

Called to Both Episode 15: Secrets to Writing Words People Care About with Jess Jordana

Joy Michelle

So, today's episode is our first guest interview here on call to both. And I know I have nothing to compare it to because it's the very first one, but I'm just going to tell you right now, it is so jam packed and good. Today's guest is Jess Jordana of Jess XO, she is a copywriter for creatives believes in drinking iced coffee all year long, and is a new mama to an almost one year old named Parker Jain. She's worked with everyone from solopreneurs to organizations like the rising tide society, the guide culture and the social bungalow. But honestly, you guys, I think her most impressive accomplishment is surviving teaching high school. And still having some maintained relationships with those students to this day, you're gonna get to hear some insider secrets and tangible tips for how to write more compelling copy in your business. Or as Jess puts it, words people actually get something I really love about this interview is that Jess shares what her business looks like before having her daughter, and what it looks like now because it looks very different. And even some of her goals have changed as a result of becoming a mom, which I love that she shared. The other thing that you're going to want to listen for is a really simple but powerful exercise that Jeff shares on how to dive into some of the specific pain points that your clients and customers might be feeling so that you can stop being so general in your copy. Trust me, it's a good one, and you're going to want to stick around.

Joy Michelle

Hello, and welcome to the call to both podcast. I'm your host Joy Michelle, and you're in the right place. If you're ready to grow your business, while also being the intentional and present mom, you want to be this show will leave you feeling inspired, equipped with tangible tips and encouraged to go after your own version of being called to bow. Let's dive in. Okay, so just welcome to the podcast. I am so honored to have you here. Thank you for being my first guest here on the call to both podcast. I know that we've been talking about chatting on Instagram for a while now. So this is basically going to be me asking you all the questions that I've wanted to ask you for a while. So well. , thank

Jess Jordana

Thank you. I'm so excited to chat. I'm honored to be the first guest and I feel like we ended up having like podcast level chats in DMS and on boxer anyway. So this will be fun to let everybody in on it. So yes, good

Joy Michelle

thing we hit record for this one, right. Yeah. So before we dive into the questions that I have for you here, can you just share with our listeners a little bit more about yourself and the business that you've run?

Jess Jordana

Yeah, absolutely. So if we haven't met yet, I am Jess, I am known weirdly enough as the copywriter who loves iced coffee, which I don't know how that happened. But it did. And so I basically take all of

the passion and fire burning inside people and turn it into words that people actually get which is harder than you would think when you go into business. It's not really anything that any of us sign up for. And so I am so privileged to be able to do that with our agency clients. So in a done for you fashion, and also through our resource called the profit shop as well as through our membership called connection lead conversions. So there's kind of a bunch of different ways that I help people put that into practice. But that is the thread that runs through all of it. And in real life. I live in northern New Mexico. With my family and I am married I have an Aussie doodle dog named Joey Tribbiani and I am a new mom to an almost one year old, which our babies are your littlest one is about the same age. And her name is Parker James. So that's me in a nutshell.

Joy Michelle

First of all, I cannot believe Parker is almost one. I know, I know that you will. I was reading on your blog that you recently took a three month maternity leave. And so I was thinking about this. And then you shared the Parker was almost one and I couldn't believe how fast this year has gone. I know. Now having two kids that have reached the one year milestone, it only gets faster, which I know moms say that and you're like, please stop. But it's true. It's so true. So I would love to hear a little bit more about that maternity leave that you took because I think as a creative small business owner, that is no small feat. And I would just love to hear a little bit more about what went into it. Maybe even what you would do differently. And anything that you learned by taking a maternity leave from your creative business.

Jess Jordana

Yeah, absolutely. So I'll tell you like kind of the nuts and bolts that went into the maternity leave that I knew I would need to prepare for, and then I'll kind of go through what actually happened. So the first thing that I knew I would have to do is create content, because I knew that I wanted to. And this is a personal preference thing. But I wanted to continue to show up on Instagram, because that is the primary way that we sell pamphlets. And so I knew that I could continue to show up with value and sell pamphlets and get that resource in front of people without it actually being me present. So I wrote content for Instagram, three times a week and email once a week for four months. So I wanted to it was quite the project, I wanted to make sure that I had three months. And then I wanted to make sure that I didn't have to like scramble and write a bunch of stuff as soon as I came back, like creating content and things like that, so I could kind of ease back in. So I just knew that I needed that kind of extra cushion. So the way that I did that is I basically had this rule, where anytime I wrote something I had to write to. So this was really, really helpful because I was creating content in the moment. But I also needed to create the batch content for my maternity leave. So anytime I wrote an inch Instagram caption, I made myself write two. And often I would end up writing three or four, because I was kind of in the groove of it. And same thing with a newsletter. Anytime I wrote one, I told myself, I had to write too. And I knew that that was going to take me a little bit longer. But we also know that once you're in the task, it doesn't take you getting into the document or getting your head in the right space, or whatever. So I was kind of just maximizing the time that I was spending on that. And that was really, really helpful. And so that was the first thing. The second thing was that I decided not to take on any clients. And this was a personal decision again, because I do have an associate writer, so I could have had her take on projects while I was gone, I just didn't really love that idea. Because I like to be in our projects with clients. And so I decided not to do that. And so with that in mind, I saved four months of expenses for the business, in case we made no money on pamphlets. So it was kind of like the thing that was like, if we make \$0, then I can still pay my team, then I can still pay for kartra and acuity and like all of that random stuff. And so I saved that amount, just in case. Luckily enough, we did break even or make profit each month.

So that wasn't necessary. But that just helped my peace of mind. So much knowing like, this isn't going to totally tank while I am trying to rock the baby to sleep kind of thing. So that was really, really helpful.

Joy Michelle

Yeah, yeah, I mean, a couple of things you said stood out to me and that you planned ahead not only for the content of your business, but the financials of your business. And then you were leveraging momentum as you were creating that content. And I felt like exactly what you were saying is so true in my own content creation flow is that if I can just get myself creating a little bit of content, the rest of it kind of starts flowing. And you just get into some momentum. And it's it's so helpful to just say, Okay, we're just going to do too, and then sometimes more will come to you. I love that. And that is so helpful to approach it that way. Because I think sometimes it can be so overwhelming to think about taking time away from our business, whether that is a vacation, a sabbatical, a maternity leave, even like a holiday timeframe, like December is a really popular time to take time away. But it can be a little daunting when you have your content that's happening now. And then also your content that's happening down the road. So that is so helpful to hear. One thing I'm curious about now in your life for the past two years since becoming a mom is how has your business changed since having your daughter?

Jess Jordana

Yeah, so this kind of, we can backtrack a little bit into like how maternity leave actually went, because this really influences how the business changed. One really great thing happened, like I'm pretty sure it was the day that I went on maternity leave, it could have been like a couple of weeks before or something. But the iOS changes came out for Facebook. And so Facebook ads has been a really big contributor to probably sales. We've had wild results with Facebook ads for probably two years. And so that was like our biggest kind of thing that we were putting effort into. And then iOS changes came out and I went on maternity leave. So it was kind of this funny thing where we still made sales and everything and it kind of just like dwindled over time. Thanks Zuckerberg for that, but I think the biggest thing that I didn't know was, Is this the iOS changes or is this the fact I'm not present in the business, that things are kind of starting to not go up. So with throughout my business, things have typically doubled each year. And so this past year, it felt like momentum wasn't growing in the same way or wasn't carrying us in the same way. And I had a really hard time figuring out is that because we've relied on ads, or is that because I have to be present in the business. Either way, I knew that the systems that we had in place, the foundational systems, were not creating momentum, I was creating that, or Facebook ads, were creating that. And so that was something that whenever I came back, I had to kind of fix. And so we shifted a lot of things whenever I came back, not only because I was now working three days a week, when before I worked whenever I wanted, probably more than I should have. So I was working within three days a week, and then we didn't have the same systems to rely on. So I had to create a new marketing plan, I had to like, kind of build those new foundations and really decide like, what do I want this to look like? Because before I had just approached it from like an endless growth standpoint, like I just want things to grow. I'm an Enneagram threes, I'm like, if we're not growing, we're dying, and we need to just keep going forward. And so that was something that I really, really had to step back and be like, Okay, what do I want growth to look like? Like when I get to, quote, unquote, growth, what would feel really great in this life that I have now and in the life that I want in the future. And so this past year has honestly been a lot of burning things down a lot of reorienting a lot of like getting quiet and being really, really honest with myself. And saying, like, just because you can doesn't mean you should. And you get to choose how you build this business. And that's really, really important as mom's because we have really limited time and the stuff that we do matters. It matters for

our families, it matters for our audiences, all of that kind of stuff. So yeah, that's been the biggest change, I think, Oh, absolutely.

Joy Michelle

And I whenever you mentioned, working whenever you wanted, and then that being this big shift of having set hours, and I can I can't even tell you what my hours were before becoming a mom, because I just loved my work so much. And I always had these passion projects and things I was chasing. And I think a lot like you were feeling I'm not even sure sometimes what it was that I was chasing other than just like the next thing. And so sitting with yourself and asking, Is this actually the thing that's going to take me towards what I want most not just, you know, a great new trophy on my wall. So, so helpful to hear. Do you have any insight or tips for moms that are finding that working at these these new set times being limited in your hours shifting from you know, kind of working whenever or working at least a full time schedule, and then dwindling down? Has anything helped you in finding productivity while working from home?

Jess Jordana

Yes, I think I've always been a fan of knowing how your brain works. And being kind to your brain. I think a lot of us expect way too much from our brains. And this is something that I talk about all the time with learning to write copy for your business, because everybody says, Well, I'm just not a writer. And that's not true. You just haven't learned how to write in this way. And you're expecting way too much from yourself right out of the gate. And just in general, because the way that our brains work, you can't ideate or create and edit at the same time. So a lot of times we're sitting down and we're telling ourselves, okay, I need to write an Instagram caption. But as soon as we have an idea, our editing brain is like, well, no that stupid, like, nobody's gonna listen to that or whatever. And so then we're fighting our brain as soon as it has a chance to breathe. And then we can't get anything done because we say that we don't have any ideas. But the reality is we just haven't given our ideas space specific space, and then created a separate space to then edit and tweak and refine those ideas. So I think that's true of business in general. A lot of times I like to set a time to have ideas, and then set a time to decide on an idea and then set a time to develop that idea. So I think just having that really split out as tasks almost even though that might be within something that looks like the same task, I think is so so important, because that's the thing that's going to help you fight the while I sat down to do this task, I had two hours. And now I'm at the end of the two hours, and I got nothing done. I'm a terrible human being. So I think that's the biggest thing is like learning that you need to separate those processes for yourself to have the most success. And that's it's kind of the same thing with like, batching content, or whatever, like you want to do like tasks together. But I think a lot of times, we lump three tasks together, which is like coming up with ideas, deciding on ideas, and developing ideas. And then we just kind of hurt ourselves in the process. This is

Joy Michelle

so good. And I think I talk about this a lot in the context of planning. So often, if we have a less, maybe less hours in our business, or less workdays in general, and we're working with smaller windows of time, we want to just like jump in, and like knock out all the tasks. But it's this weird counter intuitive concept, where if you slow down a little bit, and set aside time to plan, and then you set aside time to vision cast, and then you jump into the actual content creation, the content creation is a little bit faster, but it's probably a bit more effective, and it moves the needle in your business more. And I have to remind myself this all the time, when I have, you know, 45 minutes until childcare sub, and I'm like, Oh, we got to knock out all this stuff. And like, take five minutes. And like, look at everything that's up ahead

and make sure that you're doing the right stuff. And that you know, it this could be you know, where can we grab those like tasks, just like you were saying, I think this is just a fantastic transition into copy and writing for your business. And I know, I have found that there's so much writing in my business, Gosh, darn it, and I can't get away from it. It doesn't go away. And it can sometimes feel like my words fall flat. And I know that I'm trying to get across a good point. But it just doesn't always come out that way. And I know you are the copy, Queen. So can you share any tips or even best practices for writing copy that actually sticks and stands out? In what is a very noisy online space?

Jess Jordana

Hmm. Yeah, I think the first thing I would say, and this is more of a mindset thing is to stop calling yourself a terrible writer, I think that's the thing is that like, it's not that you can't write, it's that one. Nobody's taught you to write in this way. Because most copywriting or writing that sells writing that moves people to action is in complete contrast to the type of writing that we've learned in school, which is the most training that we all have. And so I think just giving yourself grace in that, like, nobody's taught you how to do this. So it's a, it's a little bit of a learning curve. And then second is to not be afraid to get really, really specific. So I find that most of the time when things fall flat, it's because we're living in this like, ethereal land of like, Are you stuck? Are you overwhelmed? Are you like all of these like super general things? Which like, yes, it is true, we do help. Like probably every business owner listening helps other business owners or other people eliminate overwhelm in some way. But the difference between a health coach for women who's helping people eliminate overwhelm, and a business coach for photographers who's helping people eliminate overwhelm, those are wildly different situations. And we have to dive into describing that situationally as best as we can, so that we can speak to those people. And so I think the best exercise that I have kind of used over time, is to think about, okay, Joy is a coach for photographers, when you're beginning photographers are sitting down at their desk, maybe editing, and they're overwhelmed. If you were to video them, like take a video of them, what would that look like? Like what would be happening? They're sitting down in their comfy chair, maybe they have a blanket, they probably have a nice drink, and they're ready to edit, but their brain is just like swirling with all of these things that they need to do because they're not just an editor in their business. They're also the photographer, they're the marketer, like all those things, and then think really specifically, what would it capture? Is it like a heavy sigh? Is it like tears streaming down your face? Is it tears of joy because you're looking at the photos that you created? And you realize that you can do this or whatever. So there are so many different ways that that can go. But in terms of specificity, I think that's probably the most concrete way I can tell people to get specific, is to think about capturing your person on video. And you can't capture the word overwhelm on video, I've learned this from James Wedmore. But he says you can't capture the word overwhelm on video, you can't even capture stress, you can't capture hope or anything like that, you have to just write down what you could capture. So sounds things that you would see things like that. And that's going to help you get so much more specific. So I hope that that's just like a tangible takeaway that people could use. Oh,

Joy Michelle

my gosh, that is a very powerful exercise. And whenever you said you cannot capture overwhelm. My mind is like we you can't and then I'm sitting there. And I'm like, You're right, you're right, because feeling frustrated at your desk while you're editing. Because the photos didn't turn out the way you want it because you don't understand the settings or because you're getting this like pop up that saying error code for 50. You're like, what does that mean? And then you're Googling and they're like, this isn't helpful is a totally different overwhelm, or stuck feeling than somebody who, you know, might feel like they don't have answers for their health journey. Completely different. So that is super powerful, very

helpful. And I know that everyone listening is going to be able to apply this in such a different way. So I love this. So as busy moms, we have less time to do these types of things. And I love this exercise, because I think that it, it just dials in on the real problem, what is your real solution that you are giving? Are there any other tips for saving time when it comes to copy because I know for you know, Instagram and email, and it's like we're writing copy both inbound and outbound in our businesses constantly. And I know that that can feel time consuming to really sit down and be thoughtful. So do you have any other tips for getting the most bang for your buck? And saving time when writing copy? Yeah, absolutely.

Jess Jordana

So I think the gist of it is to split the process. So like I said, be kind to your brain, split the pieces of the process up and stop thinking, Okay, I'm going to sit down and write my services page in an hour without thinking about what it needs to say first, without specifically outlining that without gathering the materials that like your testimonials, or whatever is gonna go into that. And then you write. So this is something this was the thing that actually brought about the creation of the pamphlets because I found that so many people were asking me for like a mad libs sort of template for their website. But I was like, listen, I get why you want that. But that is not going to help you because you're not going to know what the heck to put in the blanks, because that's a part of the process that people don't really account for. So my whole entire business is really getting people to split up the process. And so the very first step is what I call and copywriters call a spit draft, and I teach this process in my head sounds kind of gross, but I teach this process in my free video series, I have a three video series that I can share with you guys the link at the end of this episode. But basically the idea of a spit draft as that you write down everything that you are going to need to write. So then, when you sit down to actually write it, you're giving your brain a place to go, instead of sitting down and thinking, Well, what does this even need to say kind of thing. So I teach that more in depth in that video series. But an example of that would be I'm currently writing I mean, I'm a mom, too. I have 16 hours a week to work. Typically, I'm currently finishing out writing one of our launch email campaigns. And it's about eight team emails that are going into that campaign, which is a lot because I'm a copywriter, and I prioritize email. But I have a task on my list every single day to write for emails. And that's just one task on my list. It should take me about an hour to write four emails. But that's because I've already done the work of very specifically outlining. So I know I'm not just writing an offer email, I'm writing about the offer from this angle. Or I'm not just writing an objections email, I'm writing about this specific objection that I've gotten from this person kind of thing. And so that gives my brain a specific place to go so that I can write an email in 15 minutes, instead of having to strategize at the same time. And then come up with ideas make it sound great write a show stopping subject line, all the things so I think that would be the biggest thing is to break up the process. Yes,

Joy Michelle

this is so helpful and we will have your video series in the show notes. For anyone listening who's like I need this. Show me how to break If this down so that it's more tangible, this is so, so helpful. I'm already thinking of different things that I'm like, I need to break this down a little bit more and stop expecting so much of my brain to just sit and I turn on a timer and say, okay, 90 minutes, let's do it, let's do the whole sales page. And then inevitably, I'm disappointed in my process or the progress that I've achieved during that time. So this is so helpful. And I, I feel like what I'm getting is really work with the way that your brain works, find when you're productive, find ways to break this down and make this tangible and real and doable. And then lean into that. So this, this is so helpful. So what I would love to jump into next is a little list of rapid fire questions that I'm going to be asking all of my call to both guests

here on the podcast. So if you're ready, we can jump into those rapid fire questions now. Let's do it. Okay. So what does culture both mean to you,

Jess Jordana

I think called to both means that we have room and our hearts and our schedules for multiple avenues of impact. I think it's common for moms to feel like, well, maybe I could have more impact if I just did one thing, or if I just focused on this. But if you've been called to both, that means you have the capacity for both. And I think that that's something that we all struggle with is that capacity piece.

Joy Michelle

So good. What is one thing that has surprised you about motherhood?

Jess Jordana

Okay, I have two answers to this one. The first one is like funny, the second one is real. The first one is that I am not, like bothered by the things that excrete off of a baby's body. I thought for sure, I'd just be like grossed out 24/7. It doesn't bother me. So that was surprising. And then number two is just the lack of right answer. Like, I know that there's an abundance of opinions on the right answer. But seeing so many different moms, even among my friends, among my business, friends who do everything so differently, and they all do it so well. It's just encouraging to know like, you have the power to decide for your child for your children. And it's going to be right, and you're going to do it right. And so I think that for a lot of us business owners who are high achievers, it can feel like we can't ever get it right. But you are so oh my gosh, I have goosebumps, okay.

Joy Michelle

What is one tool or tip that you can share that has helped you thrive in your business, your motherhood or both?

Jess Jordana

Yeah, so again, two answers, because I'm just like that. But one is giving your brain a chance with which we've already talked about in terms of just like being kind to your brain, helping to optimize how it works, instead of fighting against it, or feeling like you're missing the mark, because your brain is just doing what it's supposed to do. And then the second thing is sleep. I don't know how people do without sleep. But I have been so determined to really figure out this sleep thing. Luckily, Parker has been a great Napper. She's always napped well, but the night's sleep was challenging. And so Becca from little z sleep is a friend of mine. And we've followed everything that she says and I just highly recommend that if you value sleep, which I think most of us do, but it just is such a game changer between how your day goes when you get a decent night of sleep versus how your day goes when you get half a night asleep. So yeah.

Joy Michelle

100% Okay, two more questions. What is the last book you read or podcast you listen to?

Jess Jordana

So I'm currently on a podcast fast because your girl has a problem. I swear, I listened to you on my like mom days, I would regularly listen to like three to five podcasts because I have a baby who can't talk to me. And I don't like what's inside my brain. So I just listened to other people. But I know that that's a problem. So I am currently trying to listen to no podcast and it is the hardest thing that I've ever done.

I've done this once before, and like did it for a week, quote, unquote, but I really did it for like three days. So I'm working on that especially leading up to a launch. I just want my brain to be free and I don't feel like it is when all of these ideas are swirling around. So that's the podcast from on the book friend. I am currently reading The no BS small business book by Casey Graham. And it is if you want an identity crisis in a book read this one. But it's really really good in terms of helping you determine In what you really want from your business, which I think has been so hard for me, because I just love business. And so, up until this point, I just wanted to run a business because I wanted to run a business and it's fun. But when you're a mom and you don't have that like singular vision in mind, it makes things really hard. And so it makes things hard to choose between and all of that kind of stuff. So I'm working really hard on digging into that. And this book is really, really challenging me in that area.

Joy Michelle

Oh, my goodness. Okay, I think that's that's our topic for the next time you come back on the podcast, we're gonna talk about what do you do when you just love business? And you need to narrow it down? Because same raising my hand, same? Okay, last Rapid Fire question, What is something you are excited about or looking forward to?

Jess Jordana

I am really excited about my first brand photo shoot in two years. So I don't have anybody in my area who does brand photography. And so it's just been really hard to stay up to date, especially with COVID and everything on brand photos. And so I had my last brand photo shoot, when I was barely pregnant with Parker and fun fact, I was so so sick that I have to have iced coffee and all of my photos, but I couldn't drink coffee for like the first 16 weeks of my pregnancy. And so we put we made this like drink with like soda and a little bit of milk and like so we just tried to make it look like coffee because I couldn't even smell it. So fun fact, a lot of my brand photos are like a weird coffee or Coke, like coffee, fake drink.

Joy Michelle

So yeah, I'm gonna be zooming in on your Instagram pictures to try to figure out like, which ones are fake coffee, I'm gonna be like, I found it I spotted

Jess Jordana

during that shoot, my best friend Lindsey was taking my photos and I would like accidentally go to sipping because it's just like natural. And she'd be like, don't drink don't drink. So it was it was a good time.

Joy Michelle

Oh, my word. So will you have iced coffee in this upcoming brand? Shoot?

Jess Jordana

Absolutely. Yes, it is my brand at this point. And I just love that because I really am. I haven't right now. I have it all the time. So yes,

Joy Michelle

I love it. Oh my gosh, this has been so so good. So in closing, where can listeners find out more about you follow along with you and learn more about writing effective copy?

Jess Jordana

Yeah, absolutely. So I hang out the most on Instagram. I'm at Jess Jordana on Instagram. And then my website is Jessicajordana.com. And you guys can find the free video series at Jessicajordana.com/writersblock. And that is the primary copy conversion tips that have helped my 4000 plus students and clients to really get the most out of their copy.

Joy Michelle

Oh, I love it. Well, thank you so much. This has been incredible, and I hope to have you back one day. Yes.

Jess Jordana

Thanks Joy. This was so fun.

Joy Michelle

It was a blast. Thanks.

Joy Michelle

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