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James Robert Lay:

Greetings and hello. I am James Robert Lay, and welcome to episode 219 of the Banking On Digital Growth Podcast. Today's episode is part of the exponential insight series, and I'm excited to welcome Ethan Beute to the show. Ethan is the chief evangelist at BombBomb and host of the Customer Experience podcast. He is also a Wall Street Journal bestselling co-author of Human-Centered Communication, as well as Rehumanize Your Business. And I look forward to talking with Ethan today about how financial brands, FinTech, and even mortgage companies can use video to level up the personal brands of their lenders and leaders, and as a result, level up their digital growth potential.

Ethan Beute:

Thank you so much. I am so looking forward to the conversation. I know, even though we've barely met, we have so much in common already, and I know that. So I'm looking forward to getting into that and spending some time in things that I know we're both passionate about.

James Robert Lay:

Well, definitely, and I always want to start off on a positive note here with every single guest. And what's good for you right now, personally or professionally, it's your pick to begin?

Ethan Beute:

Sure. This is right on the border between the two of them. Actually, it's in both camps, I guess I'll say. I'm about to take a five week sabbatical. So BombBomb started a sabbatical program. I am one of maybe the first three or four people to do it, and I couldn't be more excited and anxious and nervous about taking so much time off. It's so atypical for who I am and how I approach things. I had all these plans and I got some wise advice from a friend of mine who had coincidentally just changed jobs and spent the entire month of June in India with his family, waking with the sun, going to bed with the sun, taking walks together, preparing all their meals together. And I was actually reaching out to him to engage him on a project I thought I would be working on during the sabbatical.

And he was like, hey, happy to support you in whatever way makes sense. But I want to give you advice as a friend. Let's just wait till you're done with your sabbatical before we do this. And so I took that to heart and now I'm staring down the barrel of a social media detox as well. So there's all this exciting, scary stuff baked into this separation from all the things that I regard as very normal.

James Robert Lay:

Well, I'm curious, and if you're willing, let's maybe dive into that before we get into the opportunities for video, because it's almost the antithesis of everything that we're seeing and that we're hearing and I've been a contrarian. I think it's been in my nature when everyone is going that way, I'm going to go that way and just see what's over there because I'm curious like that. You mentioned a digital detox and I think it's even deeper. I think it's also a dopamine detox because we get massive amounts of dopamine hits from scrolling, from consuming media, from getting likes and clicks and commenting and then you're going to separate from all of that. And I'll be the first one to admit, I've struggled with digital addiction and it's almost like I am an alcoholic working in a bar because I'm a digital anthropologist.

Through a lot of coaching and counseling, I've been able to manage some of this and I'm a big believer in taking digital dopamine detoxes because that's probably we disconnect with everything around us to reconnect with ourself, even for your friend, reconnect with nature, waking up with the sun, going to sleep when the sun sets. So there's this whole deeper thing going on here. When was the last time that you were just completely stepped away from social media, technology, screens? What does that look like for you just working in this space?

Ethan Beute:

I haven't. It's really interesting, yeah. In general, I've gone through phases. My wife is a much better model for me than probably anyone else in my life in terms of stepping away deactivating for a period of time, these kinds of things. And so it ebbs and flows in general, but I've never gone multiple weeks in a row without logging in. I mean, I removed Facebook from my phone years ago. I turned off the badges and notifications and things on my phone years ago, but it's just part of what I do. And I love, by the way, I just love the term digital anthropologist. I think when we talk about marketing and we would talk about business success, we're really still talking about all things human, no matter how digital we get. And so this intersection of sociology, psychology, and anthropology is where all of this is.

If we want to be successful, understanding those things matters a lot, even as much as understanding the technology itself. But to answer your question very directly, I've never taken a prolonged step away because I've always told myself the story and I'm very aware of it, that it's important for me to be there. It's important for me, it's important for the company, it's important for the ideas I embody and teach and practice and learn and share. And so I've never given myself permission to do that. And at some level it feels that you're responsible, but I also know it's the exact right thing to do in this experience I'm about to have.

James Robert Lay:

You know, maybe and I'm just curious because we could possibly come back and just reconnect a couple of months from now.

Ethan Beute:

I'd love to.

James Robert Lay:

And do a little bit of reflection on the journey that you're about to take because I'm curious, do you journal today presently?

Ethan Beute:

It's funny, journaling for me is a lot like meditation and some of these other things that so many people I know and respect and appreciate say this changed my life, but when I sit down to meditate even with guidance or when I sit down to journal, it's just not really my thing, but I will tell you, specific to this, I've picked up two notebooks, nice little inexpensive notebooks, and I will be spending a lot more time writing than I do. I mean, I write a lot for work. I've written two and a half books on some of the things that we'll cover. I've written hundreds and hundreds of blog posts over the years, but I don't sit down and write for myself for the sake of myself rather than for publishing. Right?

James Robert Lay:

Yeah.

Ethan Beute:

And so I am dedicating myself to it, but it has not been a habit of mine. How about you?

James Robert Lay:

Well, I would say it's kind of the thing that has transformed my life. The idea of journaling, the idea of meditation, and separation. I just came back from the Texas Hill Country with my family for one week, and it was a digital detox. Like you, I removed social media from my phone. I removed email from my phone. I even removed my internet browser because I then found other ways to get my dopamine fixed, which was just news. I love to learn. But my wife, she's been my accountability partner because you have to really know how to lock yourself out of Safari, because you can come back and reinstall it. So she now has the keys to the kingdom. I can't get Safari back on my phone, but it is through meditation, it is through journaling that it really transforms the mind. And as a result, we're able to see things differently than how we saw them before.

And that then allows us to shape new beliefs, which form new behaviors that lead to actions, which when repeated or new habits. So if I look back over just the last decade of my life, I wouldn't be here had it not been for these practices. Do you mind if I give you just maybe a... Because I think a lot of times when I talk with leaders that what holds them back from journaling is like, where do I start? How do I begin? I've never done this or maybe I've dabbled with it and I got frustrated. And as one with ADD, I have to create frameworks for myself that then I'm like, well, if it works for me, maybe I can recommend it to someone else. And if it helps them, great, if not, no big deal. Do you mind if I make a recommendation for you?

Ethan Beute:

Please?

James Robert Lay:

So just simply ask yourself, what's been going well for me? And that is a framework of winning, exciting, learning and looking. And what that does. It'll take your mind from the past of winning. So you're always focusing on the progress that you're making, staying out of the gap, which is I call griping about problems. So it's really this whole positive psychology thing. And we know the benefits of optimism for health. There are now scientific studies coming out around how optimistic, and this is some work that Frost Bank is doing in financial services, but how optimistic are better off than pessimist. So there's this whole mind thing going on here. So that's the past winning. Exciting and energizing, well, that's the present moment. So looking out everything around you, what are you feeling excited and energized about? And then there's a little bit of past/present a mix here of what have you been learning? And this could be time-bound, last day, last quarter, last year, it doesn't matter.

So it's really pliable. And then the last one is looking. It's like, okay, what am I looking forward to? What am I looking forward to tomorrow? What am I looking forward to next week, next month, next quarter, next year? I've been doing this with my kids. And a lot of it has just become dinner conversations and where to the point now, if I don't ask my kids at dinner, what went well for them today? Or what was a win for them? Or what was good? They're like dead like aren't you going to ask me? I'm like, oh yeah. So just a little framework, W-E-L-L, that you and the dear listener can maybe your supply within your own journey of continued growth, because this is all about, I think just we're learning more how to be human in a digital world.

There is no roadmap. We're making it up as we go along and you have been the co-author of two fantastic books on the subject. And there's a lot of hype right now in financial services, in banking, in mortgages, around the need to personalize experiences. But in your book, Human-Centered

Communications, we can't just personalize, we have to get personal. And as you share it, it doesn't start or end with customers. Let's transition the conversation here. What challenges are you seeing on this front that the dear listener must be aware of when it comes to thinking about their own financial brand, their FinTech, their mortgage company?

Ethan Beute:

I guess I'll go straight to, and that's a great observation. Thank you for bringing up personal versus personalized. That's a blog post I wrote years ago and it remains a present theme that I think a lot of people, once they get turned onto the idea, give themselves permission to do the things that they know are the right thing to do. So why aren't we doing the things we know are the right thing to do in these moments? The difference between personalized and personal is the difference between dear first name and you know, hey James, right? There's a difference there. And personalization is inserting elements, whether they're manually inserted into some message, experience, communication, flow, whatever, versus making a truly personal moment. And we can all feel the difference, right? And that's a key word, our feelings drive thoughts, thoughts conscious and subconscious drive our words and decisions and behaviors and those words, decisions, and behaviors, drive business outcomes.

So all of our business outcomes are driven by people's feelings and how we make them feel, how we make them feel about themselves, how we make them feel about the problem or opportunity that brought us into a commercial relationship together. How we make them feel about you as an individual human being, how you make them feel about you and your team, you and your brand, whatever the case may be, it is all about feelings. As soft as that sounds, I hope that people would buy that logical flow of feelings drive thoughts, thoughts drive words, decisions, behaviors, and those drive our business outcomes. And so the powerful thing about a personal moment in the context of financial services is that A, I think we've all been enamored of the efficiency that it brings. Like digital transformation accelerated dramatically through the pandemic period. A lot of what we're experiencing today was inevitable.

James Robert Lay:

Yeah.

Ethan Beute:

But it was maybe depending on who you read still three years off, maybe as far as 10 years off and it all got accelerated and compacted. And so the experience got super, super digital really, really quickly and I think that's why we're wrestling with some of these themes that we opened on. And so the allure of a business owner, whether you're an operator in a larger business and you have some sense of ownership over your domain, or whether you are a business owner yourself, it's easy to get attracted to and dwell in efficiency. But what we can lose sight of is effectiveness. Some of the things that take a little bit longer can actually be the most effective, and in the end, get us better results faster than continuing to do the efficient at a rapid pace.

Ethan Beute:

And so to tie it back, the personal touch is so meaningful in this high risk, high vulnerability environment. What is so common for say the mortgage loan officer, here we are, again, here's another transaction, here are all the pieces I need. Here's the order that they all flow in. Here's another frequently asked question right here, new day, new client, same question, same answer, yawn, I'm bored of this. I already know how all this goes. Well, guess what? The person you're serving hasn't done a mortgage or a refi or anything in five years or eight years, or it might be their first time ever. So it might feel like a frequently asked question to you or a really pedestrian or boring thing to you because it happens all the time, but for these people, this is a big deal. And it often requires a great deal of vulnerability.

Now my wife and I are very conservative financial decision-makers, perhaps to our detriment, but we haven't made any major errors to my knowledge. So we're not embarrassed or concerned or anxious and revealing some of our financial decisions and laying out our financial blueprint with somebody that can help us get to a better state in the future. But that's not the case for a lot of people. And so this idea of opening themselves up and revealing some of their deepest things, they maybe even lie to themselves about, right? And so that being present available and personal, truly personal, letting some individual human being feel seen, heard, understood, appreciated, supported, valued, is something we cannot afford to, I'm air quoting scale our way past. You don't scale your way out of making these moments human and honest and personal, and that takes time. But that gift of your time and attention to another human being is what is so valued in the experience. These are the moments that are the most memorable.

James Robert Lay:

And this is where I see the greatest opportunity. Once again, as I mentioned before, being a [inaudible 00:16:24], when everyone is going that way, I'm just going to go see what's over here. And is it even worthwhile? Is it even worth a conversation? And what this boils down to I think is relationship, and you talk a lot about feelings. You talk a lot about emotions, which is very challenging in the financial services space, because a lot of leaders in this space are more analytical, they're left brain. I'm not saying that they're anti-emotion, but I do believe there's a lot of conflict in the mind that goes on. And the more that we can bring this down, distill this down, into models, that it's easy for people who might be more analytical to understand, I think it's the easier for them to grasp and take hold of which is where my wife and I, we came up with this concept called the pyramid of human relationships.

And the pyramid of human relationships has three different levels. At the foundation of every relationship is just respect. And respect is from the financial services, help me when, I, the person, the account holder, has a need, not when your bank or your credit union or your mortgage company has a need. Once we have respect, then we can level up and then there's trust. And I'm going to come back to that in a moment. And then once we have trust established, well, then there's love. And love we can look at as just commitment, basically. Like I'm ready to commit to your brand for this said product over here. Now the bridge between respect and love, it's trust as I said. Trust being built upon two things. What you say, what you do. What you say, that's communication, which is really the entire central theme and thesis that I wrote about in *Banking On Digital Growth*. And that's because communication is at the heart of all relationships. How does video play into this thinking around Human-Centered Communication to establish, to build, to increase trust?

Ethan Beute:

Cool. A few key ideas here, and I love your pyramid. And the thing that I appreciate the most about it is that you're willing and able to use the word love, which again, some people struggle with in a business context, but it's a real thing. How else do you capture the most powerful, positive, emotional sentiment that also packs in all of its necessary precursors, including respect and trust? So really well done with that. So video, of course, is the next best thing to being there in person. And you have two types of video. You have live synchronous video, which would be a Zoom call, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, whatever. And then you have asynchronous video. Asynchronous video is, oh, sorry... Another live, Instagram live, Facebook live, live streaming, et cetera. And so then with asynchronous, it's out of time and out of space.

So synchronous video takes us out of space. Two people anywhere on the earth with a camera and an internet connection can connect in real time, but we have to make sure we have our time zones correct. So it overcomes distance, but it doesn't overcome time. Asynchronous video overcomes both time and distance, that's to say, and I'll give one qualifier and then get into that. Let's set aside the

asynchronous video of videos in your Facebook feed, videos in a LinkedIn feed, videos in a YouTube channel, what we do and what I've spent the last decade working on as a learner practitioner, teacher, observer, cheerleader, many other roles related to this is video messaging, video, email, and video messaging, using simple recorded videos in place of what would otherwise be a few paragraphs of faceless typed out text. So in that zone, we're overcoming time and distance.

I can get to the office at seven 15 before some of us still show up in the office at BombBomb, and in other businesses of around the world, the vast majority of us don't, but I do. And so I can when it's still quiet, send three or four thank you videos to start my day. A, like, as you said about optimism, the expression of gratitude is a very healthy thing.

James Robert Lay:

Yes.

Ethan Beute:

Doing it in a video message, A, allows me just dwelling in the benefits to me personally, it allows me to express these thoughts and feelings with my whole self. It's not an intellectual exercise of I think of Judy and Judy is amazing. She did that thing for me and so I'm going to go to the keyboard and try to capture my thoughts and feelings and peck them into the keyboard and it's an intellectual exercise for me to execute it. And she receives it and reads it. But I mean, how many times do we see the words thanks, thank you, cheers, exclamation points, emoticons? All those are, are efforts to express what we truly feel. And video allows you to express what you truly feel. I'll just share one more idea here. This idea of sending video messages in place of what would otherwise be faceless typed out text allows us to give people, especially in a financial context, because of the sensitivity, the risk, the emotional exposure, the vulnerability, the trust that's required, et cetera, communicating this way in this context allows us to express what people need and want most from our communication.

What the human being needs and wants most from our communication is to know our intent. Now I'm borrowing a little bit from a gentleman named Dr. Nick Morgan. I'm using his language to cap, he in the word intent, he captures a variety of things that I'll just rip out really quickly here that I would use as an instead, but intent really gets to it, it's what is your motivation? Do you seem to understand me? Do you seem to believe what you're saying? Do you seem to have my best interests in mind? Do you seem to care? All of these things are things that people are judging in every social interaction before they're judging how much you know, right? People don't care how much until they know how much you care. People don't judge your competence, just using academic language, people don't judge your competence until they've judged your warmth. If you don't prove that you're sufficiently warm, and that then goes to this intent, motivation, sincerity, honesty, forthrightness, if you can't demonstrate those things, then they don't care how much you know, and this is just basic evolutionary psychology.

If you think back, I just make up a number, 2,800 years ago, 2,800 years ago, if you said yes to people based only on their competence or what they were arguing or what they were suggesting without judging what their motivation is to share that with you, or to share that with you in that way, you could easily be manipulated or taken advantage of and the consequences very well could be fatal. Now, today, the consequences aren't going to be fatal, but you could still very easily be manipulated or taken advantage of. So humans are very, very good at making these judgements of warmth and intent and motivation and sincerity. And if you're communicating in ways, let's just talk about like a lead to close scenario. If you're communicating early on when someone is raised their hand by filling out a form or whatever the case may be, even if it's this personal referral.

If you're reaching out in ways that don't allow them to assess your intent, which is to say, if you're sending out faceless typed out text alone or faceless voicemails, you're not giving them the information they need to say yes in a safe, healthy, confident way, what the brain does in the absence of

that data because faceless typed out texts both visually and emotionally impoverished. If they don't have what they need to make the decision, they make it a conservative way that defends themselves. And they say, well, and this is none of this is conscious by the way, they'll say, well, I don't know if this person's sincere. I don't know if I can trust them. I don't know if they seem to believe what they're saying and so I'm just going to assume that they're not. And so this idea of getting the benefit of the doubt in a digital virtual or online environment, you can't do that.

You're not getting that benefit of the doubt for a variety of reasons, which is to say nothing of all the active, nasty malfeasance and manipulation that the worst actors are performing, you're also engaging in that same environment. So you're even less likely to get the benefit of the doubt. And so video is just the most human experience you can deliver when you're forced to operate digitally and virtually. And if you can't be there in person or you can't be live and video, a video message is a great substitute in so many cases.

James Robert Lay:

And there's a lot to come back and reinforce here. Number one, 95% of the decisions that we make, that inform our actions, our behaviors, our habits, are rooted in our subconscious mind. We're not even aware of what's going on. Video back to your point of the plain text versus video communication via email or asynchronously, or in real time, video helps to fill in some of those gaps because communication isn't just written, it isn't just verbal as you and right now are on Zoom. We're reading each other's body language, and we're able to get a lot of cues that we're probably not aware of, but it's helping to inform our conscious mind of how we're having this conversation. There are three important questions for the dear listener to consider when it comes to establishing building and increasing trust.

And the very first question is, it's binary. It's a one or zero response. Can a prospect trust you? Period, end of story. If it's a zero, they do not continue. If it is a one, if it's true, they continue forward. Because the second question that you must answer, because they're asking, is how are they making me feel? Back to your point of warmth, friendly, inviting, and then if they feel good to proceed on their journey, then the last question that we have an opportunity to answer is, how can we help them? But what we end up doing is we tend to only focus on how can we help them not thinking about how are we making them feel, yet alone, are they even trusting us in the first place? And so I appreciate your perspective on how video can close some of these subconscious gaps in the mind.

Now, another point that you made here, and I think this is where balance comes back into play, because in Human-Centered Communication in your book, you know that you can't automate a relationship. And you touched on this before, but that's why I want to loop back to this because automation and AI, they are a big thing in financial services. As we're moving into the strategic planning season, I know that's going to be the big topic in almost every single boardroom. I'm getting a lot of questions about it, but I'm also trying to strike a balance here. What might that balance be for financial brands, FinTech, mortgage companies, to balance technology, or what you write about of the book, human and tech?

Ethan Beute:

The quick take is high tech for high touch, right? It's when we're thinking about what tools we're going to deploy in our business, we can't just look at it in terms of what money is it going to save us? We need to find this balance of effectiveness and efficiency. Effectiveness being, how can we leverage tech to take away the things that slow us down that we're not as good as machines at so that we can do more of the things that we're superior at? And I'll just give you a quote or it'll be a paraphrase in case, I'll call it paraphrasing in case I'll get it exactly right. So one of my favorite books that I've ever read and I've read it like five times, it's actually a collection of essays by a German economist named Ernest Schumacher.

And it's called Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered. And so it really is a human-centered approach to economics. And the quote goes something like this. "Every organization must continually strive to find the balance between the orderliness of order and the disorderliness of creative freedom. And the problem inherent in large scale organization is that it prioritizes as a natural bias and tendency toward the orderliness of order at the expense of creative freedom." So again, orderliness of order, disorderliness of creative freedom. So let's substitute some words there, orderliness of order is repetitive, efficient, automated.

James Robert Lay:

Yep.

Ethan Beute:

Disorderliness of creative freedom is messy, human, confusing, emotionally charged, vulnerable, where is the trust? And so to speak to the analytical person you were referring to before as a proxy for where a lot of people are in these spaces, we all know intuitively as human beings that when people say yes, yes, I'll sign this contract. Yes, I want to do this loan with you. Yes, I trust you to create this plan and execute it on my behalf. All of these yeses are based in this disorderly, hard to measure, hard to understand. We all know intuitively that people say yes because of those reasons, especially in this insanely commoditized space, right? And so we must be honest with ourselves. We don't need to name any of the names because we all know them, whether it's real estate, mortgage banking, financial advisory insurance, there are, there are tools and systems, entire companies built on the idea that we can get the human out of this thing.

And we've seen one step forward, two steps back for a lot of them because they haven't figured out how do we fill in this missing gap? And so what I would suggest to a human being that is in a customer facing role in any of these industries that are characterized by big decisions, big impact milestones in your life, some risks, some vulnerability, some exposure to some truths in my life and the decisions that I've made and helping me with my problems or helping me capitalize on an opportunity, if you are to stay involved in this process, then you need to dwell in the disorderliness of creative freedom and use the technology to free you up to do so. To free you up to find ways to create personal moments, not just to apply more tech to create personalized moments, to go back to another thing that you smartly pulled out of some of those pages.

I appreciate that too. So it's this tension and balance. The answer is, and I see this all the time, I spent a lot of time on social, that's why I'm so excited in afraid to walk away from it.

James Robert Lay:

Yeah.

Ethan Beute:

You see so much tension in these two things and so many people treat any of these discussions as either/or, and we know that the answer 99.8, seven times out of a 100 is both and, not either, or, and so. If you are over biasing toward giving the tools and the machine all the responsibility, you're making a mistake. Likewise, if you are insisting on putting your thumbprint on every single thing that happens, you're probably also not creating as healthy and sustainable a business as your customers deserve. And so it's really finding that healthy balance between the two and when you're deciding what to automate and what not to A, of course, it's about balance, B look for off ramps.

I see this mistake so many times, not just in the industries that you focus on and specialize in, but across all customer experiences, there aren't enough off ramps where technology is deployed. This is



the rage click, this is the smashing, the zero button. Like I just want to talk to a human. These things create off ramps and then create sensors and alarms that either A, tell the machines to off ramp to a human being or give people the option to say, I'm ready for a human being now, before just keeping them in some death loop of confusion and frustration. So I know there was a lot there too, but you're asking me questions I care a lot about.

James Robert Lay:

Oh no. And I appreciate the passion. And that's why I want to just loop back and reinforce a couple of key points. Number one, small is beautiful. I remember probably in 2019, whenever I was writing *Banking On Digital Growth*, I was telling my wife, I'm like, just watch. And this was before COVID. I was like, just watch, the micro is going to beat the macro over the next decade. And she's like, well, what do you mean? And so she's really big into just clothes and fashion. I said we were already seeing the decline of a lot of larger retailer brands, but I said, okay, here's a great example. You know, you've got maybe a high end retailer or a Macy's or a Foley's, Sears was already on the cutting block back then and JC Penney.

And I said, they're going to struggle or go away. But I said, all of like your boutique niche high end brands, they're fine. They're going to figure out a way, they've been around for hundreds of years in some cases like the big fashion houses coming out of France and Europe and Italy. But then I said, the other thing though, is watch, you're going to have people that we have no idea who they are, who are building communities on Instagram and TikTok, for example, they're going to start coming out with their own fashion lines. And sure enough, she has bought clothes from individuals that we didn't know who they were three years ago. And now we're seeing more headlines of larger retailers you know about the file bankruptcy. And it's because the micro has the potential to continue to beat the macro.

Why? People buy from people. People trust people. And I've been saying, and I will continue to say, and it's been a big theme on this podcast, the power of the individual personal brand of the lender or the leader. And I get it, it makes a lot of people feel uncomfortable because what you were talking about is this chaos disorder, versus being able to control things. We can control the macro brand experience, but if we empower our individual teams and our lenders and our leaders to go out and build these personal brands, are we putting ourselves at risk? And I'm like, no, like you send people out into the communities to go to chambers of commerce events and you don't even think twice about it. Why can't we empower them to use tools, to use technology, like video that allow them to literally hack time? Back to your point of your example earlier, you get in, you send three gratitude videos to start your day.

So you're already in a positive, energetic state. Wow. What holds us back? I think not even organizations, because that's a whole cultural issue. I think back to your point about digital transformation, we see 60 to 85% of digital transformation initiatives fail or fail to meet expectations, not because of technology, but because of the people issue here. And so instead of trying to take transformation and push it in from the organizational level to the team, team to the individual, let's focus on the individual first. And so, what holds us back when it comes to at least trying new communication tools, like video, video email, where are the limitations that are often rooted deep in our subconscious mind?

Ethan Beute:

I'll give you two. And I like that you walked it straight down to the individual level because that bypasses a couple other ones I always like to hit. So at the immediate level, it's I'm already sufficiently productive. I like my results. I like where I am in my career. I've got a healthy book of business. Why bother? Right? So that's the first one, right? I'm successful. People tell me I'm successful. I'm in the top 10% or 20% most of the time. I'm satisfied with my income. Why would I bother? So that's one and that would apply to any change at all.

James Robert Lay:

Yep.

Ethan Beute:

The other one specific to video is fear of judgment and fear of rejection. Again, from an evolutionary psychology standpoint, one of the things we fear the most is to be judged and rejected by our tribe. Because again, I think I used 2,800 years earlier, 2,800 years ago. If we were judged and rejected by our peers in our tribe, we would die. We would die in the desert or we would die in the mountainside or we would die in the planes wherever we were. And so this is still very deep in us. And so this idea of, and I'll compare it again to synchronous video. So most people are comfortable now getting on a zoom meeting, most people are willing to turn their cameras on, but it's like an in person meeting like a coffee or a lunch or a sales presentation.

Afterward, you might beat yourself up a little bit like, oh, I missed the chance to add this extra idea or I wish I hadn't said it that way. Or I wish I had been paying more attention to the other decision maker in the room on reading her body language so that I could have blah, blah, blah. Right? So you might judge yourself a little bit afterward, but there's no repeating it. The problem for human beings who fear judgment and rejection more than they're curious about the outcome of a new and different and better behavior is that they can play these videos back. So of course, you have, what do I say? When do I do it? Am I set up right? I think the setup right again, has been removed by the Zoom experience during the pandemic. But these other elements of when would I actually send a video message instead of text, what do I say? How do I get into it and get out of it?

These are things that require some practice to get comfortable and confident. But the problem for a lot of humans early on is that as soon as they hit stop, they know who they're reaching out to, they know why, they know about what they want to say, they do it, they hit something and they can play it back. And I tell this story in *Rehumanize Your Business*. I'll never forget the first time I heard my own recorded voice on an audio cassette. It blew my mind. I was like, who's that? Like, I recognize my friend on this tape, but who is that other person? Right? And so we're not used to seeing and hearing ourselves. So in a live video, we could see what we look like, but it comes and goes and we don't dwell in it. But with a recorded video, we can play it back over and over and over again and start telling ourselves these lies of, I don't look right.

I didn't say it right. I said um too many times, all of these things that you do anyway when you're across the table over coffee or lunch, or when you're on a Zoom meeting. And so I think that's the number one stop. Is this is new, this is different, I don't like the way I look. I don't like the way I sound. I'm not comfortable or confident in this zone. And so I'm going to quit before I ever start an earnest. What I would encourage anyone to do just to close that loop is reach out to two or three or four people a day, whether you're using BombBomb or another tool, make a commitment to send two or three videos a day for a week. Reach out to people you know and who know you. Reach out to people you love and who love you and say things like, thank you. Good job. Congratulations. I just noticed that. Or I was sorry to see, or I was sorry to hear. Simple messages of acknowledgement, appreciation. And I promise, I said two a day for a week.

So let's just say you send 10. I promise that you'll get at least four replies from people you know and who know you that validate that this is in fact different and better, and you're going to feel it in the nature of the reply.

James Robert Lay:

Yeah.

Ethan Beute:

And then when we broaden this out and we start sending to prospects, customers, past clients, our peers, potential strategic partners, our referral partners, when you start broadening that reach and identifying other opportunities to do it, I'm happy to do that with anybody, by the way. And then I've published a number of things besides the two books to help with that. As you broaden it out, it's not just the quantity of replies that you'll get, and you will get that, especially in a prospecting mode to the degree that you're doing it in a relevant and helpful way.

It's the quality of replies. No one has ever told you that's the best email I've ever got. But if someone reaches out with a question, hey, I noticed this, and I noticed that, the two odds in my mind, I don't understand why this is the case. And you record a two minute and 12 second video that says, hey, I know exactly what you're talking about. I wonder the same thing myself. People ask me this question now and then, here are two different ways to think about it and here's what I think that means for you. Thanks so much for reaching out to me, if you ever have any other questions, continue to reach out to me. I am your person for these types of things. Appreciate you so much. Hope you and your wife are having an awesome summer. And I hope Jenny makes captain of the soccer team again, have a great day, right?

That's the kind of thing that is truly remarkable and the kind of thing that people want to tell other people about. And by the way, you probably saved yourself six to eight minutes in just talking the reply out, then typing it out.

James Robert Lay:

Absolutely. Absolutely. And there's a couple of points that I'm going to come back and reinforce here. Number one, start small. And you know what? This is just for the production team. Don't cut that. Don't cut this either, because I think that's a key point here. If this was not being recorded, we would just keep going on. But because this is being recorded, we could come back and edit that out and clean it up. No, that's not real life.

Ethan Beute:

And no one's going to beat each other up over it. It's just how things are.

James Robert Lay:

Exactly. So let's keep that in there because most likely that would just get cut. So you're getting a little bit of behind-the-scenes on that, but start small and start internally. I mean, we just had a conversation, Audrey, who is our ops lead and I about some of the works from Dr. BJ Fogg with Tiny Habits. And we're also big believers in Atomic Habits by James Clear. And it's just a simple act of starting that is probably some of the biggest barriers. And so when you start recording, make a commitment, you're not going to hit the stop button. You're just going to keep rolling if you flub it up like I just did here. You're just going to keep rolling. You're just going to keep going. But start internally too, because I think when you work with your internal team, it's a safe space before you even begin going externally.

And I like the idea of establishing two videos over the course of five days, that's 10. And then it's like, okay, well, we can expect three to four positive responses. Well, that then makes a little dopamine affirmation hit for us. Like, oh, they love me. They really love me.

Ethan Beute:

I am good enough.

James Robert Lay:

Right. And so there's validation, but then I'm going to come back to Human-Centric Communication. You share something here, which is on page 222, use frameworks, not a script. And I think that's a whole conversation for another day and get the book Human-Centric Communication, get Rehumanize Your Business to continue expanding your thought on this, because it is your thought that's going to transform your beliefs, which transform your behaviors, your actions, which when repeated become your predictable future through habits. And so as we wrap up, first and foremost, Ethan, thank you for the time. Thank you for the conversation. This has been highly enlightening and highly energizing for me. What is the best way for someone to connect with and continue the conversation that we've started here today?

Ethan Beute:

Yeah, absolutely. First, thank you. I mean, there's so much shared vision and values around this stuff between us and I'm so glad we connected and I look forward to future conversations recorded or not.

James Robert Lay:

Yes.

Ethan Beute:

And so if folks really enjoyed this, you can find me on pretty much all social networks. Ethan Beute, last name is spelled B-E-U-T-E. BombBomb is bombbomb.com. And we are BombBomb on all the social networks, you can try it absolutely free. Publish a lot of stuff. We do a lot of live training. And so if you are interested in some of these core ideas and you would like to find ways to restore that personal human touch and to leverage your very best asset, which is who you are. Like in a commoditized space, you are your own best differentiator. Why are you hiding behind this cloak of digital anonymity?

Well, first and foremost, probably because you haven't recognized the opportunity to shed it and get more present with more people, even in a digital and virtual posture. So if you're curious in these themes, this is where we live, this is what we've been doing for a decade, and I would love to hear from y'all. My only qualifier is again, I'm going to be gone from social for a little while, but I promise I'll get back to you. I will make time to get back to everyone that reaches out and engages with me on these themes and topics. And not only will this change our business results, I think we talked a bit about that already. Like, this is something that customers and prospects and team members and recruits can feel.

This will also change business culture and change it for the positive. It's about finding the time where we can to see and hear and appreciate each other.

James Robert Lay:

Yeah.

Ethan Beute:

And I think if we're going to create healthy, sustainable businesses, they're businesses that we enjoy being in and operating in. It's not a duty or an obligation, it's a privilege. And so let's make this fun again and let's spend more time in relationship with other people because that's where it's at.

James Robert Lay:

100%, let's make this fun. This has been fun. Connect with Ethan. Learn from Ethan, grow with Ethan. Ethan, thank you so much for joining me on another episode of Banking On Digital Growth.

Ethan Beute:

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Thank you.

James Robert Lay:

Until next time, and as always, be well, do good, and make your bed.