



American
Organization for
Bodywork
Therapies of
Asia

The Top 5 Blocks To Growing A Full Practice You Love

by Diane Przymus, AOBTA®-CP

You have found a passion and a way to make a positive difference in the world. You know it is needed and you love doing it so much that a part of you would do it for free. You also have done the math and recognize that **you could make a great living with this, if only.... you had more clients.**

You are not alone. I have spoken and worked with hundreds of bodywork therapists and other healers who struggle to make a great living doing this essential work.

It is not because they are not gifted or amazing at their work. On the contrary. Many of these people are a best kept secret within their community. **They are passionate, caring, intuitive, and highly skilled.** Their clients love them. Yet they are only serving a fraction of the people they could help.

Why?

The clients they could help the most don't know about them.

How is this possible? Most of them have done some sort of marketing. They have business cards, a professional listing and often a website. Some of them are spending a lot of time marketing, others are trying to manifest a full practice via the law of attraction, and a few of them are avoiding marketing altogether. **In any case, they feel frustrated when nothing changes.** They may tell themselves they just don't know enough. However, I have known bodyworkers who have previously launched successful marketing campaigns for other businesses yet struggle to get their own practice off the ground.

What is going on?

After interviewing 50 different healers, including several within our AOBTA® community, I found that most of these healers attributed their challenges with building a full practice to **a lack of training on marketing when they were in school.** They tended to either do very little marketing or use the same marketing tactics over and over with little results. Unfortunately, a few of the people I spoke with had concluded it simply was not possible to make a living doing bodywork.

I remember a time when I felt that way. My Shiatsu practice consisted of a few clients and I had no idea how to create a business. Fortunately, through my life coaching

training, I was able to do the mindset work and receive the right marketing support to help me build a successful private practice in 2010.

With the desire to help other healers do the same, I started offering intuitive business coaching in 2012. I became the Business and Marketing Instructor at the Center for Massage in Asheville, NC in 2016 to ensure that every massage therapist received the necessary training to market and grow a private practice. I know from the evaluations that my students felt very prepared and ready to market their practice. Yet, when they entered the field, many of them still struggled. They had the knowledge. What was in their way?

Limiting beliefs

Limiting beliefs influence what you experience in your life and business. Unless they are brought to light, limiting beliefs are like an unconscious software that operates in the background, undermining your best efforts to grow and change.

Over the years I have identified **5 common limiting beliefs that prevent healers from building a successful practice**. You may relate to one or more of these barriers. Read them, contemplate them and commit to clearing them. Your dream practice and the clients you are meant to help are on the other side of these outdated beliefs!

Limiting Belief Number 1: I am not enough

(Result: Lack of self-confidence)

Believing that you are not enough diminishes your self-confidence which makes it hard to put yourself out there, charge appropriately, and set clear boundaries.

How this lack of self-confidence manifests:

- Lack of accountability either by not setting or not following through on your goals
- Not knowing or not communicating the value of your work to people
- Inconsistency in marketing – because you are not connected to the value of your work and your own inherent worthiness, you avoid marketing and promoting your services
- Undercharging for your work and/or overdelivering at an unsustainable level
- Not setting clear boundaries with your clients and/or your time
- Feeling not good enough. Constantly signing up for additional training in the hopes that it will boost your confidence.
- Difficulty receiving or taking in compliments or accolades
- Difficulty reaching out for support – business or otherwise
- Staying small and invisible rather than increasing your reach and impact

Why

As a healer, it may be difficult for you to see and value yourself especially when so much of your energy has been “other” focused. Healers tend to have exquisite emotional intelligence especially when it comes to empathy, compassion and sensitivity to the feelings and needs of others. Whether you honed these skills as a survival strategy or they are simply part of your nature, you may have a hard time identifying and communicating your needs and preferences especially when in conflict with another. You may prefer being in a supportive role because it feels safer and you derive a sense of worth from what you do for others.

Another reason you may lack self-confidence is that your gifts (which often reflect a more yin energy in a yang dominated society) have often been underappreciated and taken for granted. You may have been criticized for being too sensitive and the value of what you offer has not been reflected to you. As a result, you may undervalue your gifts.

What You Can Do

Engaging in this process of valuing yourself can bring up a lot of resistance and can seem counterintuitive to what you have done most of your life – putting your needs last. You need to begin valuing yourself and the sensitivity, empathy and emotional intelligence you possess. You must recognize that you can create and hold a space that many people are hungry for. Your skills with bodywork and healing are powerful and impact the body, mind and spirit of each person you help. This is a powerful medicine especially when you couple it with who you are and all of what has transpired in your journey to bring you to this place of offering this sacred work. You can't wait for others to reflect this to you. Make the decision yourself to know your inherent worthiness and to let this shine out to the world. Confidence comes from courage – from having the courage to be who you are and to stand tall and true.

1. Set clear trackable goals and a marketing plan that you stick with
2. Take calculated risks – courage builds confidence
3. Seek out support, this is an affirmation of your worthiness
4. Practice good self-care and honor your needs as much as the needs of others
5. Practice setting clear boundaries
6. Set your prices from your integrity – in a way that is fair and conveys the value
7. Focus on the transformation and benefits people gain from working with you

Limiting Belief Number 2: I can't have or don't deserve what I want

(Result: Lack of clarity about what your ideal practice would look like and mixed feelings about growth)

How this lack of clarity manifests:

- Feeling foggy and unable to envision what you truly want

- Not allowing yourself to dream big or stretch far because you don't have enough faith that it could happen
- Overworking or underworking rather than creating your ideal schedule and client load.
- Working with clients who are draining and who don't appreciate you
- Holding yourself back from opening to new ways you could serve your clients.
- Not scheduling or allowing time for self-care

Why

It doesn't seem possible to have a full practice and have the work/life balance that you desire so you stay foggy about your vision. You are used to compromising and putting yourself last, so the notion that you could create a practice that supports you to practice excellent self-care does not seem possible to you. You may be afraid that if you really let yourself get clear and it doesn't happen, it will reflect negatively on you. It's an unconscious fear of failure that keeps you wanting to stay safely in the dark, just "seeing what happens."

Another reason you may choose to stay in the fog is that you have conflicting values or needs. On one hand you want to grow, on the other hand you are afraid of getting burnt out and stretched thin. Also, there may be shame conditioning with "Who do I think I am to think that I can ask for and receive what I want?" and pride conditioning with "My source of identity and self-worth is based on hard work and sacrifice" that gets in the way of growth and ease.

What You Can Do

The ability to envision clearly what one desires is a powerful catalyst for positive change. If you are not clear, you will tend to repeat the same thinking, habits and behaviors that have gotten you your current results. Research shows that both goal setting and visualization do indeed increase the probability of success. Even if the result is not exactly how you imagined it to be, you will stretch and grow into new territory as a result of that clarity. It is essential that you envision and create clear goals that support a wonderful work/life balance. Otherwise you may unconsciously resist growing and expanding your practice. Sometimes simply doing the math will help you realize that the increased income from your practice building could free up time and resources to live better.

1. Create a vision for your ideal practice that supports a wonderful work/life balance
2. Clear any limiting beliefs that you are undeserving of a wonderful life

Limiting Belief Number 3: Healing and Business Shouldn't Mix

(Result: Conflicted feelings about marketing and money)

How this conflict manifests:

- A strong desire to primarily do healing work coupled with a resistance to building a business
- Wishing you could just show up and help people without having to market
- Feeling ambivalent about charging for your services
- Getting nervous when you need to talk about the cost of your services
- Believing that money is bad
- Doing little to no marketing
- Generating little to no revenue
- Concluding that it is not possible to make a good living with healing work

Why

On one hand, you are passionate about doing bodywork and on the other hand, you may avoid doing the things (like marketing and practice building) that would allow you to make a great living with your work. You may have limiting beliefs around charging for healing work, making more money, or even doubts about whether it is possible to support yourself with your bodywork. Some of these beliefs may stem from religious programming as well as negative experiences you have had with manipulative marketing or monetary greed.

What You Can Do

Look at things differently.

Business: Consider your business as a temple for the expression of your soul mission. Just like our bodies, when our business is healthy, our ability to connect with others is strong.

Marketing: Consider marketing as a way to help your ideal clients find you. When you market your practice authentically, you uplift and attract the people who will most benefit from your work. Think about the amazing relief you have felt when you found someone who could help you with a pressing problem.

Money: Release your associations with money and embrace an abundance mindset. Recognize money as conveying the energy of appreciation. The exchange of money for your services creates a safe and clear container for the healing work to happen. Appreciation is part of what facilitates transformation.

Decide on your values and commit to doing things in a way that is aligned with them. Honor and operate from integrity. Some healers have found that trades and sliding fee scales allow them to honor their value of making healing work accessible to everyone.

Limiting Belief Number 4: I don't know how to market my practice.

(Result: Lack of effective marketing knowledge and implementation)

How these manifest:

- Your marketing focuses on your modality rather than the benefits people can receive
- Attempting to be everything for everyone rather than narrowing into a specific niche
- Not knowing who you can best help and with what (your target market and niche)
- Copying the brand or message of others rather than being authentically you
- Doing the same marketing tactics with little results
- Not committing to a consistent marketing action plan
- Avoiding marketing altogether

Why

You know marketing is important but have limited results because you try different tactics without a well-developed niche, avatar, client journey, brand, and marketing strategy. You focus on the features of what you do (massage, cranial sacral, shiatsu, etc.) rather than the transformation and benefits they bring. A carpenter does not sell his tools...You may hesitate to promote the transformation and benefits that your potential client can expect because you fear the possibility that they won't receive those benefits.

What You Can Do

Realize that good marketing is honest, authentic, and empowering rather than manipulative. By getting clear on the essence of what you offer and who you help, you will be able to effectively and authentically market. It is exciting to discover who you can best serve and once you know this, connecting with your tribe becomes part of how you serve. You will be able to marry the energetic aspects of manifestation with tangible business building strategies.

Dig deep and discover your gifts and who you can best help

1. Create your client avatar – an imaginary profile of your ideal client
2. Choose a niche and create a message that speaks to them
3. Be you, own your uniqueness and let your authenticity create your brand
4. Brand your marketing materials
5. Design an authentic marketing plan to help your clients find you

Limiting Belief Number 5: It is safer if I stay invisible and small

(Result: Very few people know about you)

Why

Invisibility may be a survival strategy that you, like many healers, have adopted to adapt to challenging circumstances. Part of you may desire to put yourself out there while another part may do what it can do sabotage your efforts.

What You Can Do

When you allow yourself to be seen, you feel vulnerable and your own core wounds come up for healing. You may want to avoid this because it feels messy, overwhelming or scary. Your healing is the world's healing and when you do your own healing work, you naturally enrich the space you can hold for others. Your practice becomes a conduit of healing for others as well as for yourself.

1. Ask yourself if you are willing to become visible in order to help more people?
2. If so, commit to taking at least 2 new actions in the next month to do so.
3. Seek support from people who can help you feel comfortable becoming more visible. For example, a photographer can help with your headshots and a web designer can help you make or improve your website. A healer or coach can help you work through your resistance.

Conclusion

As you can imagine, clearing these beliefs opens a whole new level of mastery for you in your life and practice. Honor yourself for your perseverance and dedication to your path. It may not have been easy. Let go of what has been and instead open to what is now possible. Trust yourself, give yourself the support you need to do this amazing work and allow your light to shine forth.

AOBTA® member, Diane Przymus has been practicing Shiatsu for the past 18 years. She knows the joys and challenges of private practice and has been supporting other healers in their businesses since 2012 as an Intuitive Business Coach as well as a Business and Marketing Instructor at the Center for Massage in Asheville, North Carolina. She brings a grounded, evidence-based approach to business that includes applying 5 Element Theory to assessing and treating stagnation in businesses. Helping healers discover their unique gifts and who they can best serve is her superpower. She teaches healers how to authentically market and attract a full practice of ideal clients with ease and integrity.