

Introduction: Welcome to the Enchanting Lawyer Podcast. The show that walks you step by step to improving strategies you can use today to grow your business. We show you how being kind, useful and, of course, enchanting will bring you more clients and build a thriving community. Now here's your host from sunny San Diego, Jacob Sapochnick.

Jacob: Hello everybody, and welcome to The Enchanting Lawyer Podcast. This is your host Jacob Sapochnick and I'm actually recording this from the French Alps. I'm here in France and I've been spending here about a week now, and meeting exciting people. Our guest today is an amazing person. He's an innovator in social media. I'll introduce him in a few minutes.

Our guest today is Joel Comm. He's an entrepreneur, New York Times bestselling author, and a new media innovator. He's also an expert on harnessing the power of the web, publishing social media and mobile applications in order to expand your brand's reach and engage in active relationship marketing. He's a sought after public speaker who leaves his audience inspired, entertained, and armed with strategic tools to create new media campaigns and more. The thing is he just came back from Asia just recently. Joel, welcome to the show.

Joel: Well, thanks Jacob. Yeah, I did. Well, I'd say just a week ago I got back from Asia and I'm still recovering from jet lag.

Jacob: I'm going to be in your shoes in about a week or so when I'm back in the US.

I gave a little bit of an intro about you but I think that a lot of my listeners who are attorneys and are always looking for new things, how to make their marketing, their reach, and making relationship with their customers and fellow attorneys. Why don't you tell us a little bit about yourself? You are kind of a unique breed in social media because you've been doing this for many, many years even before the web was what it is today. Why don't you take us a little bit back, and tell us how you started, and what you do today?

Joel: Yeah. I got started 20 years ago, actually. My first website was in 1995 and there was only 18,000 sites in the world that year. It just turned 20 years old. Since that time, I've done just about everything that's not illegal, or immoral, or out of line. From affiliate marketing, blogging, podcasting, video creation, product creation, information products, book offerings, speaking, application development, software development. I'm kind of like a kid with a pale and a shovel looking for a sandbox to play. I just like trying different things and seeing what interests me. I'm doing a lot of traveling and speaking right now and hopefully inspiring entrepreneurs elsewhere to go and do likewise.

Jacob: It's interesting you mention that because I've been following you for a while. Over the years, you transitioned from domain, getting into domain and websites,

and then I think you had the first book on advertising on Google in the early 2000, and then kind of transitioned into Twitter and social media. How do you keep up with the changes and how do you know what to embrace and when?

Joel: Well, I can't keep up with all of them. Clearly there's way too much. When something gets my attention, I take a look at it. I like to explore. Sometimes I get it right, not always. Sometimes I'll investigate something that turns out it didn't pan out after all. I think when you're willing to take risks and try new things, then you're going to hit success more often than somebody who's just stuck in one space. I might make it look easy but it's really just a lot of exploring, and experimenting, and playing around with things, and seeing what works.

Jacob: I like when you say the risk factor and basically taking a risk because a lot of people who are in the service industry – attorneys, CPA's – for us, we learn in school that things are predictable. This is what you do and then this is the outcome you may get. Social media and marketing, it's not like that. I'll give you my example of myself.

We built one of the largest Facebook communities in the world for any law firm and the reason why I got into Facebook is because none of the attorneys around me were using Facebook. I said, "Well, why don't I try this and see what happens? Worst case I'll fail." Most of us are not thinking like that. I commend you first of all for doing this.

I think the interesting thing about social media and the web is that we never know what's going to happen until we try it.

Joel: That's right. It takes a risk, you have to step out. If you want to do something different then you have to try new things. It's just an entrepreneurial mindset. If you're not willing to do that, and if you're not willing to fail at it, then you shouldn't be an entrepreneur. It's probably not a good fit for you to be in business for yourself unless you're just going to stick with that one thing.

Jacob: Absolutely.

So if somebody's asking you today, what recommendations do you make when it comes to using social media for marketing ... any business, let's say professionals or non-professionals? What are some of the recommendations that you make?

Joel: Really across the board it's the same. Social media is really just the online element of how we build relationships. It's no different. We apply the same type of sociology to how we engage with others as we do in the real world because really, social media is the real world. The fact is that in the real world we buy from people that we like, know, and trust. I see again and again from the small

home-based entrepreneur to the big brands, they go out and they make the mistake of just telling people on social media, “Go buy our stuff.”

Well, we don’t respond to, “Go buy our stuff,” unless there’s a relationship with the brand, with the product. Today, that means building relationships with the people behind the products and the brands. That’s why the brands that are doing the best with social media have faces of real people that are managing their accounts. There’s a connection with them that says, “Hey, these are real human beings here we can identify with.” They’re not just selling us stuff but they’re engaging with us. They’re having conversation about the things we like, the things we don’t like. They’re sharing a piece of their lives with us in a way that we can emotionally connect with them.

Ultimately, it’s not about the business, it’s about the relationship. Social media has amplified and reinforced just how important relationships are regardless of our business.

Jacob: People who are on social media today, they feel that they can say whatever they want. In reality, you’re not going to be rude to somebody in person.

Joel: Well, some people will be. Some are.

Jacob: Some people will be but it seems to me that more people feel that because it’s online and they don’t see you, they tend to be more rude and then tend to be more disrespectful. That’s not the case how it should be. If you want to build a relationship that translate into business, you have to be kind, you have to be helpful, and I think that’s what you’ve been doing all these years, reaching out and trying to give value. That helps us amplify it, right?

Joel: Really. It’s totally about value first.

Many, many years ago – probably 25, 26 years ago – I went to a Zig Ziglar seminar in Dallas, Texas, and I learned from Zig that you get what you want in life when you help other people get what they want. He also shared that people don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.

Those principles haven’t changed. Human nature hasn’t changed. People want to know that they matter and that you’re not just in it for what you can get. It’s about giving, it’s about doing good stuff, it’s about making a difference and bringing value. In social media, it could just be bringing value to the conversation. Conversation and communication ideas are important.

The ability to share yourself, your thoughts, your feelings in a genuine, authentic way to engage with others is valuable. It’s more valuable than what you have to sell. If you are able to engage with people on that level, when it does come time

for a purchase, a transaction to take place, people are more likely to buy from you inherently because they already like, know, and trust you.

Jacob: Exactly. That still stand today and that will continue to stand forever if people know how to use it.

Joel, I read a little bit about the stuff that you've done over the years but I would like you to tell us how did you grow your social following from the '90s. Because the thing that's interesting – starting with your blog and through all the things that you've done – if you're willing to share that with us, that would be great.

Joel: I think longevity certainly counts for something that I've been doing it for a while. Because I started blogging I want to say in 2003. I was creating content back in 1995 but back then we didn't call it a blog, we just called it a website. We didn't call it a blog until we had the platform that made it easy to publish. Back then, we hand coded an HTML to build our pages.

Technically, I've been creating content on the web for 20 years which is a long time. It's always the value. It's creating content that people actually want to read. It's creating content that is good enough that Google's going to rank it in their search engines so that people find you when they're looking for your type of information. It's sharing that content.

Now with social media, having the share buttons on our pages makes it so much easier for people to share a link. It's all integrated. So we just say, "Tweet this, post this on my Facebook page, pin this on Pinterest," and it has the opportunity to go way more viral a lot more quicker.

Having been in social media, as we call it, I'm doing it in quotes here. Since MySpace, on Twitter and Facebook since 2007, I've been at it for a while. As long as during that time you're consistently creating content, bringing value, and engaging with others in conversation, your following is going to grow.

It's not rocket science, it's really not. Some people try to make it way more difficult than it is, and they try to gain the system by using automated tools and by using bots. Really, that's just setting yourself up for failure. It doesn't serve any purpose to buy fake Facebook page likes or fake followers because you're not going to have any engagement.

Jacob: You said before, I think I read, somewhere that when you write about social media on your blog, in [joelcomm.com](http://joelcomm.com) and other places on Facebook, you talk about not just social media, you talk about your travels, movies, some things that piss you off. Then, you're open with people and people see what your life is about so they connect with you more. I think that's really what attracts people to

you because you're so open about everything else in your life. I think social media is not just one sided, people want to see behind the person.

Joel: Yeah, I think it's important Jacob, but also realize that I do have a private personal life. I think understanding having healthy boundaries about what's appropriate for public consumption and what is something to keep to yourself. There's a lot of things I don't post, you don't see what I don't post. There's opinions that I keep to myself, I bury intentionally. Don't post things that are political, or religious of nature.

I have strong opinions, and when I see one of my friends or associates, or somebody in business, posting a very strong opinion saying, "Anybody who would vote for this person's a moron," or "Anybody who would believe this has got to be an idiot." I think to myself you don't realize that you're offending a big portion of people who are following you.

I choose not to do that. I'm gracious with it. I just don't comment and I say you know what, they're venting. There's a lot of people that don't understand healthy boundaries for how to use social media in a way that is really socially appropriate.

Jacob: Absolutely. Again, you have to be logical, you have to be smart about it because you don't want to destroy the efforts you've done to build a community that values what you have to say in a professional way.

Joel: Not only that Jacob, but the people, the relationships we have are more important than if somebody disagrees with us on a political issue. I've discovered – I'm on one side of a political fence. I've got a lot of friends on the other side. I value them for who they are as people. Just because they differ in me in a philosophical or political approach to some ideology, that should not be the metric by which I decide if this person is going to be my friend or not. Everybody's got to share their opinion and it's important that they're right. Really, it's a maturity thing.

I think part of the problem, Jacob, is that we didn't grow up with social media. This isn't like we grew up, we had the VCR so we understood technology. We grew up with video game so a new system. We intuitively understand how to use a controller. Social media is a relatively new thing. So you've got grown adults that all of a sudden have this tool box with all these new tools, and they think that because they've got a hammer, everything's a nail. That's not how it works.

Jacob: Right, absolutely. I wish more people would understand that. What is really your favorite part of using social media to each people? Is there a particular favorite?

Joel: You mean a favorite site?

Jacob: Site, or method, or just engagement.

Joel: I'm very much in the moment. I share things when they come to mind. I'm not incredibly strategic. I don't use Hootsuite or other planning, scheduling software. I like to use the native apps both on my desktop and on the phone. I'm a big a Facebook fan. You probably see me on Facebook more than anywhere. I think it's the greatest engagement tool we have.

News came out that just today that Google Plus is finally going to pull the – you have to have a Google Plus login integrated with the various services in order to use those services. They're starting with pulling it from YouTube. Google Plus is slowly fading. Clearly, Google has failed again creating social. Facebook is the king. The irony is that I wrote the book on Twitter, literally, but I use Facebook more.

Jacob: Right. I was going to ask you about that as well because I was curious because I see you on Facebook all the time but you did write the Power Twitter. Why don't you tell us a little bit about this and why do you think Twitter is still very important for businesses and non-businesses?

Joel: I got on Twitter in 2007 and really in 2008 started to understand how it was the water cooler of our time where people could engage in quick conversations and be able to, as a brand, engage with customers in real time. Of course, seeing celebrities use it as a medium for news to be able to get out there quickly. 2009, the first edition of Twitter Power came out. 2010, a second edition, or it was updated. It's been five years. 2015 found us with the release of Twitter Power 3.0. There's more people on Twitter than ever before.

Though, granted, even with 300 million active users, that pales in comparison to Facebook's 1.4 billion. But, the fact that there are 300 million people using it and that Twitter is so entrenched in pop culture – the hashtag, the @ symbol, movies, TV shows, and celebrities. It's here to stay. It's going to continue to evolve. It might get bought but it's here. It's not going anywhere. Because it's here, and because there's such a massive audience, brands that aren't engaged on Twitter on some capacity are doing so at their own peril because people are talking about you whether you're there or not.

Jacob: I personally have been a big fan of Twitter. I use it all the time. I use it more of a listening tool where I follow people in my field. What do you think is the biggest power for professionals to use Twitter right now, in 2015? Attorneys and people alike.

Joel: Oh, well, gosh! Listening. What you said there is really important. Rather than seeing it as a broadcast medium as though you're taking your soap box and setting it up in the middle of Town Square and using a megaphone. Using it to

listen, to be-search for specific hashtags that are relevant to your industry and see what people are saying. That's going to turn the light bulb on for you about how you can bring value. It's looking for those opportunities to engage in a way that says, "I can help with that. I know the answer to that. I have thoughts about that." That's how you build a following because people see that you know something. When we like somebody on Twitter, we follow them.

As we see the value they bring in their tweets, and whether they're about the value and helping others or all about themselves, we get to know them. It's once we see which side is it on, we decide whether or not we trust that person. Businesses that aren't engaged by listening and engaging are missing out on where the real power of Twitter lies.

Jacob: I think in that book you put some good up-to-date techniques and some insights as to how we can use it more effectively. I'm going to link the Amazon link for the book if anybody's interested to get it. I highly recommend it.

Joel: Great. It just might pay to note that the Twitter Power series is the top selling book in the world on Twitter. We just came out with the audio book version for those that prefer to listen.

Jacob: Wow! Excellent. I should've downloaded it before my trip. Maybe I can do it from here.

Joel: It just came out the last week. So, yeah, you can grab it now.

Jacob: I'll do it. Excellent.

Joel, I see we talk about social media and the importance of this. You're one of the biggest evangelists of this. I've noticed that you've done something different in the last couple of years focusing more on the social movement. Tell me a little bit about the do-good stuff movement, your t-shirts, and what's behind it because I'm interested. In fact you inspired me to start my own movement. a part of the enchanting way. It's called Start with a Smile and I can tell you more about it, but I'm curious to see why you've taken this offline effort and brought it out to the people. Tell me about that more.

Joel: Sure.

It's actually been a number of years that I've had email newsletter for my subscribers. Back in 2004, 2005 when I started, I was signing my emails, "Live Life Today." It was an inspirational type of thought about today is all we have, for sure. We know that we have today. Go ahead and live life. As I begin going to events and helping people as often as I could, I recognize that really good things began happening to me. Opportunities opened up like never before.

I came to the conclusion that as long as you're doing good in the world, helping others, you can't really out-give from the resources that you have. It's kind of like the law of sowing and reaping. Some call it karma. The more good stuff you put out there to help others, the more good stuff comes back to you.

I started signing my emails, "Do Good Stuff," and have so for a number of years. I can't remember – I think the inspiration came from Kris Wittenberg's brand Be Good to People. She sent me a Be Good to People t-shirt and I noticed that when I wore the t-shirt, it made me a better person. You can't be a jerk to somebody at the line of the grocery store when you're wearing a Be Good to People shirt. You can't do it. It made me conscientious, more self-aware of my thought processes and who was getting under my skin, and how did I want to react.

I thought, you know, what if I take this Do Good stuff, and design a logo, and slap it on a t-shirt in some stickers and see how many people respond. The first campaign we did for Do Good Stuff shirts was ... I think it was a ten day campaign and we sold 170 shirts. People are posting pictures of themselves with it. Now I'm seeing some of my peers that bought them are getting on stage and speaking with them.

Croix Sather sent me a picture; E. Brian Rose, the founder of [JVZoo.com](http://JVZoo.com), spoke from stage the other day. I'm like, okay, there's something here that's resonating with people. I'm not exactly sure where it's going, we'd love to see it blow up more. The idea behind it is to encourage people to get out there and do good stuff. Whatever that means to you, just do good.

Jacob: Right. It's a simple idea but it just makes you feel good and it's something that you can always identify with. I love it myself. I haven't had the chance to get a t-shirt yet but I'll do it when I get back to the US and I'll start wearing it.

Joel: There you go.

Jacob: To me, it's very inspiring.

Joel as we come to the end of the show, I have to ask you about this one thing, and I'm sure you probably get asked about it a lot in your interviews. The feeling of success that you never expected, and in your case it happened with a simple stupid app. Why don't you tell us the story of the iFart?

Joel: Yeah. Back in 2007 when the iPhone came out, I had to have one. I had it I think two weeks after the device came out. I gladly paid \$600 for it. I've had just about every device since. Well, in 2008, it was summer, when Steve Jobs and Apple announced that they were making a software development kit available. At that time, I had a team and I pulled everybody into the conference room and we began white boarding all kinds of ideas.



What's funny is some of the ideas we white boarded, somebody else ended up developing, like the idea for Foursquare. I remember that as clear as day, we talked about let's create an app where people check in from locations. There was a whole litany of them. But there's one idea that when we put it on the white board, everybody just busted a gut. We started laughing and I thought how hard would it be to create this stupid – as you say – fart sound machine? We had it done in a few weeks.

It went to number one in the world in the App Store. Not in the category, not just the US, but in the world. It was all over the media, in foreign languages. It's been used by celebrities. It got me a segment on John Stewart's daily show. George Clooney says he has it on his phone. It's been a lot of fun. We haven't had an update for that app in four years. It took a sabbatical and I've been focused on other projects. Right now, we are finally developing an update to iFart and it should be ready in about a month. It's going to be called iFart 2nd Wind.

Jacob: Wow! I'm happy that you announced it on this podcast.

Joel: There you go. It's coming soon. We hope that it explodes and makes a big stink worldwide.

Jacob: Oh yeah. I'll make sure to download this, for sure.

Joel: Here is the thing, Jacob. A lot of people would see that as embarrassing. I think it's real, I think it's funny, I think it's fun. We know that especially guys think farts are funny. It turns out when I speak from the stage and I demonstrate this, the women love it. They think it's hilarious. Having the guts to say, "I don't care what people think, I'm going to do this anyway and let's see what happens," is really the core of why it was successful.

Jacob: Right, exactly. I think, as we end this show, maybe we can take that as a lesson that sometimes you never know, you try it, and it could be successful.

Joel: Let that be a lesson to you.

Jacob: Right? Excellent.

Joel: Absolutely.

Jacob: Thank you so much, Joel. If anybody wants to find you online, what's the best place to find you? Your Twitter handle, your website.

Joel: I'm Joel Comm everywhere. I'm the only Joel Comm that I know of in the world so [joelcomm.com](http://joelcomm.com), @joelcomm on Twitter, [facebook.com/joelcomm](https://facebook.com/joelcomm). You can find me in any of those places, would love for you to connect with me.

Jacob: Perfect. We'll make sure to link all your – the book and everything – in our show notes. Once again, Joel, thanks for taking the time. It was a true pleasure and I always enjoy reading and following you online.

Joel: Thanks, Jacob.

Jacob: Thank you listeners for tuning in every week. We'll catch you in our next show. Cheers. Signing off from France. Jacob here.

Closing: Thanks for listening. You can find even more resources, including the show notes for this episode, at [enchantinglawyer.com](http://enchantinglawyer.com). That's [www.enchantinglawyer.com](http://www.enchantinglawyer.com).