

0157 Marketing to Men with Ronnie Fernandez

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Y'all, I'm here with Ronnie Fernandez, you can check him out at ronniefernandez.com. We are both with our podcasting gear.

Ronnie: Yeah. yeah.

Allison: How can I help today?

Ronnie: So, I kind of started private practice. a lot of ideas. A lot of kind of, I see a really big open field for what I want to do. My private practice focuses on men. And so, with anxiety and depression. There's not, I just did a lot of research. There's not a lot of resources for men out there. So, I thought everything would kind of just come. But it didn't. So, I'm kind of all over the place. My big thing is, I'm part of Rotary. It's a service organization. And I do a lot of stuff in the community. I run the high school programs. I am also just kind of really active. I also run the grief and loss group for the local school district. So, I've been trying to do the Facebook stuff, the Instagram stuff. And also, a podcast. So, I do the podcast where I interview men on how they overcame the challenges. So, I have different interviews of people that have health issues, like heart transplants. I interviewed the former mayor where he was

in a car accident...was actually supposed to go on a plane ride with his family. He didn't go, and the plane crashed, and everybody died.

Allison: Oh, my God.

Ronnie: So, he talked about how he was able to overcome that. and all these great stories. So now, its marketing. It's all this kind of stuff that I've never really done. So, I also have, I'm dyslexic and a speech impediment. And just kind of a lot of stuff I'm trying to overcome. Especially my fear of putting stuff on Facebook. Writing stuff. It's kind of like uh. So, it's kind of overcoming all these fears. But yet, I'm still trying to run a business and have people come in.

Allison: Yeah. Oh, my gosh. There's so much here, Ronnie. I'm excited.

Ronnie: Yes. Yes.

Allison: So, one thing I'm thinking, because you're doing a lot of work with teens. You're known in your community. But you're doing a lot of work with teens. So, people probably think of you as a teen guy. Not like a therapist for men. So, I'm not saying don't do the teen work. Because if you're loving the teen work, keep doing it. But I want you with the connections you already have in your community to be so excruciatingly clear, so that they all know, oh yeah, that's Ronnie. He works with men who are anxious or depressed. And also works with teens in these volunteer capacities. So, I love the arc of your podcast is all about how men have overcome things.

Ronnie: Yes.

Allison: And how you are overcoming things as well. Like the fact that that's a piece of what you're working on in your life. because it gives a voice to a group of people who aren't always talking about what they've overcome. It makes it more well known. But as we kind of talked about some on Facebook, you're doing national platform things, or international platform things with a podcast and with social media. I want to know more about what you're doing specifically in your practice in your community or with your community, networking and things like that.

Ronnie: Okay. Yeah, I think I could do more, so rotary is the big thing of talking to business owners. Some of what I do. But I think I could do more as far as with the Chamber of Commerce. Being out over there more. And I'm talking. I mean, I go to different things, but I think you're right. I think I need to lock in on the older men, kind of thing. around here.

Allison: Yeah. Well, and do your clients, when they come in, are these guys clear that they have anxiety and depression? Or are they like, I'm just so irritable all the time? How are they describing it?

Ronnie: Well, I have a lot of videos, as far, well some videos, on how depression looks different in men. And how it's more irritable, isolation. I'm trying to use more like anger management. And different words like that. but yes. I have a big old thing on my page where it says depression often looks different in men, with irritability, isolation, overwork, drinking, those types of things. But maybe I need to be more, when I talk about it, talk about the irritability piece. Because that's what I really see in men in depression is more irritability and isolation.

Allison: Yeah. I think if you leaned into irritability, dissatisfaction, frustration. Those things are kind of easier for men to own. I mean, you've got more experience, being a man and seeing men, probably than I do. But those seem a lot easier to own than depression on the front end.

Ronnie: Yes. Depression is a big word. Especially for men. I think men see that as a sign of weakness. And so, I'm trying to use it as more a call to action.

Allison: Yeah.

Ronnie: More than using the word depression a lot.

Allison: Yeah. When I'm thinking about primary care providers who maybe the partners of these men are like dude, you gotta do something.

Ronnie: Yeah.

Allison: And they go see their doctor and maybe they get on an antidepressant. So, getting in with primary care providers may be helpful simply because they are prescribing more antidepressants than any other doc out there, right?

Ronnie: Yeah. Absolutely.

Allison: And they feel safer to go to for these guys than potentially a psychiatrist.

Ronnie: Yeah.

Allison: Not that men are going to the doctor in droves. But, I think, if they are feeling under pressure by a partner or parents or friends, or something like that, then they may. They know they aren't feeling right, whatever right means to them.

Ronnie: Yeah.

Allison: So, talking to primary care providers and maybe even coming from an anger management tilt. I mean, I do want to know how you feel when you have a guy who is coming in for pure anger management. I mean, of course there are feelings underneath it, but like rage and blowing up at people. Are those people clients you love to help soften?

Ronnie: Yeah. Absolutely. Because it's when those guys walk in and they shut the door, it's like whew, you know, and they just kind of let it go. As long as it's a safe kind of environment. So yeah.

Allison: Yeah. Okay, cool. So, I think about non-court mandated anger management. You know? Unless that's the kind of work you enjoy doing. But...

Ronnie: Yeah, I can do that work, too. I've had a couple that have requested that through the courts and stuff. And so, because yeah, I'm a social worker at heart. And I come from that background. I come from East LA, where it's low socioeconomic area. So, I kind of understand a lot of the issues that they face.

Allison: Yeah. Absolutely. I think it's a matter of answering to the courts in any way that may make or break that for you. if it's something you want to be doing from a bureaucratic standpoint, versus, I mean, the clients mostly our clients are great no matter where we get them from, right? I mean, why are they there? So, yeah. it's the system or the man.

Ronnie: Yeah, absolutely. And I guess one of the big questions I have, too, is my whole slogan is therapy but for guys. And so, I feel bad, because I'm also on a couple panels, too. So, I have had a couple women reach out to me. And I have a couple of them. But I had a couple of cancellations, too. Because I feel like my slogan maybe is a little too strong? But I feel like it has to be kind of strong when it comes to guys. So, I'm kind of like, well okay, well I'll have my Psychology Today profile, just more of what they're saying. But on my website it's like, this is what I'm doing. I'm for men. And this is what my niche is. Is that?

Allison: Yeah. I think that's how a lot of us feel about our niches when we first niche. Like oh, but I'm excluding these people who are also great.

Ronnie: yes.

Allison: But, ultimately, niching is where it's at. These are your ideal clients. And you will still get some women clients and you will still get non-binary clients. You'll still get other clients. It's just that if you want 60% of your practice to be men dealing with anxiety and depression, then it makes sense to be really specific.

Ronnie: Yeah. And how far do you go as far as personal stuff goes. So, I've overcome a lot. You know, coming from east LA, having anxiety, and then speech impediment and dyslexia. But, also, my big thing in my life was my wife being diagnosed with cancer like 5 years ago. And so, taking care of my young kids. Sometimes it feels like, that might be a little too much to kind of share, you know. So, I don't know. but I felt like a lot of things that I've gone through with all the [unknown 11:08] just kind of set me up for that. so, it's like ah, do I share all that stuff? Do I kind of, is it too much?

Allison: In your marketing like on your website copy? Or in session?

Ronnie: No, not in session. More of the marketing stuff.

Allison: Yeah.

Ronnie: So, I like to interview guys and talk about guy issues and stuff like that. I don't know if I should bring that up. I haven't brought it up. I have kind of touched dyslexia. And the speech impediment stuff. But I haven't, I think it might be too much.

Allison: Yeah. I think about it like within the spectrum of your clients that you want to bring into your practice, what information is the most dysregulated person need to not know? That is a really roundabout, for me, I'm not going to get into many details. Because some of my ideal clients have a touch of some like borderline features and things like that. So, I need to hold some rigid enough boundaries that the space is truly safe for both of us. But, because my ideal clients it's like a touch of that and not a whole lot of it, most of my people are people pleasing. And they would also fall into the, well are you okay, though? I want to make sure you're okay. I'm like, I'm the therapist, man. I'm good.

Ronnie: Yeah.

Allison: I mean, I'm good in the hour I'm sitting together, just not always good outside of that hour. Let's be honest. But maybe, for my marketing for instance, on my website I say something about, I've been through this hell. I've found my roadmap. I'm going to help you build your own roadmap. So, I don't say, this started when I was this age. And this is how long it went on. And here are the mitigating factors. I

just kind of touch on it so they know I get it on that level. Not just because I went to school. So, I think mentioning you've had significant challenges from childhood through adulthood, and you've found ways to manage, and move through some of it.

Ronnie: Not so much for my marketing thing, but more of like the podcast, more of like the YouTube stuff. Because I've been doing more and more stuff I need to, but I feel like that's kind of where I gain the most response, is from YouTube. From the podcast. It is ridiculous on how much more views and kind of engagement I'm getting from YouTube compared to the podcast.

Allison: Awesome.

Ronnie: So, yes, I just didn't know whether to kind of share that part while talking, because we're talking about how men overcome their challenges. It's like I felt like it might be too much to say, well oh yeah, this is what happened. And I just don't know whether to share that or not. I think it might be a little too much. But then, we're talking about these big issues as well.

Allison: Right. Yeah. It's a tough call. For instance, with dyslexia, it's a very specific pain to go through. One of my daughters is dyslexic and seeing this really bright kid feel really dumb. And feel behind her peers. To like go through an education, like an educational system where it's not diagnosed early on, you don't get early intervention, there is a specific pain and like a reconfiguring of the way you think about yourself once you realize, oh I am smart. My brain reads in a different spot in my brain. And so, it's a lot harder. And I needed to be taught in a way that's not taught in public schools. Or most private schools really. So, to be able to reconfigure in that way allows you to be able to bring it up, basically, in a casual way and not go too deep into it. but to be like, if somebody says something aligned with it, for instance, on the podcast. You could be like, oh yeah, I didn't know I was dyslexic until I was this age and I spent those years prior just thinking I was dumber than everybody else. And then, realizing later, I just learn differently. It allows for anybody else who is dyslexic and struggling with anxiety or depression, whether or not it's related to that, but we know the rates of anxiety and depression are much higher amongst people with learning disabilities. Then, they are like, oh yeah. that was exactly my experience.

Ronnie: Yeah.

Allison: But you're not like, and then so and so called me stupid. And I cried. And my mom wasn't there for me. So, it's kind of like speaking from a scar instead of a scab.

Ronnie: Yeah. Okay. Okay.

Allison: Yeah.

Ronnie: Okay. Yeah. That sounds good. I was like, do I do it or not? So yeah, absolutely.

Allison: Yeah. Your niche is needed, right?

Ronnie: Yes. Absolutely.

Allison: It's just a matter of having your ideal clients find you. and figuring out how they are looking for therapy when they are looking for therapy. Or if it's even them looking for therapy. Versus a partner.

Ronnie: Yeah. That's what I heard. I reached out to one of my friends through a friend, through a friend. Who was trying to start something like this? And he was like, it's going to be a lot of wives calling for

their husbands and stuff. So, I haven't had that too much. It's been a lot of, a lot of my marketing stuff has been more towards guys talking to the guy.

Allison: Good.

Ronnie: But he was saying that most of his clients were a wife or a significant other, kind of reaching out for them.

Allison: Which is interesting, right? Because it's probably just a difference in your marketing. And what's making that, like the callers be the guys or the wives.

Ronnie: Yeah.

Allison: So that's interesting.

Ronnie: Yeah. People want the service, but they say that I'm too expensive. Or they want to go through insurance. So that's kind of my, I'm still waiting for, so I live in Downy, in Downy there's Kaiser. Still trying to wait for them to approve. And that's such a long process.

Allison: Yeah.

Ronnie: I have to decide whether to continue with that or should I just go straight private pay. I mean, in my head, it's the new year. I'm just going to start having clients galore. So, I'm trying to figure things out as far as that goes.

Allison: What is your ultimate goal?

Ronnie: My overall goal is to see about 20 clients private pay. While I was in grad school, I ran this program kind of where I grew up in east LA for kids. So, like bringing them...so my big thing is networking. And having people come in and talk to them. So, I developed this whole model. So now, I'm starting to get interested in that. So, I would like to see 15-20 clients here. and then also do side work in the different high schools here. Because they are kind of liking the model where I bring different mentors in and talk about social skills. And talk about a little bit of anxiety and stuff. And so, I'm trying to balance, like how my privates are going to look. Because I really enjoy running those groups with, and it's mostly going to be with probation kids. And so, that's kind of what the balance I would like. And so, I have two little girls that I want to be really a part of. And just really be there as much as I can.

Allison: So, I think if private pay is your ultimate goal, I think the other question is financially speaking, are you in a place where you absolutely have to have a certain number of clients next month or the month after or you're not going to be able to pay your rent or your mortgage. Or you're worried about being able to feed your kids?

Ronnie: No. It would be really convenient. I think I'd get some pressure from my wife like hey, this stuff is not, I might have to go another direction. So, it's not where we're not going to go hungry. But it's going to be really uncomfortable. So yeah.

Allison: Totally. I see it when people are in a space where they really need, they need the cash, they need the clients, to be able to truly stay open. And not get a job. Then, even if their ultimate goal is to be private pay, I still say like insurance can be a good leg up to help you get known in your community for what you do. But the problem with insurance is people are just going to find you on a list and they

are not going to be ideal clients. And so, the word of mouth is not always going to be as expedient. And you're going to make a lot less money, generally speaking. Usually in California that's how it works. So, there's that piece. But still a \$60 session fee is better than nothing right now if you absolutely need it. if you don't absolutely need it and you can tolerate the discomfort a little bit longer, and you can lean into really marketing and getting really clear, making sure your website is really where you want it. and throw that up in the party Facebook group so that people can help you work through any little kinks. And maybe, you seem like you're comfortable public speaking, given that you're doing a fair amount of coordination and organization and doing your podcast.

Ronnie: Yeah. I mean, now I am. It was a big fear of mine. I would not talk in public. I wouldn't even have big conversations. It was really hard for me to start conversations. So now it's like, I don't want to go back to a job. And it's just like okay, either, if I go back it's like okay, I did everything I possibly could. And just kind of left it. like okay, I did everything. So, its, I've really had to push through all that stuff. So now, yes, I'm getting more and more comfortable. But yeah, I'm going to have to do a lot more, I guess.

Allison: Yeah. And it's like going through that Marketing Fundamentals course and choosing your five strategies. You've got a website and networking are two standards. And then figuring out which of the three. But I do want some of these three, at least one of them, to be very local. Since some other things you're doing are very international. And are you promoting your YouTube videos, are you promoting your practice?

Ronnie: Yes.

Allison: Are you also promoting your podcast?

Ronnie: No. Because a lot of people don't know what podcasts are. And I just found YouTube to be easier because most people know what YouTube is.

Allison: Yeah.

Ronnie: So now, and I just started maybe about a month ago. And I just kind of like, it looks okay now, so okay, I'll tell people more about it. so, I think that's where I'm going to kind of lead people more than the YouTube channel because it seems like more people know about it. and they have easier access to it.

Allison: Yeah. So, are you putting your interviews for your podcast on YouTube, too?

Ronnie: Yes.

Allison: Cool.

Ronnie: And I just put my flyer up. Because it's just audio. And I started doing more video stuff. It seems like a better response if it's on Zoom. Like, Zoom is awesome. And it makes it super easy to do. So, yeah.

Allison: Awesome. And did you already do, Laura Long did a training for us in the party, so it's in the training section, on using YouTube to get more clients.

Ronnie: No.

Allison: Go through that and she has some little tricks and tips that she puts in there. I think it's just a matter of clarifying your marketing strategy. And then it's just a matter of time before you're blowing up.

Ronnie: Okay.

Allison: So, yeah. and we've got your back in the Facebook group. So, if you're trying to decide between two, or if you're like I don't know about the best practice for this, it feels incongruent. Or whatever. Just let us know. we're around.

Ronnie: And I got to get over the spelling stuff. And that's why I haven't been really active there. And doing a lot. Because I'm just really self-conscious with the typing and the writing. So, I just have to get over it. like there is going to be some misspelling for me, I'm sorry.

Allison: Yeah. Totally.

Ronnie: But just go ahead and do it.

Allison: And know, as the mom with a kid with 4 different learning disabilities, I'm like oh bring on the misspelling. To me, I'm excited and happy you are taking this step to write in there. Even though it's scary for you. because it means you're getting the help you need.

Ronnie: Yeah. There are different tricks that I haven't been doing locally, as far as the Instagram stuff. Putting comments on local things. That I have to start doing. And that's the next kind of anxiety thing that I have to really get over. SO yeah.

Allison: Well, we got your back without judgment.

Ronnie: Okay.

Allison: Yeah. And I will smack down any judgment that seems to pop up. But that's not [unknown 23:09] SO yeah.

Ronnie: There are some that are really judgy, though.

Allison: In the Party?

Ronnie: No, no, not in the party. No. other therapy groups.

Allison: That is true. Yes.

Ronnie: Okay, yeah. I'll go ahead and be more a part of the party.

Allison: Awesome. Good. Alright. Well, I'll see you there more. I look forward to interacting.

Ronnie: Okay, great. Thank you so much for your time.

Allison: Sure. Take care. Bye

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