

EPISODE 199

EPISODE Julie Broad

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Best of success.

John Bowen

Co-founder, AES Nation

John J. Bowen Jr.

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EPISODE 199

EPISODE Julie Broad

Show Notes at: http://www.aesnation.com/199



John Bowen: As entrepreneurs, we all want to make a difference in the world. The way we make a difference is by creating value. There's a lot competition though to create value for the right clients and customers. How do we do it? Well, we become an authority. We become an expert. We have an established brand, a personal brand to do that. I've got a remarkable entrepreneur who has had a very successful career in real estate and then decided she wanted to do something different and we're really fortunate she did because she's been very successful in branding herself first in the real estate and now helping us as fellow entrepreneurs really establish that authority through the power of books.

She's got a bestselling book and a couple of it are really well positioned. Now with that, I got to tell you, one of my favorite things in things in life as you could see behind me is books. The power of books is just amazing. I'll share along the way what I found in writing 21 books as well why you should be doing it. I'm John Bowen, co-founder of AES Nations, all about accelerating your success. You better stay tuned because we have an amazing show.

Ordinary success, no way. You want amazing, remarkable, exceptional breakthroughs. Dig deep. Think bold. Drive hard. Watch yourself soar beyond your dreams. AESnation.com. Julie, I am so excited to have you hear. This is as you heard of my introduction of you, I mean, you've really made a pretty big impact with you and your husband, real estate then you're reinventing yourself and what I love is you're helping fellow entrepreneurs with what you've learned how to do on the branding side. So first of all, thank you for joining us.

Julie Broad: Oh, thanks for having me. I'm really excited to be here.

John: One of the things we're talking before we turned on the camera with a whole bunch of lessons that we're going to go over together and I think they're going to be extreme ... Actually, I don't think, I know they're going to be extremely valuable to our fellow entrepreneurs. But what I'd like to do and it was a question I asked you too, we had a good fortune of a mutual friend introducing us and Jessica Rhodes. One of the things that came out is the transition you made because it's not ... Most people, once they get really good at something, they keep running with it. You decided a different calling and you're making a big impact in a second career. So, give me a little bit of that background and how you did it. Because I mean, so many of your fellow entrepreneurs want to do that along the way too and it's going to be even more important what we're talking about for them.

Julie: Yeah, for sure. So, I spent many years investing in real estate. I started in 2001. It was great. I mean, I still am an investment, it's present tense, but I'm just not actively pursuing deals and raising capital anymore. But as we talked about beforehand, I ended up with two companies in real estate. My husband and I ran an investment company and then I started a training and education company helping people invest in real estate and raise money for their

ACCELERATING ENTREPRENEURIAL SUCCESS PODCAS

EPISODE 199

EPISODE Julie Broad

Show Notes at: http://www.aesnation.com/199



deals. So, I ended up real estate 24/7 and then of course it became the topic when I go to family dinners. Everybody's like, "Oh, what's the market doing?" So, I never got away from it.

Eventually, I just kind of hit a point where I thought I never got into real estate to talk real estate all the time. I got into real estate because I wanted my retirement taken care of, I wanted to have some financial security. So, I then kind of said, "I needed to make a change." It kind of coincided with my husband turning 40 and going, "I don't really want to do this all time anymore," and deciding that he wanted to make his own change and become an actor. So, without him on the team, I really needed to make the change because I was the marketing and he was the numbers and you can't do good real estate coaching or investments without both.

John: Well, it's great. I wondered why you went to LA. Now I know why you're in LA. I did work in the entertainment industry for a while too. But the idea then, let's take it a step further. So, you decided and wrote a book and you're out there helping other fellow entrepreneurs with books. I mean, when we look at the title, you're president of Book Launchers. I got to tell you, almost every entrepreneur, Julie, wants to go ahead and launch a book. I can still remember the very first book I wrote, How Much, I mean, this is back in the very early '90s, right in the beginning, it was a nightmare going through the publishers and we didn't have all the tools that we have now. But the benefit of once I got out that book, it changed my life. How did you decide to get into this space?

Julie: Yeah, I mean, I had similar experience. As a real estate investor in Canada, as soon as my book came out, I suddenly was able to get on TV. I was on TV stations across Canada, radio stations. Before that, for some reason, I was the same person, the same expertise but with the book, they suddenly recognized this expertise. It's better than a degree. 35% of the population has a degree but less than 1% has written a book. So suddenly everybody wants to talk to you. But for me, the book was ... People started asking me a lot of questions after that book came out because I had kind of a really wonderful scenario that I wish I could implement for everyone because everybody would want to work with me.

Because Wiley turned me down, I went back and forth with Wiley for a long-time book deal but in the end, they said, "You know what, you don't have a strong enough marketing platform to sell books so we're not going to work with you." I was devastated but the truth is the book they wanted me to write was something I didn't even want to write. They did me a favor because I eventually wrote the book I wanted to write and I self-published. The stars aligned and I managed to take that book to number one overall on Amazon in Canada, hanging out with Dan Brown and the Game of Thrones. This is a soft covered book for \$24 I think at the time and so it hung out in the top 100 over on Amazon for a month. So, it was a pretty cool story and one of those things where you're like, "Take that, Wiley." That lead everybody to ask me questions which kind of opened my eyes to the challenges in this space.

EPISODE Julie Broad

Show Notes at: http://www.aesnation.com/199



John: Well, it's funny, Julie. Because I did different time, different age between the two of us and so in the '90s, I wrote books with publishers. I got to tell you, really the value of doing it with a publisher and we'll get into that in a bit but it was a huge amount of work, a big delay and now I do write a lot of books with my partner Russ Prince, Russ has written 50 and we found the value of being that thought leader, exactly what you're saying. In today's world, we'll get into self-publishing and not. But I want to dive into the first question because this is something you and I are both passionate about. I mean, why is a book so powerful in this personal brand stuff and why should our fellow entrepreneurs, I mean, they're hard charging, they're working really hard and everything, let's put in one more thing on their to-do list, why would they do that?

Julie: Yeah, a couple of things. One is that it's marketing that actually pay you to review, right. I mean, I'm not saying you would produce the book that's just full of sales message. I really am a big believer that your book needs to have value, has to have great content in it, a strong message, but ultimately, you're going to create a book that markets your company and or markets you and your brand. Nobody throws books out. I mean, unless you produce a really terrible book, nobody's going to throw it. I mean, look at your shelf. Nobody throws books out.

John: I have, only because I've stopped building bookcases. My rule with my wife is that I have to take something out that I haven't read in three years and put something up. But yeah, I've got a number of bookcases throughout the house and then also I got 600 Kindle books, I was just looking at that. I mean, we save them as long as possible though.

Julie: Yeah, and so somebody bought, somebody buys these book in most cases. I mean, you might give them away but somebody's paying you to look at your marketing and then it sits on their shelf, they pass it around, they give it to a friend. It sits on their desk and other people ask about it. So, it's powerful marketing and whether you ever make money from your book or not, that's your choice. But it's something that is just a lot of people don't realize how powerful it is to have that book. I'm also a big proponent for physical books. I love Kindle but for marketing and for your business and your branding, nothing compares to that actual physical, handing that to somebody. It also doesn't have the feeling of pride. Seeing your book on somebody's shelf or on a bookstore shelf, it's just not the same seeing it on Kindle. So that's a big, big thing to take into consideration when you're doing this.

The other thing I want to mention is that as an entrepreneur, a business owner, you're probably already creating content and that content could form part of your book. So you already probably are halfway or at least 30% of the way to producing a book and you just haven't really thought about it. Producing content is really smart, good use of your time and most of us have been content creating for years.

EPISODE Julie Broad

Show Notes at: http://www.aesnation.com/199



John: I mean, I totally agree. The ability, most of us as entrepreneurs, we're passionate about something. We've got a story. We're helping people do things and real world, we've got a book inside us. In many cases, we got multiple books. I got to tell you, Julie, the very first book I wrote I did with McGraw-Hill. I grew up in the financial services industry and there's a book that literally took two years, about a year on my side and then they didn't like it, we went back and forth. They finally published it. We sold 100,000 copies and I didn't know how big a deal that was. My life changed. The investment company took off like crazy. The next year, I go, "This is really great." I wrote a book about to the industry on how I was growing my business and I had two partners at the time. Somebody read that book and bought our business for \$25 million.

I go, "I really like books." I mean, there's a lot of power in these things. Today, one of the most common for anybody that's on the internet, you've seen the concept of book funnels, I mean, we use that in our business. Yeah, one of the reasons we write books is for that relationship and positioning and I'm with you, Julie, I print these out all the time. But I want to go to the next question I have for you because this is one that I had when I first got started, I mean, I think of 9th grade English teacher, she would be wondering, I was really good at math but English, not so much and Mrs. Arbies would be questioning how I could have ever written this much stuff. But I don't think, I'm going to go, "I don't think of myself as a writer," and I'm not but I'm an author of an awful lot of books. Tell me how you think of that for entrepreneurs. They're struggling with it.

Julie: It's funny because I had a high school ... I used to think I was a writer. As a kid, I thought I was going to be a writer and then I had a high school teacher who just basically popped that bubble and I thought, "No, I'm not going to be a writer." So I think a lot of us have had that experience. But if you genuinely hate to write or you really know you're not a good writer, it's okay because as an entrepreneur, we're not setting out to be necessarily a New York Times bestseller that writes books for a living. You're setting out with a goal for your business or a goal for your brand and you're building your book to achieve that goal and then you hire the right team. Right, you get the right people on your side so that they're helping you craft that book so that it's got the right positioning, it's got a great outline, you fill in the in-between parts in that outline with your expertise and your knowledge and your case studies and your research and then you get great editors to go through it.

If you really don't want to write it, a great option is once you have that outline, so that is critical, you really prove your book message with that, how do you describe your book in one or two sentences and then craft that outline but you can speak it. If you can talk, you can write a book. You can fill in the pieces in between, get it transcribed and then again, get the right editing team on your side and with the write editing, we're all writers.

EPISODE Julie Broad

Show Notes at: http://www.aesnation.com/199



John: Well, so the way I think of it, I'll give you a little different framing but it's perfectly aligned with what you're saying, Julie. I think there's writers and there's authors. I have convinced myself I'm an author. It's really sharing. I've got those stories. It's definitely our research, our framing, I'll have a conversation and I have a team of writers that work with me now because of what we do. But it can be, with the right team, it's pretty effortless. Effortless might be the wrong word but it's not that much effort. The value, the return on investment, I can't think of anything that I've done that's had a higher return on investment. I'm an investment guy. I've managed billions of dollars. The books are really powerful and as much as everything's changed, one of the things, I am doing more books, not less and I am printing them. We'll come back to digital because I do digital too but I like both.

Okay, I got this story inside me, okay, my fellow entrepreneurs that we're talking with here. They've got the story. But talking about doing a book for years. So busy. So, what's the first step that they should take? Because the power of book is phenomenal but you got to actually have it. It's got to exist, in your mind. A lot of times, I'll joke, it's kind of the sailboat joke, there is happy, the best time, these two happy moments in buying a boat and selling a boat, in between it's a whole lot of water. It's the same with a book. If you're writing it yourself and doing everything on your own, two happy times, when you decide and when you're finally done and it's out there. But for our fellow entrepreneurs that are fully engaged in the business, what's the first step? If they think they want to get a book and they recognize the power in their marketing, their positioning, their branding, what do they do?

Julie: Yeah, the first thing you really want to think about is your goal. Because a lot of people, of course it would be great if you're topping the bestseller charts but really it's more important to think about who do you want to reach with this book and what do you want it to achieve for you and then you figure out your message. If you've got those three pieces in there, so you've got that core, like I said, that one or two lines and you know what you need to achieve, what's more important because all those other things, bestselling, saying you're bestselling author is great but if it doesn't achieve your business goals, what has it really done for you? The bestselling part might make your ego feel good but it hasn't actually solved your business challenges.

So, you really want to build your book around that goal and your message and make sure it's going to target that core audience. It's got to talk to that ideal client or whoever it is that you're trying to get your message out to so that you can achieve those goals and have that book do great things for you. If you do that, like you said, the ROE, the return on your energy is substantial. Forget that return on investment. I mean, most of us can pay back a book with one client or two clients. The cost of producing a book. So, the money isn't the factor. It's the energy and the return on the right book is phenomenal. So, you have to spend the time at the beginning to really think that piece through and spend more time that you think. A lot of people

EPISODE Julie Broad

Show Notes at: http://www.aesnation.com/199



think, "Oh, I'm just going to spend the afternoon and plan out my book." You really got to think that piece through so that the entire process is almost effortless.

John: Yeah, I mean, this is-

Julie: You do that right from the start, it's so much easier.

John: Yeah, it really is, Julie. I mean, right now, we're working on a campaign and we've tested it. It's being well received in the marketplace. It's generated a pretty good amount of revenue already, proof of concept. We go, "What's missing?" We go, "A book." So we're writing a book real quickly to leverage to that audience and create more marketing awareness, the whole thing. Really, that's going to be the core piece of generating an extra five million of revenue over the next 12 months. I mean, that's the power of a book. I mean, and I like your return on energy because that's actually true. I mean, the cost of doing the book for us will be let's say several thousand dollars, maybe a little more than that in printing and all that. The return on equity, I mean, when you start thinking that's going to be the main driver of \$5 million reoccurring revenue business, you go, "Yeah, maybe a book isn't a bad idea."

This is where, I mean, I really do feel with the right book and you were really clear, it's got to ... You got to be clear in the audience, "I don't care if this book ... I think my family reads it, they won't because it's in the financial space."

Julie: That's true.

John: I'll give it to my dad because he's real proud of me and all that stuff and he'll put it on the shelf but other than that ... A matter of fact, in our case, we have distributions. I won't. It's self-published and we won't even put it on Amazon because I want to control every step of the way because I already know my audience. What you don't want to do is this whole shotgun approach. I mean, I've seen, I've had some friends that have written a book and they get even on Oprah. You go, "Boy that's a home run." But they had no call to action. They weren't sure what to do next and it's too late. You want to, as you said, really have the campaign together.

How do you think that through? I mean, how do you guys help other people? I mean, this is a big thing, thinking this through. Okay, you get so excited about the book, "Wow, I'm going to have a book and all this." Then it's like, "Okay." Unless you've thought through how you're going to use, it can be a very low value. We can have return on energy and return on investment be not good.

Julie: Yeah. It's a challenge because we actually burst some people's enthusiasm bubbles because they think this is going to be phenomenal and then they tell us their business goal and we go, "Please don't light up. This isn't going to work." So ultimately, we were kind of

ACCELERATING ENTREPRENEURIAL SUCCESS PODCAS

EPISODE 199

EPISODE Julie Broad

Show Notes at: http://www.aesnation.com/199



the.... but yeah, what I've done to fix, to kind of fix that piece is I've brought in professional writing coaches. So, these are people who've not only written a lot of material but they have interesting background. So being in Hollywood, I encountered myself with a lot of people who have analyzed stories for Dreamworks and other major motion picture companies, they've ... One of my writing coaches took a book on computers and turned it to a seven-year running TV show. So, he gets what it takes to appeal to audience and create a story that's got engagement even in a subject that's kind of dull like computers. He turned it into a TV show for seven years.

So that's how we kind of address that, is you work with a writing coach right from the start who will help make sure that you're addressing and creating a book that people are going to want to read and also achieve your goals. Then we've got a team that takes it from there and always is thinking about that goal because at the end of it, a success isn't ... It's not a success like just finishing a book is not a success in my mind, it's an accomplishment but that's not success. Success is having that book actually do something for you and achieve that goal that you set out to achieve.

John: Yeah, no, I mean, my very first book I hired a writing coach from LA as a matter of fact too.

Julie: Funny.

John: One of the things that I learned, I'm up in Silicon Valley and one of the things I learned, I always knew the power of story, but in my space at the time, it was investments, financial side, you didn't really think. He worked very hard. I mean, that was the hardest part, was getting the right story with a call to action and it was phenomenal. He and I continued working together for many years until he retired. That to me, getting a story because we think our lives our boring. I mean, most of, I'm 61, most of my life was boring and mundane but there is a lot of moments of excitement and weaving those in a story that accomplishes major things is just, is really powerful. Having somebody that, very few of us can pull out the story, but being able to get somebody to pull it out of us.

Then for a lot of us, we're left brain dominant, we're more logical. Financial guys are real left brained. In our research, what we found is 84% of the people in business will engage with you emotionally first and then justify it with logic. This is where that power of the book and story just becomes so powerful. Julie, let's go a little off. We kind of touched on it but I want to come back to it because I'm a big believer, I love digital. I mean, we're hanging out together. We're using Zoom right now and you're in LA, I'm in Silicon Valley, we're an hour flight away, maybe five hours of driving but it's instantaneous, it's free, all that stuff. Digital costs money to print things and so on. Maybe I just use digital from now on. What are your thoughts?

EPISODE Julie Broad

Show Notes at: http://www.aesnation.com/199

Julie: I kind of already revealed my thoughts on this.

John: I know.

Julie: I gave away the ending but I like digital.

John: No, but I want to go because I mean it's expensive to do and you're printing a quantity and you got a warehouse, you got to fulfill them. None of us want to fill up our garages with books. Why? I mean, it's so easy to do digital.

Julie: So, the thing is today, it's easy to do print. Yes, digital is great and I'm a big fan of digital and the really powerful thing when you're thinking marketing of digital is the links. You can have links in your book that's direct to your website and that, you just can't replace that innovation physical and so that is something that I love about digital. So, a lot of times actually, people will get your book in both forms so you can have both. That is the big drop. That is the big thing I love about digital. But print these days, we have print on demand companies that you work with so you don't have to warehouse anything and my books for example, they're I think 268 pages roughly, I can print a copy for \$4.06 and I could print one or I can print 100 and people when they order, and so when you go to Barnes & Noble and order my book, they're getting it straight from that print on demand supplier.

So, I can live in my LA apartment and not warehouse books. I don't have to have a storage facility. So that's the beauty. A lot of people don't realize it, that you don't have to buy a quantity of books and you can sell to all these distribution channels and have somebody else, this company, this print on demand company handle that for you. Again, I want to emphasize that print gets passed around. Nobody passes their Kindle around. So, your print book and when you have an event or you speak and you give them a book, a real physical book, that has real tangible value. There's something about eBooks that just don't feel like you're getting real value. As a marketer and as a business person, you really want to be giving people things that not only have value but that people actually see as valuable.

John: Yeah, and I totally agree. I would have, Julie, I would have argued with you about two years ago. I made this switch, all we would do is digital. Then I started testing and the problem with testing is you get results sometimes that aren't what you think they should be. So now, a lot of times we'll send the digital one for somebody that wants it right away but the printed one comes following because people don't shoot away the book. The cost of printing anymore has just gotten so low. It's amazing. Okay, we've worked with a writing coach. We got our business plan together. We're all set. We're ready to go. I mean, writing plan together. We've got a great book. Hopefully we knew what we're going to do at the end before we started writing. But let's say, what do we do with our book? How do we get it really realize that return on energy that you talked about?

EPISODE Julie Broad

Show Notes at: http://www.aesnation.com/199



Julie: It depends because it really depends on what you want and what your plan was for the book. For some people, if the great thing, if you already give talks, the book is a great thing to slip at the back of the room or have included with your speaking fee so everybody in the room gets your book and again, this is your marketing piece. So, at the end got clear to action in it so your goal is just to get it in people's hands, it doesn't matter how it gets there. Some other people might be using it for a credibility. They wanted obviously to attract clients and they want more of a credibility piece so you want to sell it and have a marketing plan. You'll want to, to me, the best things to do are the free things and that's maybe kind of strapper kind of entrepreneur, I like to just get things done in the most efficient and the highest ROI possible.

But for me, what works is you connect with other people in like industries. So, if you're, in my case I'll stick with the real estate the first book, so realtors, they have a vested interest in their clients buying houses. My book was about buying houses. So, I connect with other realtors saying, "Hey, I've got books. Do you want to give away free books? Do you want to let your clients know about these books? Do you want to buy these books?" I had a lot of mortgage brokers bought my book to give it to clients so that clients would be more educated when they work with them. So, think of those kind of relationships, those kind of partnerships in your industry who is not directly competing with you but will have similar clients that would be good for you. That's a phenomenal way to promote your book and get it out there and get it in the hands of the right people.

Of course, your own network is key too. Your clients know other people just like them and so giving your client a book or selling your client a book, letting them know about it. Those are powerful, powerful ways.

John: Yeah, I mean, it really is. As you do this stuff, I've got a little, my niche I'm considered an expert but it's a tiny little niche but one of the books, several years ago, I decided that I wanted to leverage it with other groups and I was able to get one of the mutual fund companies to write a check over a million dollars to have me do a series of speeches and give the books to very important advisers for them. It was a great way of getting it out. I got really tired of signing in awful lot of books but because of my business too.

Julie: Poor you.

John: Yeah, I know, it's the worst things in life. It also generated many, really many millions more of dollars because of their coaching business and so on. Thinking about who has that related offering that you're non-competitive, not only non-competitive but your support can be really powerful. So, let me go, we've been talking about this Julie, what I'd like to do, I'm going to pull up your website, booklaunchers.com, tell us a little bit about what you do and how our

EPISODE Julie Broad

Show Notes at: http://www.aesnation.com/199



fellow entrepreneurs can reach out to explore whether you're the right one to help them get that book and have that big success.

Julie: Yeah, for sure. So, I really started Book Launchers because people were always coming to me with self-publishing problems and questions. A couple of the pieces that really I felt I could help people with a lot was getting that writing coach piece in place because I was impressed to hear that you hired a writing coach because most people don't even think about it even though entrepreneurs often think I need a business coach, when they sit down to write a book, they don't think about getting a writing coach. So, I wanted to help people really craft the right book and have the whole processes so at the very helping them in some of the launch and sales ideas. At the end of the day, the author really is the best person to market their book but they might not have all the time and resources so we do provide a bit of a launch team and some launch support.

So, we help the whole process from, I call it from concept to copies in readers' hands. We got the whole team, the editorial team, the cover team, the layout team. So just like with a traditional publisher, in a lot of regards, except for you own the book, you get all the royalties. This is just your team helping facilitate the process and it's been fun and I love it because I love books. I had to part with a lot of my books when I came to Canada because when I came from LA ... No, the other way around. You know what I mean, when I moved from Canada to LA, there we go, got it, I had all these bookshelves and you're looking at them go and I'm moving from a big house into a small LA apartment, how many books do I really need in my apartment? So, got rid of a lot of them. But I love, I love books, I love stories. So, it's been incredibly fun just seeing the stories and books come out of it. So yeah, it's kind of my side benefit of creating Book Launchers.

John: You're going to help a lot of fellow entrepreneurs create a lot of books. You're going to have to get a bigger place here eventually. But let me do the key takeaways that I'm having and I want to summarize this for my fellow entrepreneurs. If you haven't heard, I love books. I mean, I've many millions of dollars off books. It's so easy to dismiss kind of the old school marketing but if anything, it's a little bit like direct mail has done except nobody's mailing anymore so you can stand out. With books, particularly the printed books, you can really stand out and you can tell your story. You can have complete freedom to do that. Whether to publish or self-publish, you've heard Julie and I be really clear, I love self-publishing, unless there's got to be a huge reason to do a book with a publisher because the only reason they want to work with you quite honestly is if you already have all the distribution you need and then why do it.

Well, the reason to do it maybe for credibility but for most of the entrepreneurs who are listening here, that's not. You're already credible to your market. So, power of book is big. I want to challenge all of you that you don't need to be a writer. If you ask Mrs. Arbies, my 9th

ACCELERATING ENTREPRENEURIAL SUCCESS PODCAS

EPISODE 199

EPISODE Julie Broad

Show Notes at: http://www.aesnation.com/199



grade teacher, she would tell you there is not a chance I would be a writer. I'm not, I'm an author. I've always had a team, starting from the very first book, I hired a writing coach and I would encourage all of you to do that because you will waste so much time getting ready and that return on energy as Julie talked about is so important and if you use your energy just to get the story out and let people pull it out from you, it will be phenomenal.

First step is just, I mean, quite honestly whether it's Julie's company or someone else, you got to find a partner that you have confidence in. Print versus digital, do both but make sure that you have print particularly. As Julie said, the print on demand is just amazing. The quality of the books anymore that come out. What do you do once you have your book? Well, you should never ask that question. You should have it all done before you started the book and this is why we have a book plan right away. We don't write a book. I mean, have I written books without? Yes. When I've done that, I have an inventory of those books in the old days and they were not good returns on investment in the current day.

So, what you have to do is you really have to have a plan, a clear call to action and once you have that though, once you have proof of concept on whatever you're doing, using a book to accelerate it is just really powerful. Julie, I want to thank you again. It's been a great interview. It's something I'm really passionate about. Really appreciate you sharing your insights and helping our fellow entrepreneurs really accelerate their success in the right way.

Julie: Thank you. It's my pleasure.

John: Well, with that, all the show notes are above me. AESnation.com. Go there. We'll have a transcript as well. The links to Julie's company. Go out and make a difference by doing a book if you haven't don't one. If you've done one, do more. Your clients, all those future clients who are waiting for you, they're there. The strategic alliances you're going to build out of this are amazing. Don't let them down. Get that book out. Exceptional, remarkable breakthroughs. AESnation.com.

EPISODE Julie Broad

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