all that's possible, and really has demonstrated that not just in your business and the work that you do, but also for your family, a leader in your community, and all the beautiful work that you get to put out there.

I'm going to say I have an Amber crush.

**Amber:** Now I'm tearing up because the audience needs to understand Finka was my coach for a long time. She gets to lay some credit into whatever she's impressed with because you really helped me along on my journey in a significant way. It's a mutual admiration club.

**Finka:** Okay, good. I like that. One of the things that I know about you, and is important to you, it's who you are, and the work that you put out in the world is this whole notion of having a brand.

You focus on branding from three aspects. Before we dive in on what types of brands are there and which ones are most important for us to focus on, why has this been a calling for your work and why is this important to you?

**Amber:** The birth of my branding education or understanding of branding came from when I was a teen mom, and I cannot say that I understood what branding was or what personal branding was. I assure you back then, personal branding was not a buzz word, whether you're an entrepreneur or in leadership or anything, it just wasn't, it was your professional reputation.

I realized very early that I had to understand what I uniquely contributed, and why people valued me in order to be able to position myself for opportunities and to attract people who would help me get out from behind the eight ball and make up for the lost time that I legitimately did not have.

I was starting out as the underdog and I had a little girl that I needed to provide a life for. I started to understand that people saw things in me. You can imagine being a teen mom, I didn't have the most solid self-concept at the time, a lot of shame. There was also a little grit in there that kept me going. People saw things in me; a work ethic, my ability to interact well with people, the teamwork aspect of things. I started trying to amplify those aspects in order to get a better shift at Applebee's, in order to be able to get a job that maybe I wasn't qualified for, because I had to leave college in order to sustain my family and being the provider.

As I continued on that path and I continued to consistently improve upon my reality, mostly because of the people who helped me get there, it brought about self-awareness. If I was being very real, my whole idea behind helping people understand what makes them unique and understand how they contribute to the bigger picture is that it breeds self-awareness in them.

And when we're self-aware, we can then be greater leaders, when we're self-aware, we can see and harvest the greatness in others, and now we're really playing at a higher level. That was a really long answer, I really want to get into people's minds and I want them to be able to confidently define and position their value at the end of the day.

**Finka:** When we're not aware of those gifts and unique strengths and talents we bring to the table, we end up diminishing or not showing up as fully as we can as a result of that. What I'm hearing you say is, in your early years of trying to figure out how do you get the ideal shift at Applebee's or how do you get hired for that promotion; you were trying to uncover some of those unique strengths that you bring, so you get chosen.

Specifically, what are the things that you did that helped you identify, in those earlier stages? How you did what you did.

**Amber:** I constantly ask for feedback. If you believe your press, you have to believe the good press and the bad press. I was very quick to dismiss the attagirls, and I was very consistent and asking what can I do better? The attagirls were helpful because I could see patterns. I've worked four jobs at one time thinking, you know this.

That was very overwhelming. I was almost on autopilot sleepwalking through life, but I did know that there were certain things you need to bubble wrap. It was also very important for me to understand where I was not winning either.

I needed to diminish those things or bubble wrap them. Like depending on a friend or pulling in a colleague, or somehow figuring out how can I take this perceived weakness. I don't believe in weaknesses. We're not weak people. We just have things that are a little less helpful that we might not want to pull on, because that's not the most helpful way for us to get to where we want to go. When we have those things, when we're aware of those things, and we're confident, and the fact that we can bubble wrap those things, that then helps you develop confidence in your greater areas.

Here's what happens and especially with women, and I'm seeing it more and more with men too in that millennial group. We have greatness inside of us. We might not be fully aware of what that capacity is. What we do is we spend time looking at what we perceive as weakness, and then we try to fix that instead of trying to harness the greatness that's already in us and put a really strategic direction behind that.

For example, my housekeeper is here. *You don't want Amber keeping house.* I was a teen mom. I worked four jobs. I really never learned how to do that. Mopping is not my thing. This is a very simplistic example, but if I spent my time trying to clean my house inadequately, I'm going to be miserable, and this house would never be clean. We're not going to get the results that we want and I'm not out pursuing what I'm meant to do by selling branding and delivering confidence to people. We have got to get very real about what we bring to the table and how we can fortify against the things that might hold us back a little bit.

**Finka:** I agree. I will also add it's hard work. It is such hard work because our brain is wired to look at what's not working and where we go wrong and it is wired to look at our weaknesses, like negativity bias, it's built in us. Going out and getting feedback, I love feedback, but I love positive feedback.

Give me some constructive feedback. I'm going to tell you, I'm learning, I'm still a learner of feedback and it is super valuable, and we need it. The conditions we give ourselves to receive that feedback is important. A simple example for me would be when I started getting out there and doing workshops and teaching. I'd go out there and I'd get my program evaluations and let's say a group of 25, 24 said that was great. One would say that wasn't my cup of tea. I'd focus on that one, on what it is that I could have done better, why didn't they like it? Why wasn't it? It didn't matter that I got 24.

Your brain just goes to the thing that is not working. Over the years I've been literally trying to train myself, look at the good things that you're bringing. Look at the assets that you bring to the table. What makes you unique? What makes you different? How do you bring those aspects?

Have you run into that? I have, and I'm continuing to learn and improve and grow, but what has held you back when it comes to owning your greatness and continuing? I know you're on the path of it and you're doing it, and you're also human. There's going to be obstacles in the way right where it's so tough.

**Amber:** The destination is never realized.

**Finka:** No, exactly. Tell us a little bit about what's it like for you? Where do you find hiccups on accepting and owning your greatness?

**Amber:** It's really the opposite for me. And I know that sounds crazy. I've never feared failure. I've only feared success. What would happen *if* this happened? What would I have to let go of? What would I have to sacrifice? Will I have to go back to those old ways of working around the clock and having to put things before family, it was just going back to old wounds.

I won't say never, but when I see the 24 and then the one, okay thanks 24 people, I don't need my skirt fluffed. Let me get curious about what this one person said. I want to be curious about why they felt that way. Do I need to care or were they just not my person and I just need to let that go. Do they have valid feedback that I could use to improve upon it? Not just for that person, but for the 24 other people, it could have been that much better. I look at the negative, the constructive, whatever you want to call it. I look at that with great intention, but I have a really hard time with the 24 telling me I'm great.

**Finka:** I completely understand that one, I can also relate to that experience as well, because as soon as we are great, at the end of the day, what it does is it creates change. All of a sudden, more doors might open, you might have more invitations to come and speak or come and work with people, which may change how your family dynamic responsibilities around the house or who knows what it might do. Whether it's success or failure, the end result is they create some form of change. And that change is what we're scared of. It doesn't matter if it's good or bad.

**Amber:** Even just the change of you being the leader, you being the person that people are admiring or putting on a pedestal, and I'm a Libra. I want everybody to have balanced relationships and I'm no better than you. I'm just the one who has the microphone. I had to learn hard things faster because I was foolish enough to get knocked up at 16, that does not make me better than you. It just means that I had to accelerate my learning a little bit. Maybe you're still learning some of these things because you did not have a child when you were 16, that doesn't make you bad or less than me. It just means I'm a little further ahead on the journey in this area that I teach than you.

There is always a great discomfort between me being the perceived expert. Getting fan mail and things like that just freaked me out as you know. I started getting feedback. Amber is down to earth. Amber is real when she's on the stage, it feels like she's speaking to me specifically.

Okay, that I can handle. If you understand I'm there to be a part of this with you, and I'm not trying to be a Kardashian, no offense Kardashians. It's always that underlying, real desire for humility that I fight against.

When we have these personal brands and we're having to put ourselves out there. I went to dinner the other night with a dear friend of mine that I've known literally since high school. He's much older than me, and said, there's the superstar. Isn't it lame that we have to really promote ourselves in a celebrity fashion just to sell coaching and consulting and speaking. I do believe that when you and I do things like this and you do a podcast or a Facebook live, it's with the intention of helping other people. It's the outcome that helps me overcome my fear of success. My fear of people holding me in high esteem, which is way harder than somebody telling me I suck.

**Finka:** I agree. I experienced that too sometimes. We have our little farm and sometimes I'm sharing what we're doing, the things that we're making or the beekeeping, the lavender, whatever it is. I'm posting to share, to give updates. I know people genuinely are curious as to what we're doing and at the same time, I'm sharing with the intent that it inspires people, maybe they have a dream. When we share our greatness, we actually create a moment of possibility for other people in their own mind. That's the mantra that I tell myself, this is not for me. It's showing others that if you thought you could have something, if you wanted to do something, if you wanted to make a big shift or change in your life, or your business, or your career, you can do it. We don't have to be held back by the confines of what we've been told success looks like, feels like or the route to get there, because all of us do it differently.

**Amber:** Right. That's why I focus the first three to four chapters, really four chapters of *The Bombshell Business Woman* on my personal story. I'm 41 and I'm still talking about being a teen mom. That is such a far distance experience for me, but I know that when I share that story, it helps people who have so much in their wagon that they're carrying around in life; I can't because of this, I can't because of that. She doesn't know that I got knocked up at 16 and look at me now. Let's just eliminate all excuses. I'm not beating my chest. I'm trying to model what is possible.

**Finka:** Absolutely.

**Amber:** I want everyone to have the life that they are capable of living. If we all embrace that, imagine how the world could be. If we all stepped into our gifts and our experience and really own that. It's all service. It's an issue of service. I'm going to use my gifts in service to other people. And if I have the

privilege of doing that as a vocation, and as a thank you there's an exchange of money, as a recognition for what you've contributed and now that's beautiful. That's magical.

**Finka:** Absolutely. Beautiful and magical. Can you tell us about the types of brands. If I'm seeking to understand my brand, where do I start, and maybe take us through what types of brands you help your clients work through and discover, and then we'll get into your signature style of branding in a moment as well.

**Amber:** The Velvet Machete Brand Strategy, the concept behind that is in branding and communication and influencing, the machete cuts to the chase, it's very direct, but the velvet wraps the message in a way that is appealing to each unique audience.

When we think of things like that, we think of external brands and they might target different demographics differently, with different messaging but they're still the same brand. With Velvet Machete Brand Strategy I brand from the inside out. We have to start with the personal brands of leadership.

If you're your brand and you do have a personal brand, the end. Even if you're in a corporation, I work with big companies, just like you do big, big companies. We start with the personal brands of the leaders. How do I contribute uniquely? How do I define and position my value, not just to elevate myself through the corporate ranks, but to be able to influence my team, my peers, my superiors, vendors, customers, everyone.

What's my signature style. When we have strong leaders with strong personal brands only then can we have a strong employer brand, meaning our company culture. Why do I want to come work for this company versus another company? All of those personal brands have to come together to uphold that employer brand, or you don't have happy employees who are giving discretionary effort, who are delighted to come to work because they know that their gifts are seen and appreciated towards a bigger picture.

Nobody jumps up out of bed in the morning and says, *I can't wait to go work for FedEx ground*. That's not what's happening, but they do jump out of bed in the morning if they feel like FedEx ground, who has the purple promise and an excellent culture, appreciates what they bring to the table so that they can pay their mortgage, go on vacation, buy a baseball bat for their son, whatever. When we have happy employees because of the strong employer brand, guess what happens to your business brand and customer satisfaction because you have efficiency. You have people following processes, you have people who are giving discretionary effort who are putting the customer needs first because their employer is putting their needs first.

Now you have a strong business brand and the cycle continues, a strong year, a business brand. The more you can pour it into your leaders, the more you develop their personal brands and it goes on and on and on.

But in each of those categories, like Sally Hogshead, she's the queen of pointing out the goldfish; the attention span that we all have, and whether you believe the Harvard study or not, I think it's safe to say that we have Tik TOK and Snapchat attention spans. No matter what type of branding you're talking about, we have to be clear and concise and you really have to understand what's in it for the person I'm trying to influence and what are their fears and how do I address that with my messaging while still staying true to my brand?

**Finka:** Absolutely. What was it? How did you come about The Velvet Machete Strategy? How did that come to be and why? Why do you believe a personal brand, employee brand and company brand needs to be wrapped up in this, under this umbrella?

**Amber:** I have always inherently been the person to tie all of this together in the organizations that I've worked for. Early on, I worked for Sports Village Fitness Center and realized through going to Ursa conventions, for all of your fitness listeners, that it was so much easier to keep members happy and to have a retention strategy than it was to go acquire new. To me, I thought, our employees have to be happy. As membership director, as corporate membership director, I was both, I knew that our employees needed to be happy. I knew that we needed to keep our members happy. And then if we could internally remain strong, then we can externally flourish as well.

Then I moved on to the next, part of my career. I worked for Kimberly University and I called myself the Friday fairy. I could just tell when there was tensions, I could tell when people were stressed out. I would make banana bread and I would go to the different departments and deliver it.

I was not even in HR. I was a major gifts fundraiser, I also had to ask employees for money where you get paid, but we also need you to give an employee gift too.

**Finka:** That was Amber's Velvet Machete personal brand in action.

**Amber:** Yes. And I didn't even know why I was doing it. It just happened so naturally. I went back to school because I figured out this thing I was doing was called public relations and that I was interested primarily in internal relations.

Then every place I went, ultimately culminated with me working for Gaylord Hotels and my entire job I ran the internal PR department for our 4,000 employees at five different locations. And it was our entire job to ensure

employee satisfaction. We knew and believed and were overt about the fact that employees have to stay happy.

We didn't really talk a lot about employer brand. We just talked a lot about culture, and we knew that if our employees were taken care of that we could show that same amount of passion to our guests and that our guests would be happy. We focused on the employees first. That was a whole position. I had a team to do that. When I left and went out on my own, I had to take a really big step back and say, what is it that I really believe? What is my process? Trying to fit that I had an entrepreneurial audience, and I had a corporate audience and I'm trying to make them all work together.

You and I kept saying, it's the same message. It's just a different frame. Once I developed The Velvet Machete Leadership Journey with the five steps and the three different areas of branding, it all clicked. It's like, okay, everybody can come to the party now, I don't have to use different languages. This applies, no matter if you're leading yourself, leading your home, leading in a corporate organization or leading your own company, it's the same.

**Finka:** That's great. You look at the current environment that we're in today. Why is now the best time, or is it the best time to focus on finding your brand?

**Amber:** I'll go back to The Velvet Machete Leadership Journey, it's all about becoming a confident, compassionate, and influential leader. So again, confident, compassionate being the velvet in the machete. And if you create that leadership personal brand with the intention of service to other people and influencing other people for a greater good, the time is now more than ever. It's critical. As we're dealing with financial uncertainty, we're dealing with social injustice. We are dealing with political unrest. We were dealing with natural disasters. There's this dumpster fire of a year, which I'm actually grateful for. I mean, I hate all the terrible things that have happened, but I'm grateful for the growth.

I'm grateful that so many people are awakening and understanding that they do have a role to play. You can't just phone in, and you can't show up and sleepwalk through your job. There are people who are hurting with very sensitive issues, and not everyone is equipped to navigate that.

As a leader, you cannot lead other people if you don't understand yourself first. So again, getting back to that self-awareness issue part of creating your personal brand. And it always cracks me up when I take on a new one-to-one client coaching client, or even my students at The Velvet Machete Leadership Academy, the first thing we do is work on the personal brand.

They're like, well, you didn't say this was going to be therapy. This is hard work, this is inward focus. And sometimes you have to get over it. Just like we talked about, you have to get over some of those mental blocks. Some of those

stories that we've told ourselves that we've believed from boyfriends, from parents, from teachers, from whoever told us you need to go get in that box and get happy about it. Don't you shine your light. Don't you be different. Junior high tells us don't you be different, just fall into step. And as long as you fall into step, everything will be okay and you won't be ostracized.

For me if I was hiring, I would ask who was not well liked in junior high because you were weird. I would like for you to work for me because you're going to rock it out. If somebody's struggling, I want to ask them 'when you're in junior high, what was it that you gave up in order to fit in?' Because that's where I want to focus.

**Finka:** It's so true. I remember a number of years ago, I was in a meeting in a boardroom, it was a management team at a financial services company and the facilitator doing the session, he asked the room as part of the introductions around the table, everyone would say their name and, share what did they want to be when they grew up.

What was that kid dream? I'm like, Ooh, I love this question. Everyone went around the table and shared what they would have wanted to be. And none of them said they wanted to be a bank manager. There was a florist and interior designer, a pro basketball player. There were so many of these big dreams and I looked around and thought wow, these are lost dreams. That somewhere along the line, we decided to put who we wanted to be and who we could see ourselves becoming to the side to fit in, to be who everyone expected us to be.

There was a residue of sadness that I walked out of that meeting with. And at the same time, which I think is what's happening for us right now. I don't think this is happening to us. With all of the uncertainty and upheaval in all the various areas that you shared with us, it's happening for us.

It's that wake up call, what's the dream, what's the possibility. Who's the person you've always wanted to become that you've held back because it didn't fit into status quo. What I like about right now, I know it's very difficult, everything is really hard right now for a lot of people, but sometimes it needs to get really hard to motivate us.

**Amber:** We're uncomfortable. You're going to do something to feel comfortable. Again, if you're not uncomfortable, you're just going to let things keep going as they are. And we've been doing that as a collective and as individuals for a really long time.

To add on to what you said, it just made me think about one of my Academy students who is in financial services. We were following her breadcrumbs and we were looking at her body of accomplishments and we're trying to figure out her personal brand as a financial person within her company, she just

found it almost polarizing within her own self, that she was such a people person and she loved helping people and she loves storytelling and she actually majored in music theory or something, but here she is in this financial world. What we discovered is what made her different and what made her special and unique and not only unique, but uniquely suited for that particular company was that she could tell the story of the data in a way that was non-threatening and enabled the leaders within the organization to fully embrace their financial acumen. Whereas if she wasn't wired that way, it might've been more intimidating, less people would have their focus on the numbers and the organization as a whole would suffer because you didn't have that numbers focused culture. She brought that as one person to this entire company, because she decided I'm not giving up on that person. I'm going to accept where I am right now because she liked her job. She liked what she did. I'm going to bring this part of me that wanted to be the artist, I'm going to bring that artistry into this, there's not going to be a divide, I'm going to integrate it all.

**Finka:** I love that. One thing I've learned from immense experience is that if you quit the job and let's say she said right now, you know what, I'm going to go out and work in the music industry or somewhere where her creativity and artistry was more appreciated than in financial services, I can guarantee you, she would have the same problem eventually happen there. Because if you don't figure out how to accept your unique gifts and your differences and your Velvet Macheteness that you bring to the table in the environment that you are already in, it's going to be very difficult for you to do that when you think you've landed the dream job, because it can turn into the nightmare again if we don't learn those things. It's exactly what you said Amber. We start where we are at. Look at the environment you're in. How do you bring more of those qualities that you bring to the table in that environment, because they need that.

Those 12 branch managers that I was surrounded by. It wasn't about them going and becoming the florist in that moment or the interior designer. That dream had something that they wanted to be when they were younger, a quality, a strength, a talent that they can actually apply to their leadership that they're in, in leading those organizations today.

**Amber:** I wanted to be an In Living Color Fly Girl, which is where J-Lo got started. That's all I wanted. And I still dance in every opportunity possible, definitely every day in my house. I love my hip hop music, but when I think about that and I think about what I do now, I'm on stage, I perform. I do infotainment. I provide information in an entertaining style. I'm irreverent. I kind of have a hip-hop thing about me. Everybody knows if Amber is having a bad day, she's going to put on some gangster rap. It's interesting to look back on that and then see how all of that applies.

I don't care how straight laced an organization is, they've invited me and my innovation to come in because I'm not like them, I'm going to bust up the norm. I don't have to try to be straight laced at whatever company. I am going to be Amber the Fly Girl and mess up their whole energy in there. Everybody else is going to get either uncomfortable or relaxed. That's what I bring to the table, is a little bit of that disruption.

**Finka:** Absolutely. Disruption too is uncomfortable because we bring tension into environments and I lean to harmony. I don't like to create conflict and I'm learning that disruption's not a bad thing. When you're different, have a different perspective or a point of view, if it's not the way everyone else does it, our tendency is to eventually fit in; even if right away you're different, and you accept your differences somehow, some way the conformity is so tempting. Almost like a conformity creep happens. You don't realize you're doing it until you're so far along the rabbit hole. Oh crap. How did I get here?

How do you stay awake? How do you face disruption? How do you bring your differences, knowing that not everyone's going to love them, not everyone's going to accept them. It may not serve them, and when you're facing resistance. It could be a disruptive personality, maybe it's a challenging idea, maybe just a challenging question.

How do you not allow it to quiet your voice or deter you from continuing to push, to speak up, to put yourself out there, embracing who you are.

**Amber:** I love that question. And this is actually one of the areas I tend to camp out in because I'm certified in the change cycle, completely believe in the change cycle and what I find, especially in fast-growing businesses or years like this year, where everything's crazy and you have to continuously innovate and pivot, as we all like to use the word this year.

I don't want to demonize what others might perceive as resisting change, because I don't think anyone genuinely hates change or resists change. I think that's a box that we put people in. I think there's two types of needs that people have that drives their behavior.

One need is consistency. The other need is a need for diversity and competing priorities. You have to decide, what's my need. If I know that my need is that I want consistency, my behavior is going to be; I'm going to take the same way to work every day, every Tuesday is taco Tuesday. I'm going to keep my same group of friends. You could see those behaviors.

On the other side, if you're someone who is more prone to inviting change, you're probably on your phone and on the computer and watching TV all at the same time. You don't do the same thing every day.

Now we know, based on my behavior, based on my needs, this is how I'm wired. Here's what y'all need to listen to when it comes to getting outside of your comfort zone and embracing change. Some people are wired to create change and other people are wired to implement change. I'm going to say it one more time.

Some people are wired to create change. Other people are wired to implement change. Those who are wired to implement change, to help make a sustainable process so that change can be successful, should not be demonized for not liking change. They're just slowing the process down and going, Whoa, Whoa, Whoa, what do we need to put in place so that this change is successful.

Meanwhile, the changemakers, they're already bored. They don't want to do the process. That's an everyday monotonous thing that's not in their DNA. They're ready to go find the next piece of change. When those two people work together, beautiful things happen.

You don't want a lot of change sustainers in a startup environment because they'll slow you down. Just this year I was a startup all over again. After eight years, my whole business model just blew up in my face. Let's start over. If I had a bunch of people who had a great need for putting processes in place, I would have given them whiplash. You have to know where you are in your life, or in your organization and understand who you need to surround yourself with and embrace and accept and position yourself to be at the right company at the right time in the right part of the company's history to either be a value as a change-maker or be a value as a change sustainer.

**Finka:** I love that; having those two constructs makes so much sense. Either we're someone who creates change or someone who implements change. I have a perfect example. It has to do with my husband and myself.

We moved five years ago, we sold our city life and moved to the country. If you asked me five years prior to that, I would have said, yes, let's do it. We were talking about it for a number of years. He said, that doesn't make sense. We have good jobs; he has his business in the city. Look, you just can't sell your house and go live out in the country and you don't have things lined up and I'm like, come on.

Oftentimes, I'd have these brilliant ideas, and he'd always say what about this? And what about this? No, we can't do that because of this. And we can't do that because of that. And honest to God, I am like, you are such a dream crusher.

**Amber:** Typical in an organization.

**Finka:** Exactly. This person just keeps squashing kill joy. You're squashing every idea that I bring to the table, however, over time, we didn't take those immediate leaps. And what had happened was, the five years after having those initial conversations about wanting to live differently and wanting to have a different lifestyle, we started actually having conversations before we made the move about our values, what's important to us, and what we want in our life. What's the vision of our future. Questions we should have been asking ourselves before we got married.

It was crazy, but we started having these conversations. Eventually, we made the decision together to make the move. It wasn't me pushing it on him. It wasn't him saying no we can't do it. There was this balance of figuring it out at a slower pace. What happened was we still made change, but it was implemented at a pace that allowed us to be more successful I would say, because if we jumped five years prior when I was saying, let's do it, we could have been successful; but looking back on what I know today about myself and about him, we might not have been successful. Maybe our relationship would have been jeopardized, financially for sure, if we had done it then.

I love how you positioned that because it makes sense in my personal life and I'd see it in work all the time. You've got leaders who are saying they're resistant. They don't want to make the change. They are the people in the wagon. We need to leave them behind or maybe not. How about we look at them through a different lens to see what value that they actually bring.

**Amber:** Now one of the strongest pieces, or if now the strongest piece of my behavioral profile is that I am not risk averse. I know that shocks you Finka, in fact I play this in my mind all the time. Finka said one time in a coaching session, Amber, you continuously live on the outskirts of your comfort zone. That's what you said. And that is the truth. What that looks like with me is I'm ready to jump out of the airplane. Woo let's have the adventure.

**Finka:** Did you make sure it had the safety on it or not, or let's just grab it and go.

**Amber:** Just grab it and go. Why would I be mad at the person who says, wait a second, let's do the 10 point check on this before you jump. I'm not trying to keep you from jumping out of the airplane. I'm just trying to make sure that the backup is in place. That there is actually a parachute in the backpack, somebody down there to receive you. It's their job to protect. That's what they do, and it's my job to go be the adventure that's equally as good for them, because especially in a business environment, if you're not trying new things, if you're not evolving, especially at the rate that business is going now you're dead. They don't want to die, and I don't either. We help each other. It's fantastic.

**Finka:** What I'm hearing you say is, one of the main reasons that you need to discover your personal brand and become aware of it is, as you do that, you not only become aware of your unique value and your greatness that you need to become, to bring to the table, but that there's a sense after you are self-aware, of *Oh wow, other people bring different things than I do.*

There's this appreciation. When you are on that plane, you're ready to make the jump. You're also appreciating the person that did the 10 point safety check, they're valuable to the team and for you to make that jump successfully.

**Amber:** yeah, cause that's my bubble wrap.

**Finka:** That's your bubble wrap. Yeah.

**Amber:** If you think about fine China, its expensive, the value is immense. There's nothing weak about it, it's a beautiful set of China, but if we're going to ship that China across the country, we're going to bubble wrap it because it's fragile.

Those fine China areas of us, it doesn't diminish your value. It just means that we need to fortify that. My bubble wrap when I'm jumping out of an airplane is the person who did the 10 point check for me because I'm not going to. That's amazing, but you don't get there unless you're first self-aware.

**Finka:** Yeah, I love that. When we think about our personal brand and bringing our unique selves and our greatness to the table, what would be some ways in which we could bubble wrap ourselves that those delicate, fragile pieces of ourselves that need to come out, that they're also gracefully, protected.

**Amber:** We start with build a personal brand in The Velvet Machete Leadership Journey, and the second piece is we build support of environments, and I believe in that. That can be people environments, that can be physical environments, how you organize yourself, it could be your digital environments. Could be your spiritual environments, your physical body, your mental environments. Those all have to be in support of your personal brand. It's a unique thing.

I like to give the example of low carb living. Some people do it, they hate it. They feel miserable because it's not for their body, their unique. I on the other hand, if I try to eat carbs, I'm slow. I'm lethargic. My brain doesn't work right, I don't sleep well. What's right for me is not right for anybody else. Our entire life, our entire existence is that way. You have to build those environments around you that are unique to you. As you do that, you start to find where those bubble wrap needs are. It's like, I'm great at this, this thing's not so helpful. I need a person in my people environment to help me.

Maybe I'm not the best networker I'm going to need to find at least one person who's willing to help me start the process of networking. Maybe it's that I need to strengthen my understanding of networking. In my mental environment I need to really do some education around that. I need to read some books around that, whatever your goals are for the year, for the quarter; that's where you start seeing the type of environments that's going to help take your personal brand to where you want to go, which is hopefully being the most influential part of you and the bubble wrap reveals itself.

**Finka:** Love that love that. I can talk to you for hours on end right now.

**Amber:** I miss you so much.

**Finka:** I know me too. I'm so glad we had an opportunity to talk today and I look forward to continuing the conversation, offline and online here again. Before we go, this is the *Sell From Love Podcast*, and I love to share with others. Personal branding is fundamental when it comes to selling from love, to be in a place of authenticity, courage and integrity, and bringing who you are, your full greatness, your unique self, is a key part of showing up in that way. But I also love to share with others. Where have you experienced an organization or a company that for you demonstrated what it was like? They were selling from love or it was you buying from love. What was that? Who are they, if you could share with us that experience and what made it so.

**Amber:** I love Southwest Airlines, love with a capital L, and I feel like they love serving their customers. It is experienced in every interaction that you have with that company, they are just so delighted that you would do business with them. I've heard the CEO give a keynote as a professional speaker is actually at the NSA, the national speakers association influence convention.

And because we were in Texas where they're based, they had flight attendants walk through and give all of us gift certificates. I don't remember how much it was, but it was enough to get a round trip flight. They knew that we had lots of choices in how we were going to fly to get to our engagements, and they chose to love on us that way. Anybody who flies Southwest they're funny about their announcements that I travel with my ESA, my cockapoo Gibbs. And they're so great about him. Not all airlines are as nice about my dog sitting on my lap; it's just a constant experience. I'm so happy to give them my money.

**Finka:** I love that example because you know when we sell from love, we deliver generously and we are over-delivering on generosity. That example of giving away, they knew that they could, wow. You know you that much, even if they gave away a free flight for you to take, that you will fall in love with them instantly and become a loyal dedicated flyer with them.

I believe a business that believes in delivering in this way, they understand what they'll get out of it.

**Amber:** And, you know, I'm bougie. I serve luxury hotels. You would think that I'd be first-class on another airline, but the whole bougie part of it to me isn't necessarily about the opulence of it. It's about the level of service. I don't need more foot room. I'm not a big person. I know there are speakers who are really tall gentlemen, that might not be as comfortable for them.

I don't need to be first-class, I'll sit on the wing. I don't care. As long as your customer service makes me feel valuable. That's where they win.

**Finka:** I love it. That's for all of us. To wrap up our conversation around personal branding, it's who we are and what we bring to the table, but it's how we demonstrate that by making others feel, other people feel valuable when they're surrounded by us and ultimately that's love. Absolutely.

Amber, any final thoughts and then how can people learn more about you or connect with you?

**Amber:** I always like to encourage people when I'm on a podcast to go to take every assessment you can find; you can read books about self-awareness, journal, meditate get really clear on you and go to you university first and foremost.

One of the things that you can do is take my leadership personality assessment. Go to [amberhurdle.com/leadershipquiz](https://amberhurdle.com/leadershipquiz). And I will help you identify what piece of your personality makes you the most influential, where you have the opportunity to become the most influence. And I'll also let you know an area that you might want to consider bubble wrapping. So again, you can protect that personal brand from the more fragile areas and ultimately become influential.

**Finka:** I love it. We will have the links and all the details for Ambers leadership quiz in the show notes as well. Thank you Amber so much for spending time with us here today and having this wonderful conversation I appreciate and adore you and thank you again,

**Amber:** Well, I love you.

**Finka:** Love you back.