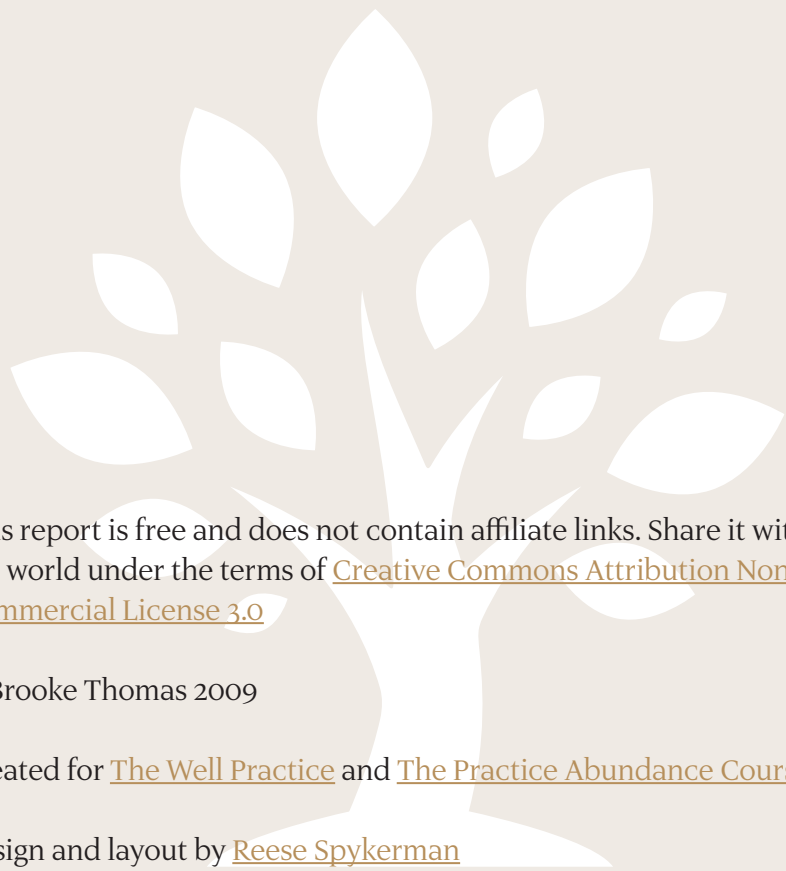




# Practice Building 101

Your I-Don't-Have-to-Feel-Like-An-Icky-Car-Salesman-Guide  
to Growing a Thriving Wellness Practice





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Part One  
The Mission

## MORE PEOPLE NEED TO KNOW WE EXIST

Before I found all the options that exist in the wonderful world of Integrative Medicine, I was a sunk ship- a total wreck. For the sake of keeping the recap short, I can simply say that before this I was dealing with 22 years of chronic pain (I'd had a birth injury, not so fun), a jaw that was locked shut, doctors telling me I'd have to accept that I would be eating soft food for the rest of my life, and just general 92-year-old in a 22-year-old's body unpleasantness.

Then I had the great good fortune to have my conventional doctor tell me that I had to get into meditation classes and someone's bodywork office stat. *What!?!* I'd had no idea that there were other options. Because my wonky-ness started with a birth injury, I'd had a lifetime of doctors generally scratching their heads at my chronic pain and other symptoms. But now there was this whole other world of options for getting well. Needless to say, after one session of Rolfing- the modality I practice- I knew my life had dramatically changed. I've been (mostly- I'm still human) pain-free and happily eating solid food for 12 years now.

But the thing that's stuck with me most from my experience is this: why oh why didn't I *freaking know* that there was this whole world of options *sooner*. Since my Rolfing hallelujah experience, I've been equally delighted with the discovery of many genius modalities- homeopathy, Shiatsu, acupuncture, yoga, Gyrotonic- I could go on since I'm a wellness junkie... But each time I go back to that same initial reaction: *more people need to know this exists*.

The trouble is, there's an art to letting the world know that something exists, and we're trained only to be technicians. Then we're pushed out into the world where we're asked to be small business owners. Sadly, our schools give us little to no- or worse, incorrect- information on how to spread the word and sustain ourselves.

The statistics are grim- 50% of acupuncturists are no longer in practice at the 5 year mark. The average career span of a massage therapist is 18 months. Are we flakes? Dim bulbs? No. We're missing the foundational element that allows us to share our skills. While some schools are beginning to integrate training their students in business and marketing skills, there is a serious lack of instruction on how to avoid becoming a bag lady (or gentleman) after graduation- and when it is included it's so dry and spare that we'd often choose head-butting a curb over suffering through another practice building class. It seems our holistic educations could stand to be a bit more, well, holistic.

## GET YOUR THRIVE ON

These days, I find myself in the incredibly happy position of acting as a translator between the marketing world and the wellness world. I've fallen deeply in love with both for the same reason: *you can change people's lives*. While the word marketing often gives people an icky vibe (we need a new word!), when its powers are used for good and not evil you can spread the ideas that matter; Like, for example, letting people know that they are capable of being well. I talk with a lot of wellness practitioners from all over the world and it seems very common that we choose to study our modality after our own profound healing experiences. That means that most of you reading know what a big deal it is to spread the message: you CAN heal. This is not something to get shy about- we need to let people know we exist. For people to hear about what we have to

offer- wellness providers need to know how to grow a sustainable and successful practice.

## THE MISSION

I'm on a mission people. I want there to be Starbucks-esque lines at local wellness centers. And so, [The Well Practice](#) was born. I wrote this ebook and have kept it free because I wanted there to be an easily accessible resource that can help us all to collectively thrive as quickly as possible. If you find it useful, please pass it along to anyone you know who can benefit. Likewise, if you want to join me on my mission- or just to reach out with questions or success stories, [give a holler!](#) Additionally, if you read Practice Building 101 and feel like you want to dive into more hearty support in your practice building adventure, you can check out the more comprehensive [Practice Abundance Course](#).

I also post to more tips, tricks, insights and, yes, blunders, to [my blog](#) weekly. I'm currently documenting the process of starting my third practice [from scratch](#), so it's sure to be full of some juicy nuggets.

## GETTING PAST THE DREADED "M" WORD

We all know we recoil at the mention of it. Say the word, "marketing" to a group of wellness providers and you might as well be talking about fiscal responsibility and stock market trends. Why such dread of the "M" word? I think it comes down to a simple misunderstanding. When *the word* is uttered, we start envisioning the door-to-door salesman who- as soon as you open your door a crack- jams his foot in the door and quickly pushes his way into your home. In other words, marketing is usually perceived in our community as an inauthentic, sleazy, hard sell, 'squeeze every cent

out of your client' numbers racket. This is (obviously) the antithesis of the heart-based work we've all been called to do. If this happens to be your view, I'm delighted to tell you that people who succeed at marketing their work do so by connecting with their authentic selves. After all, who responds to the used car salesman's pitch anymore? Treating people like walking dollar signs is marketing toxic waste. *No one* wants to be pushed around and sold to. But there is a way to connect with people and let them know about the valuable contribution you can make to their lives.

*\*side note: for an outstanding blog post on this subject, read Chris Guillebeau's take on [why people hate marketers](#).*

## SO WHAT IS MARKETING?

Put simply, marketing is authentically connecting with the community of people you want to serve. That's all.

## IF I CAN DO IT...

So simple, and yet, with no information on how to spread the word about what we have to contribute, it can be pretty dang challenging. When I say I spent my first three years in practice stumbling into brick walls, I kid you not. I was beyond hopeless and truly *dreaded* the idea of promoting my practice. After too many years subsisting on canned tuna and ramen noodles- this with four part time jobs on top of my practice- I had to make a change. On top of the ramen noodle issue, a cross-country move meant I was starting from scratch. Again. It was my make it or break it moment. I knew that if I had the same excruciating slow-build to my practice in New York that I did in California, I was going to be sitting in a cubicle somewhere, resigned to the small amount of happiness that comes from a steady paycheck. I couldn't bear the thought of it, so I decided I would figure out this whole marketing thing. The

result? After leaving all my hard won clients behind and starting from scratch in a new city, *I tripled my income in three months and my practice was full*. Did I meet a guru? Work day and night? Undergo some weird voodoo ritual? Nope. Turns out it's not as hard or as scary as anyone thinks. All it takes is a little know-how and the dedication to get out there and do it.



## Part Two The Toolbox

### HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This is intended to be a simple resource that can help you fan the embers of your practice and get that fire happening. Is there more to practice building than what's contained here? Yes. I could have gotten into more nitty gritty stuff, but that's what [the course](#) is for. For those of you who want to jump on in and get going pronto, this is an intentionally pared down manual that can give you a jumpstart.

There is no formula- I'm inherently allergic to formulas- however, for the sake of making this book easier to navigate, I've broken down marketing strategies down into four categories: Essential, Writing, Speaking, and Relating. The Essential is what it sounds like- essential for everyone. The rest you can pick and choose strategies from, or keep to one track. Each strategy has its pros and cons listed, as well as resources for implementation.

Lastly, I think we all find reading on a computer screen universally annoying. I suggest you print a copy and refer to the electronic version to follow the links you're interested in.

### CREATING A TRAIL OF INFORMATION BREADCRUMBS

I find that when most wellness providers express their distaste for marketing, it's because marketing falls into the "buy my stuff" category in their minds. It seems the true *job* of marketing is to find a way to get people to hand over their money. This (clearly) reeks of manipulation and only deepens our hatred of the "M" word.

The best approach for practice building is to create opportunities for potential clients to form a relationship with you *before* they

hire you. Because our fields require so much intimacy and trust, people are going to want to feel like they can know you before they know you. I've heard the "buy my stuff" approach likened to an inappropriate marriage proposal. Imagine seeing someone across the proverbial crowded room and sparks start to fly. As the two of you move closer to one another, you're both flirting. Then, once you're face to face, the first words out of your mouth are, "Let's get married!" It just doesn't happen that way. You flirt, you talk, and you deepen your "relationship" before you even decide if you want to have a first date.

I have a friend who is an acupuncturist in a small town. Recently, he was telling me about his attempt at growing his practice by putting an ad in a local newspaper with a coupon for a discount off of a session. While I applaud his efforts to both reach out and include a call to action in his ad, this is a perfect example of let's get married marketing. One could even consider this a jump into bed tactic: The only way someone can follow up on that ad is by scheduling a session. How many people utilized those coupons? Sadly, zero. A better approach would have been to include a call to action in the ad that led people to an information resource he had created- this allows people to get to know him better before they decide whether or not to call. If he had instead listed a place where people could get his free course on acupuncture to help with digestive issues, or acupuncture as a tool that can be used in one's life to have more energy and heal more quickly- well I'm guessing he'd have had more people follow up. Information doesn't require any commitment; it only deepens people's knowing of what you have to offer. Always make your practice building about giving people as many free, low commitment ways to get to know you as you can. Leave a warm and honest information trail to your door, and the right people will follow the breadcrumbs.

## ABOUT THE LANGUAGE YOU USE

When you craft your message in your marketing materials, imagine you're talking to the kinds of people who you'd be most delighted to see walking through your door. Because marketing isn't about trying to squeeze into an ill-fitting mold ("what's it going to take to get you into some acupuncture today?") — but instead is about sharing your passion for what you do in ways that are a genuine fit for you- think of anything you create as an opportunity to attract the people who are out there looking for you as much as you're looking for them. We're not trying to get people to say, "Uncle". People can sense when you're in alignment with your authentic self and when you've headed into the desperation zone. Avoid that rocky, barren landscape by letting your personality shine through in whatever you use to grow your practice.

*\*to read more about this approach, [Havi Brooks](#) has a great post [here](#), and [Michael Port](#) talks about what he calls the "red velvet ropes" in his book, [Beyond Booked Solid](#). You can also feel free to browse through [my practice website](#) to see how I've written my site.*

## WHAT FLAVOR IS YOUR MARKETING PLAN?

There are a gazillion ways to promote yourself. In order to avoid clutter and overwhelm, I've broken down some marketing strategies by type. Most people will find that they resonate best with a writing, speaking, or relating approach. These categorizations are in no way meant to imply an either/or mentality. Mix and match as you wish. Your marketing plan should reflect who you are as an individual and is never one size fits all.

# THE ESSENTIALS

But first... drumroll please... the essentials. There are only 3 things I consider to be essential for anyone who wants to grow their practice. The no-brainers are business cards and a website. The third essential and all-important cornerstone of any approach you choose, is connecting to your community.

## Business Cards

No matter how much time we're all spending in cyberspace these days, business cards remain an essential. You're still going to run into people who want to have a way to follow up with you, and there will always be those fabulous clients who want extras so that they can spread the word.

My main tip for business cards is that you include some call to action on your card- show people the way to the next breadcrumb. The best way to do this is to send them to whatever information resource you've created for potential clients (the nuts and bolts of which are coming up). Linking to your other information resources will increase the odds that someone will remember and utilize your card. An example would be a double sided card with your contact information on one side, and the place to find your resource on side two. Side two could read something like, "For a free ecourse about Homeopathy to heal from chronic illness, go to [www.yourwebsitehere.com](http://www.yourwebsitehere.com)" or "to watch my video on stretches for cubicle dwellers, go to [www.yougettheidea.com](http://www.yougettheidea.com)"

## Resources

🌿 **Printing:** My favorite place for printing is [Overnight Prints](#). The quality is outstanding and it's quick and easy to use.

If you already have a design, you simply upload it to the site. If you want to design a card yourself, they have tools and templates available for you. They're also inexpensive and you can order in quantities that make sense (no more minimum orders of 2000 cards!) If you want to go even cheaper [Vista Print](#) has an introductory offer of 250 cards for free (the cards are free, you will however pay processing fees which will average about \$10). You choose from their available designs and fill in your contact information. In return they put their branding on the back of your card, and they hope you'll reorder with them in the future.



**Design:** The two designers that I work with (and adore) are [Reese Spykerman](#) and [Nette Gaastra](#). To keep it on the cheap, there are always graphic designers eager to do your bidding on [Elance](#). [Zazzle](#) is a fantastic site where you can choose from a wide variety of design templates and just fill in your information. Just head into their business card section- they have by far the best designs I've seen in the ready-to-go template format. Also, as I mentioned above, [Overnight Prints](#) and [Vista Print](#) give you designs to choose from. Lastly, [Crowdspring](#) is a new contest-type model that allows you to post your project and the rate you're paying, and have a bunch of designers (minimum 25, average 77) create designs for you. You get to choose the winner. This model is really intriguing if you want to have a lot of designs to choose from.

## Website

A website is an essential piece to marketing any practice. You just plain need to have one to establish a basic sense of professionalism and credibility. Your website is the best way to give people a chance

to get to know you from a distance before they reach out- it's the perfect first breadcrumb on the trail.

When creating the content for your website, there are a few key bits to include. Have a bio, and in it, be sure to tell people your personal story about why you practice your modality as well as giving the basic qualifications info. About three years into my practice, I decided to tell my story of healing on my Rolfing website. That simple change made a big difference in my practice. After that I'd say about 80% of my new clients mentioned that they came to see me because my story had made such an impression. I don't think it was necessarily that *my* story was the thing, so much as it was that my willingness to be vulnerable allowed others to feel they could be vulnerable with me. It wasn't weepy or melodramatic, but it was honest.

The other must have is to explain your modality. Do not do this by regurgitating whatever shop talk you used in school, but rather by answering what questions people *always* ask you. Do they ask you what a session is like, what it feels like, how it works? Listen closely to your clients and the people at parties who wonder what you do- then talk directly to them on your website.

The last bits are contact info and location. Now you've got yourself a basic website! If you choose to expand from here, you can incorporate many other pieces that increase the level of personalization and intimacy between you and your potential clients. These things, such as a blog, videos, ecourses, etc. are discussed in detail later.

## Resources

🌿 **Bodywork Sites:** Bodywork Sites builds websites *only* for wellness providers and because of that they've stripped away a lot of the unnecessary stuff and hassle. You can have a professional website up in 5 minutes, it's easy to edit, looks great, and they even have some marketing options built in (like ezines and business cards, if you choose to have them.) You can try it for free, and if you take the plunge there's an initial set up fee followed by a monthly fee of \$29.95. My one recommendation is that you take the time to edit your site with text that is personal to you and your practice (same deal goes for using their newsletter service). Beyond the fact that your marketing efforts should always personalize you, there's also the issue of the search engines being less than fond of duplicate content. If they find websites with identical info, you may be banished to a cyberspace black hole. Fortunately, personalizing your site is easy.

🌿 **Technology Therapy:** Technology Therapy built [my site](#) and I can't recommend them enough. I've worked with them on a variety of projects and they're always clear, quick, thorough and kind. What more can a girl want? If you want to integrate a full e-marketing campaign into your site at any point, they're a fantastic resource for making sense of what will and won't work best for you, and making it happen. Jennifer Shaheen, the founder, has a knack for getting a bird's eye view for what will work best, and helping to integrate that. She also has a great [blog](#) full of useful tips.

🌿 **Elance:** If you decide you want to custom create your site from start to finish, [Elance](#) is a wonderful site with many people who can get the job done. The best way to go is to post a description of your job, and then see who bids on it. Alternatively, you can search through different business profiles and customer reviews about them.

🌿 **Wordpress and Squarespace:** Wordpress and Squarespace are my two favorite do it yourself options. [My current website](#) for my private practice was built with Squarespace and I find it to be super user friendly. Wordpress is another great platform for building your own site.

## Community Outreach

The vast majority of us have practices that are location dependent- massage therapy won't be happening over the phone any time soon- which means that you'll be working to connect with people in your local community. For those of you, like life coaches, who can work by phone, connecting to your community has the exact same advice, except you're likely to find your people online via their websites, blogs, Facebook, Twitter, etc.

Forming these relationships with fellow practitioners is my numero uno practice building essential. To make it a success for yourself, here's my list of 'Do-s', 'Don't-s' and a 'Why Bother' for how best to connect:

## Do:

### Get to know them before you introduce yourself

We live in a digital world- this is easily done. A little Googling is all you need to get a sense of who they are, what their practice is all about, what they're interested in and value. Once you've gotten input from the great Google, dive in! Read their website and bio, if they have a blog or newsletter read it and subscribe. Follow the digital breadcrumbs and really get a feel for who they are. This should be enough to get a sense of if and how you want to reach out to them.

For example, when I first found my colleague [Sarah](#) (who is an amazing Pilates teacher) her blog mentioned that she'd be heading to San Francisco to do a Pink Ribbon Program. In my first email to her, I acknowledged this and told her I thought it was a wonderful thing to be a part of. It was a simple thing to do, and I wasn't blowing smoke up her ass. Sarah and I have since become fast friends and I've rediscovered my love for Pilates. Don't miss out on great relationships by being too shy (or lazy) to make a relevant first connection.

### Ask yourself the question: "what can I do for them?"

This is my prime piece of advice in developing networking relationships. Just take this one thing to heart, and you'll do beautifully. Because we're out there networking we usually approach people because we hope they'll do something for us, namely send us clients. If the true question in your mind is, "what can I do for them so they'll do something for me?" it will turn people off and send them running.

Everyone can smell an ‘I’ll scratch your back’ vibe coming a mile away and it’s, well, gross.

### **Follow through with what you can do for them**

The answer to that question will take a myriad of forms depending on who it is you’re approaching. This means that you have to follow rule number one and get to know them a bit before contacting them. Once you have met, you’ll surely come across other things in conversation that you can do for them. Finding these things simply requires staying tuned in.

Two quick examples: I met [Sabrina](#), the nutritionist, and she was talking about how she recommends to her clients that they keep food journals. I happened to have discovered [Gyminee](#) recently, which is a great free tool for food and fitness logging- so I passed that on. [Jason](#), the massage therapist, mentioned how frustrated he was with the stool he used in his office, because he couldn’t adjust the height. I happen to know about Rolfing benches that adjust to different heights, so I passed that on. Are these mind-blowing contributions to their lives? No. But doing this kind of thing demonstrates that I want to be a helpful resource, rather than a leech.

### **Continually follow through on what you can do for them**

Stay in touch. If they have something that is continually updated, whether it’s a blog, a [Facebook](#) profile, or they’re on [Twitter](#), stay up to date. If three months from now they Tweet that they’re thinking about doing a renovation of their wellness center, send them the info on that great contractor you know. You get the idea...

### **Let go of all attachments to getting something from them**

Seriously. They don’t owe you- just be a resource out of the desire to contribute and leave it at that. Connect with wonderful people who are doing amazing work and then treat them well. That’s all. Build a relationship, and the rest will follow.

### **Don’t:**

#### **Blanket your town’s healthcare offices with a form letter**

Please, please, don’t send a form letter introducing yourself to every wellness provider, doctor, and physical therapist in your town and just blanket the area with that same stale letter. In a day and age when you can make a relevant connection to someone by spending a little with Google, form letters are insulting junk mail to the person who receives it and it’s a waste of time and paper.

#### **Ask for anything in your first meeting**

Re-read the “What can I do for them?” bullet point.

#### **Ever ask for them to refer to you**

Nope. Never, never, ever. If someone wants to refer to you, that will happen naturally. If someone doesn’t want to refer to you- or doesn’t have the opportunity- then they won’t and that’s ok. Really. Re-read the “let go of all attachments” bullet point.

### **Why bother:**

Why bother spending all your time on developing relationships with other practitioners when what you really need to be doing is developing relationships with clients!?! After all, we all have bills to pay here, right? Because, this *is* your connection to clients. Becoming a well regarded member of your town’s wellness community puts you on people’s radars, establishes your credibility

and authority, and makes you the kind of person people *want* to refer to, without *having to ask for it*.

## Resources

Seek out the wellness rock stars in your community by showing up where they are (hello yoga studio!), and listening carefully to whose name keeps coming up. Likewise, if someone is telling their amazing story of their practitioner, make a mental note. Local papers can also be helpful, but I tend to look more for articles than ads. “Best of” editions usually come out annually and they can be a great way to see who is getting acknowledged for their work in your town. Trust me, once you connect to one person, the floodgates will open and you’ll have a long list of names that will give you a pretty good idea of who’s rocking it in your town.

## BREADCRUMBS

That covers all of our essentials. As I mentioned before, the trail of information breadcrumbs that will lead clients to your door comes, for the purpose of simplifying, in three flavors — writing, speaking, and relating. All of these can be mixed and matched as you wish, and many of these strategies feed into one another quite nicely. To begin, and to avoid feeling overwhelmed, choose which flavor feels like the most authentic fit for you and then choose one main strategy to kick things off with. You can always expand from there.

## FLAVOR ONE: WRITING

The writing track has only one clear pre-requisite: you should like to write (shocking!). Other than that, I find that this track appeals to those of us who tend toward introversion, and who love to teach, but prefer to do so through the written word.

### Written Breadcrumbs

#### Blog

Blogs started out as online journals or diaries and now there are blogs that cover anything you can think of. Simply, a blog is a way to post your thoughts online on any given subject- it’s like having your own newspaper or magazine of which you are the sole (mostly) contributor of articles.

I feel like the word “blog” has been so overused that it’s become underappreciated as a strategy for growing a business of any kind. As long as your blog isn’t about your cat Fluffy, or what you eat for breakfast every morning, you’ve got yourself a super-powerful tool for publishing valuable articles and insights- both of which will allow current and potential clients to get to know you better. For example, you can create posts that will address some of your clients’ common concerns- you can write a post during a heat wave about foods you can eat to keep you cool and hydrated, or another example might be a post about recovering from disk surgery. The options are endless, so the key is to make it both relevant and in your voice. Remember, this is a wonderful way for people to get to know you- so don’t write like a robot. Make it indicative of your personality.

### PROS:

- 🌿 You should be posting to your blog a minimum of once per week. This makes your blog a constant, every-growing resource about you and your practice.
- 🌿 Because blogs are constantly updated by you, it's hard to top the degree of intimacy and rapport that can form between you and your readers. Blogs are my number one favorite breadcrumb strategy.

### CONS:

- 🌿 Because you should be posting to your blog a minimum of once per week, that means that if you don't really like, or have some skill with, writing — or you don't have the discipline or time to be consistent — choose a different strategy.
- 🌿 Because regularly reading a blog requires a commitment on the part of your reader in a time-poor era, blog readers may be slower to show up than those who are simply downloading an ecourse or subscribing to an ezine. However, once they do show up, they'll be true dedicated fans. Cultivating fans, rather than those who simply nod at you once, is a worthwhile endeavour.

### RESOURCES

#### Platforms:

- 🌿 **Wordpress:** This is my favorite blogging platform- it's free and takes a minute to set up. Their features keep expanding and Wordpress is becoming ever more flexible and useful. You will eventually want to take advantage of some of their paid upgrades- same goes for Blogger below.
- 🌿 **Blogger:** Blogger's also free and fast.
- 🌿 **Typepad:** Well it isn't free, but it does tend to be the choice of the serious bloggers out there and it is an excellent and professional tool.
- 🌿 **Domains:** I do recommend that if you're taking this blog thing seriously that you buy yourself a domain name, rather than using their free address. Check out [Go Daddy](#) or [Domains In Seconds](#).
- 🌿 For in depth information on the upsides and downsides of using only the free blog option, read [this blog post](#) by [Kathleen Sullivan](#).

#### Inspiration:

- 🌿 **279 Days to Overnight Success:** This is an outstanding- and totally free- ebook from Chris Guillebeau which chronicles his success with blogging, among other things. He also happens to be one of those people who's got the right idea about marketing- reading his no-hype sales policy is reason alone to subscribe to his [newsletter](#).

- 🌿 **Prologger:** This is a trusted site for tips and tricks. My focus for practice building has been on using your blog to attract clients. Prologger's focus is on monetizing your blog — but you'll still pick up great advice from the pros (and I realize that monetizing your blog might not be the worst thing in the world). They also have a handy-dandy [book](#) and [workbook](#).
- 🌿 **Copylogger:** This is another great blog that's full of inspiration and ideas on how to get it all happening.
- 🌿 **Chris Garrett:** Chris Garrett has a stellar blog that will help you troubleshoot and make your blog the best dang blog it can be. (Whew! That's a lot of bloggage in one sentence) He posts frequent critiques that you can learn a lot from, as well as offering critiques as a paid consultant.

## Ezine

Ezine is just another way of saying “electronic magazine”; however they're often created and used more like electronic newsletters. People will subscribe via your website, and it can then be distributed by email and/or posted to your website or blog.

Ezines can be long and contain several articles on a related subject, or they can be short and sweet and at a paragraph or two long. Remember that this is an opportunity for people to get to know you, so be sure all your content demonstrates your expertise and your personal voice. Ezines tend to be most effective when sent once or twice monthly.

If you want to add your client email addresses from intake forms to your subscription list, please tread lightly. Either get verbal

permission, or ask for permission in an email where they can choose to subscribe, or not, before you send an issue along to them. Not only do you want to avoid making the SPAM Gods angry, but your clients may also not appreciate a surprise addition to their already crowded inbox. Even if someone sent me the most relevant, inspiring, exciting ezine- if they'd done it without permission I'd feel pretty pissy about it and would scramble to hit the unsubscribe button.

### PROS:

- 🌿 Because ezines are usually sent once or twice monthly, they can be a good strategy for those of you who love to write but don't want to post to a blog a few times per week.
- 🌿 Ezines are another strategy that provide a constant stream of information at predictable intervals, so they're a great breadcrumb strategy.
- 🌿 I know a handful of practitioners who tell me that they get a hearty percentage of their new clients from those who had an issue of their ezine forwarded to them by a current client- so they seem to be a good word of mouth strategy.

### CON:

- 🌿 Unless you choose to keep it on the short and sweet side (which you absolutely can) publishing a newsletter once or twice monthly is no small job. Be sure to consider how quickly another month rolls around when you decide what format your ezine will be in. They should be consistent- so don't kick it off with eight articles and then send a short inspirational quote for your next edition. Take some time to plan things out.

## RESOURCES

### Platforms:

- 🌿 **Autoresponders:** You'll need to get an autoresponder account. This is a place where you can store all your email addresses, send out mass messages or newsletters, and stay compliant with SPAM laws. [AWeber](#) and [Constant Contact](#) are the two biggies that most people use.

### Inspiration:

- 🌿 **Other people:** Nothing beats subscribing to other people's ezines to get a feel for what they're doing and what you like. Start subscribing- you can always unsubscribe.

## Ecourse

An ecourse is a mini-course which is emailed to people who sign up for it through your website. When someone signs up the first lesson in the course is automatically emailed, with the additional lessons emailed at intervals of your choosing (courtesy of the handy auto responders). They're generally best kept short and sweet at somewhere around 5 to 7 lessons total- emailed a week or two apart. You can offer people an ecourse on anything you'd like. The options are endless: A 4-part course on sitting properly at work in order to avoid low back pain, a 6-part course on nutrition during pregnancy, a 5-part course on yoga for tight hamstrings. Whatever you think the best combo is of relevance to your potential clients and demonstration of your expertise.

After people receive their last lesson in the course, send one last email that offers a "graduation gift". This is an opportunity for them to follow up with you further. An example could be a 15-minute free consult with you (either by phone or in person), or a discount on a session.

## PROS:

- 🌿 Because ecourses are short and sweet, they're easy to create and you can use them for a long time to come once they've been written. This can make them a good springboard to start from: you can get an ecourse sign up on your site quickly, while you nourish a more in-depth resource like a blog or an ebook.
- 🌿 Ecourses are low-commitment for potential clients, so you're likely to get a good number of sign-ups. In your sign-up box tell them exactly how many installments you'll be sending. When people see that they'll be receiving a total of five emails in the series, it's less intimidating than signing on for a newsletter or blog updates.

## CONS:

- 🌿 The low-commitment factor works in your favor for getting a larger quantity of sign-ups, but the quality may not be as high as those who go for the higher commitment resources. By "quality" I don't mean that they're lousy people, but rather that they're not as ready to give you a call and schedule a session.
- 🌿 Because there is an endpoint, you'll need to capture their attention in the limited time you have. Do this with great content- take some time to write your course.

## Ebook

An ebook is simply a book that is not printed, and can be downloaded to someone's computer — much like the one you're holding in your hands! The word "book" can be intimidating and bring to mind the struggling novelist working for years to turn out their 500+ page work of art. For our purposes, you can conceive of the word "book" to mean something completely different. It need not be long-winded. (The size of this ebook is pretty hefty; you can easily create a slimmer version that is still a great resource.) Some examples might be a simple book on the benefits of acupuncture, or how to maximize your sessions (with any modality) with simple take home exercises and meditations. Listen for the information that clients are frequently asking for, or that you're often handing out, and then turn it into an ebook. This can take many forms from, "What to Expect From Our Sessions Together", to the dietary or cleansing advice that you know you're always handing out.

### PROS:

- While writing an ebook can take some serious time up-front, it's then a meaty resource that you can use for a long time to come.
- Because we're all still impressed by a book, even an electronic one, they're a fantastic way to demonstrate your professionalism and credibility.
- Ebooks are easy to forward- and will often spread like wildfire- making them a wonderful word of mouth tool.

### CONS:

- There is the time commitment factor to consider. To write an ebook, even a short one, requires some work. If you do choose this route, remember that this book is likely to spread far and wide, so put the time into making it a resource you're proud of. I can admit my blunder here: the first version of this book was slapped together from un-edited bits of [my manuscript](#). Soon it started to take on a life of its own and I decided to give it a glance several months later. I cringed. It wasn't up to the quality I want to present to the world- and so here we are at version two. Don't let EDD (the entrepreneur's version of ADD) get the better of you. If you want to write a book of any kind- focus on it.
- An ebook is one solid lump of information, which means it has fewer breadcrumbs built in. People sign up, get their ebook, and that's it. It's easy for them to forget all about it. You may need to build additional information strategies, like a blog, for people to even know they *want* to read your ebook in the first place.

### RESOURCES

#### Formatting:

- [Adobe](#) does a great job of explaining how to format and publish ebooks in (what else!) [their own handy ebook](#). It ain't cheap, however. But if you'll be making more than one ebook and you have the desire to do it yourself, it may be worth the investment.

🌿 **PrimoPDF** Hey now! PrimoPDF has given us a way to create a PDF without investing in Adobe's \$300 price tag.

🌿 **Hire a designer:** I'm a big fan of focusing on your strengths and hiring others for theirs. [Design by Reese](#) made this gorgeous ebook for me. You can also check out [Elance](#) to scope out other designers who know their way around a PDF.

### Inspiration:

🌿 I've recommended it already in the blog section, but [279 Days to Overnight Success](#) by [Chris Guillebeau](#) is a great read that can go a long way to letting you in on the power of the magical ebook. And it's free. And [Design by Reese](#) made that gorgeousness too.

### Articles

We've covered a lot of strategies that can link up easily with your web presence, however there are still publications that you can write for, both online and off, that will grow your readership and establish you as an expert.

If you want to write to grow a local practice, check out the local magazines and newspapers in your area and see if you can submit a one time article, or pitch a holistic health column to them that you write on a regular basis. Don't underestimate the power of writing for national publications to grow a local practice either. I know a handful of people whose regular work in the *Massage Therapy Journal*, or other publications that reached beyond their local borders, grew their practice like gang-busters.

Look also for websites that accept articles: [Integrative Practitioner](#) is one example of a site that has national and international reach. See if your town has a website that accepts articles or is looking for content. Many local areas now have sites that cater just to their residents.

### PRO:

🌿 There's nothing like contributing to an esteemed local or national publication to let people know you're the real deal.

### CON:

🌿 You'll need to do the work of getting cozy with the editors of the publication, introducing yourself, and demonstrating your value. That means that on a national level, this may be too much of a stretch if you're newly out of school and have no articles to show anyone. On a local level, form a relationship with the editor of the publication, and submit quality articles to kick things off.

## RESOURCES

**Press Releases:** You may find that submitting formal press releases is needed. There is an exact science to writing a press release. Here are a few tips:

1. Never send a press release that “sells” you or your business in any way shape or form. For example don’t send press releases letting the media know about a special discount you are running, or about why people should pay you for your services. In fact, you’ll have the best success by doing things that seem like the antithesis of selling your service. For example, at the moment that I’m writing this we’re in a recession. Therefore people are cutting back on things that they consider a luxury, like massage. Instead of a press release that basically says, “Why you should still want to pay for massage,” send one that says, “Self-massage tips for tight times. How to keep your back and your wallet happy.”
2. To email or to fax? There’s some debate about how you should send your releases. You’ll have to tinker with what you get the best response with. Many people also have good success with some of the web distributors of press releases like [PRWeb](#), [PR Leap](#), or [PR Newswire](#).
3. Send your press release in the proper format. People on the receiving end of your release are used to seeing things look a certain way- if you don’t have the correct number of hash tags in the right place, you’ll be disregarded as a rookie. To learn all the i dotting and t crossing that’s required, you can go to [Bill Stoller’s article](#).

4. Don’t worry about creating a catchy hook. You don’t need to be dazzling. Your only job is to be a great information resource for the reporter. “Great” simply means that you are providing information that the general public does not have. Think of all the expertise you’ve accumulated in your studies and in your practice that could be beneficial: how to sit at the computer to reduce back pain, what to look for in a massage therapist, how to practice yoga if you’re full figured, why cough suppressants won’t help you get through the cold and flu season — the ideas are endless. Remember that what’s obvious to you is news to many other people.
5. Start small. Check out small local radio and news publications and build your skills and confidence here first.
6. Keep at it. When you send out your press release, don’t expect to hear anything the first time. Send the first release, wait a week, tweak the headline a bit and then send it again — and keep it up.

**HARO:** Short for ‘help a reporter out’, this service allows you to join a free list which is a service that connects reporters to sources- you’ll get daily emails about what reporters happen to be seeking out for stories. The downside is that you’ll have to sift through daily emails in the hope that someone is writing a story that you can be a source for. The upside is that if you want to dip your toes into this whole publicity thing without trying to figure out exactly how many hash marks you need at the end of your press release, this is a new option.

## FLAVOR TWO: SPEAKING

The speaking track is for those who like to teach through the spoken word. This can involve public speaking, as well as video tutorials. Usually your speaking types are a wee bit more extroverted than your writing or relating brethren.

### Spoken Breadcrumbs Teleseminars

Teleseminars are an excellent way to connect with people and teach on your area of expertise without all the hassle and expense of setting up a live seminar. Add to that that you can record the event and then use it in a myriad of ways, and you've made it *very* easy for people to have the opportunity to listen in, learn, and get to know you.

I highly recommend that you give your teleseminar away for free. Think of it as courting your potential clients. If you give them loads of valuable information for free, they are far more likely to pay you for your services. The teleseminar will be an indicator of what value they can receive from working with you. Because of this, don't make your teleseminar a pitch. No one wants to take the time to listen to something that is the equivalent of a door-to-door salesman banging on the door. Give them some juicy and relevant material that they can learn from and be enriched by. A no-no course: "Why acupuncture is great and you should take advantage of my discount this month." A yes-yes course: "Acupuncture for infertility: The truth about what it can and cannot do for you."

I *do*, however, recommend that you include a pitch at the end of your teleseminar. (What! Now I'm supposed to have a pitch!?) Ok, not quite a pitch. All I mean is that you should give people an opportunity to follow up with you. Drop the next breadcrumb on

the trail. Offer free 15 minute consults, or let listeners know that they can schedule an initial session for a discount for a limited time. I recommend that in addition to mentioning the next breadcrumb at the end of the call, that you also send this information out via email to those who signed up for the class.

#### PROS:

- ☘ Cheap (or free) and easy to set up.
- ☘ Easy for prospective clients as well since all they have to do is call in.
- ☘ If you have a practice beyond your local area, this can be a great way to work with people without requiring the prohibitive costs of plane tickets and a hotel stay. In this case you can do free preview teleseminars, which lead to a paid course (aka a series of teleseminars).

#### CONS:

- ☘ Because this is so easy for prospective clients, it may be valued less in their eyes than a live event. If you're growing a practice in a local area, this is particularly relevant.
- ☘ If one of the reasons that you like to teach is the interaction with people, you may find this lacking- you'll spend most of your time talking to what feels like dead air over your phone. It's a bit disembodied.

## RESOURCES

- 🌿 **Hosting:** A free resource for hosting your call is [Free Conference Call](#). Even though it's free, it's always worked well for me, and it should meet all your needs. There are inexpensive upgrades available if you need more tools. The other host to try is [Instant Teleseminar](#). It costs about \$47 per month, but offers more features than Free Conference Call.
- 🌿 **Inspiration:** If you find yourself wanting to learn more about how to effectively use teleseminars, you can check out [Kathleen Gage](#) and [Alex Mandossian](#). Both do a lot of teaching about how best to use this tool. I haven't studied with either of them, so I can't give a first hand referral, but I can say that Kathleen Gage has always come across as authentic to me, and while Alex Mandossian seems a tad manic from where I'm sitting, I have friends who've taken the course and reported it to be worth the investment.

## Podcasts

Podcasts are like an audio blog in that you “post” them on a regular basis. If you love to teach (or interview people), but aren't a fan of being in front of a camera, this is a great way to go.

### PRO:

- 🌿 Podcasts are a great way to build a following of people who look forward to your- no doubt- educational and informative shows.

### CON:

- 🌿 While it's not super complicated, podcasting does have it's own learning curve, and will require using some toys and tools.

## RESOURCES

- 🌿 **Toys:** I don't profess to be a podcasting expert, so you'll need to do a little digging, but there are a few basic things worth investing in. For sound quality, you can start with an inexpensive USB headset, though you may eventually want to get yourself a microphone. The fancy pants version is [Marantz](#), but you can go cheaper and still have good results.
- 🌿 **Editing:** [Audacity](#) is a good, free site for editing your recordings. [Levelator](#) is also free and is needed for cleaning up sound quality.
- 🌿 **Hosting:** Running audio on your site can cost you a bundle in hosting fees. To avoid that, check out [LibSyn](#).
- 🌿 **Promotion and sharing:** There are plenty of places to share your podcast, [iTunes](#), [Podcast Pickle](#), [Odeo](#), and [Podcast Alley](#) are a few of the top ones. You can also connect your podcasts to accounts you have on social networks, like [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).

## Vlog

If you what you dig about a blog is that it's an ongoing conversation in your voice, a great teaching and community outreach tool, and an ongoing archive of your work, but the writing part... not so much- a vlog, or video blog, may be for you. Same deal as a blog in that it's updated regularly, but your updates are via video posts.

### PROS:

- 🌿 This is a very intimate way for potential clients to build a rapport with you from a distance. Seeing you speak regularly on your vlog will give people a good sense of you.
- 🌿 This may be of special interest to those of you in movement fields, as you can post a weekly yoga class, or movement education tip on your vlog.

### CONS:

- 🌿 You should want to be in front of a camera, obviously. That doesn't mean you need to have the aspiring starlet thing going on, but if you're not comfortable on film (as I'm not!) your lack of ease will translate and the quality will suffer.
- 🌿 You should have some ability in working with a camera. With practice, you should be able to become proficient without going anywhere near a film school, but you still need to accept that with a post once or twice a week, you and your camera are going to become very good friends.

### RESOURCES:

#### Hosts:

Running streaming video on your site takes up a lot of bandwidth. Layperson's translation: costs a boatload of money in monthly hosting fees. Fortunately, a few companies have stepped in to do the hosting for you: [YouTube](#), [Vimeo](#), [Viddler](#), and [Blip TV](#) are the four I'm seeing used most often.

#### Cameras:

[The Flip](#) and [Xacti](#): see more in the YouTube resources section.

#### Inspiration:

- 🌿 [Gary Vaynerchuk](#) is pretty dang famous for building his wine business through a widely loved vlog, [Wine Library TV](#) (which if you're into wine is some hilarious good times). Because of his success he also speaks a lot about using video and social media to grow your business.
- 🌿 [Melissa Pierce](#) has written the [perfect short and sweet ebook](#) on how to do the whole video blogging thing. She also happens to have one of my favorite video blogs, [Life in Perpetual Beta](#) (it's not related to the wellness field, but she's interviewing a lot of interesting people about whether or not the planned life is worth living- so it's good stuff).

## YouTube

I know YouTube brings to mind whatever hilarity your friends have been emailing to you lately, however YouTube can also be a great tool for promoting your practice. People respond well to video because they're given an opportunity to really get to know you from a distance. It's also a very flexible medium in that you can post your

videos on your website, or post them to YouTube and email the link to current or prospective clients, you can even start your very own channel and have updated content- or all of the above, of course!

YouTube is best suited to short tutorials, and the options are endless: stretches for carpal tunnel, demonstrating massage techniques to decrease neck pain, yoga poses for increased energy, movement education for improving posture- whatever your heart (and your clients' hearts) desires.

#### *PROS:*

- ☘ You Tube is a free and easy way to post your videos to a vast search engine and your own website. Not too shabby.
- ☘ It's the second most used web search engine after Google. Having a presence with YouTube can help you to get found a lot more easily.

#### *CONS:*

- ☘ Because YouTube has developed a bit of a stigma for pre-teens who are trying to get the next viral hit by re-creating Star Wars in their living room, you'll have to make it clear from the quality and content of your videos that they're worth watching and educational.
- ☘ If you're uncomfortable around a video camera, this isn't for you.

#### *RESOURCES*

- ☘ **You Tube:** To read their how-to's you can go [here](#). For information on posting You Tube videos to your website head on over [here](#).

- ☘ **Cameras:** [The Flip](#) and the [Xacti](#) both come highly recommended and (relatively) cheaply.

## Interviews

If you feel like you come across well in an interview, don't hesitate to reach out to those who can grace you with said interview. One way to do this is to choose who you'd like to do an interview with (think local or national television or radio shows) and go the press release route. Please check out the [press release how-to's](#) in the writing section of the book.

Another option is to seek out people on [Blog Talk Radio](#) who might have a show with the audience you want to reach. If you've ever fantasized about having your own radio show, you might also want to consider starting your very own Blog Talk show.

#### *PRO:*

- ☘ Being interviewed is an outstanding way to demonstrate your expertise. Even if you don't get tons of viewers, posting an "as seen on" on your website helps you to get as much mileage out of your press interviews as possible.

#### *CONS:*

- ☘ You have to do all the work of scoring the interviews, and to demonstrate to potentials interviewers that you have something of value to contribute, so be prepared to do the upfront work.

- 🌿 You've gotta like being in front of that camera or microphone, or an interview can do more harm than good. If you're sweating bullets, you won't exactly be demonstrating your expertise.
- 🌿 [Blog Talk Radio](#) as a place to get interviewed can be useful, especially for those of you with non-local practices. However, to start your own show, keep in mind that it's another thing you'll have to promote. If you're in love with the idea of being a talk radio host, go for it. If not, skip it.

### RESOURCES

- 🌿 For info on how to use press releases, [go here](#).

## Courses and Workshops

Whether it's an hour, a full day, or a course that meets repeatedly over a few weeks, teaching is an excellent way to reach your clients. As a practitioner you have so much valuable information you can pass on to others by putting it into the form of a class or workshop. It's a wonderful way to add value to the community you want to serve.

If you're developing a course to teach, remember to keep the question, "what can I offer *them*" at the front of your mind. It sounds silly, but you'll see lots of classes with the basic gist, "Why Homeopathy Is Wonderful", or "Why You Should Want to Take Advantage of My Discount This Month". People aren't going to want to take time out of their busy lives for these classes- no matter how much their actual titles may cloak their true intentions. On the other hand, creating a class for parents about common

homeopathic remedies for infants and toddlers would probably be pretty well attended.

To increase the odds that people who attend your class will follow up with you and become a private client, offer a "graduation" incentive that nudges them to follow up. A free 15-minute consult is often appealing.

### PROS:

- 🌿 Teaching workshops is a wonderful way for someone to really get to know you and the quality of your work. From here, people will often become clients in your private practice.
- 🌿 Running classes is a great way to contribute value to your community, and these are always the most important practice building activities you can do.

### CONS:

- 🌿 You'll be promoting your private practice *and* your classes, which can feel a little exhausting in the beginning. However, once you've got classes running, they turn into a great way to bring in new clients.
- 🌿 If your office space doesn't allow for larger groups, you'll have to rent additional space for your classes.

## RESOURCES

- 🌿 **Toastmasters:** If you're interested in teaching, but are worried that your public speaking skills aren't as polished as you'd like — or even if you have a true fear of speaking in public — Toastmasters can be an excellent resource. Toastmasters is a non-profit organization that has been dedicated to helping people become more competent and comfortable in front of an audience since 1924. Toastmaster's groups usually meet weekly in order to support one another in improving public speaking skills. They have chapters worldwide.
- 🌿 **Promoting your course:** Think strategically about where to both hold and promote your course. You can get the word out through many of the channels you've built already: your website, blog, postcards, ezine, online directories you're listed on, etc. Also consider where you hold your class as a way to spread the word about it. Depending on who you're trying to reach, you could hold it at your local yoga center, new mom's group, food co-op, meditation center, etc. Put your feelers out to where your potential clients are already hanging out and see if you can teach in that space.
- 🌿 **Learning Annex:** The Learning Annex can be a great place to pitch teaching a course. You won't get rich doing it, but you will have your course listed in their course offering which gets out to thousands of people. It's also a great way to establish your credibility as an expert. If you're the one teaching the class on Eating Vegan, or Yoga for Cubicle Dwellers through The Learning Annex people will trust that

you know what you're talking about. The thing is not to focus on making money from the Learning Annex, but instead using it as an opportunity to reach your potential clients more easily.

## Speaking at Events

In addition to teaching your own course, you can always see what opportunities there are to speak at others' events. A naturopath that I know had great success by speaking at an annual talk held at a local hospital. It dealt with options in healing and treatment for cancer patients, and she had a great deal to offer. See what local events might be happening that you can speak at. Are there local groups that meet regularly and like to have guest speakers? Are there large annual events that need speakers on interesting subjects?

### PROS:

- 🌿 By going to where people are already gathered and ready to learn, this approach takes a lot of the pain out of having to grow an audience for your own classes.
- 🌿 Being a speaker at an event or organization is a great way to become a trusted go-to resource.

### CONS:

- 🌿 While you won't have to grow your own class, you'll still have to do the up front work of convincing those who are hosting events that you're someone they should have speaking.

- Public speaking has to be a clear strength of yours.

### RESOURCES

- Toastmasters:** As mentioned in the previous section, Toastmasters is a resource for sharpening your public speaking skills in a supportive learning environment.
- Local publications:** Look in local newspapers and magazines and on local websites for places to speak. Likewise, just keep your ears and eyes open for those who might want a speaker.

## FLAVOR THREE: RELATING

Relating is different from the writing and speaking track in that it requires that you go to where people already are (rather than bring them to you) and demonstrate your value and contribution where people are actively seeking that kind of information out. I've heard it called "intellectual voyeurism", which basically means that there are places where people congregate and can check out what one another are up to. The best way to utilize the relating track is to show up in these places and form relationships. For those of you who are pretty introverted and don't see yourself in front of a camera anytime soon, this can be an excellent way to grow a practice without having to convince yourself you like public speaking.

*\* This section also has some of the most universally useful strategies for growing your practice, so I recommend that everyone give it a glance.*

## Social Networking

Social networks allow you to create a profile — which is a version who you are and what you're about- and connect to people you know who have profiles on the same social network. Social networks are an invaluable tool for both staying and becoming connected. We've all heard of six degrees of separation. On a social networking site, because you can connect to your friends and then see all the people that they are connected to, and then who those people are connected to and so on — you can get a bird's eye view of who you're six degrees from. Even if you're a million degrees of separation to someone (hello Oprah!) you can just follow them on Twitter or send a friend request on Facebook and viola! you've begun the process of forming a relationship. (um, no guarantees that Oprah will become your BFF)

There are loads of social networks, but for the sake of brevity I'll cover the two that are the most used and useful: [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#). (yes, [MySpace](#) and [LinkedIn](#) are also widely used, but LinkedIn is best when job hunting, and MySpace is for kids — in my opinion).

### PROS:

- Social networks are a fantastic way to connect with current and potential clients, as well as to learn from and reach out to potential mentors and colleagues.
- If you're introverted, this is a great way to form and nurture relationships without having to go door-to-door with business card in hand.

### CONS:

- ❖ You can't be an internet-phobe, all of these take place in cyberspace.
- ❖ You'll have to nourish your various "followings" but the good news is that the best way to do this is by being as authentic as possible.
- ❖ Consistency is key- you'll have to be on your network daily, if not a few times a day.

### RESOURCES:

#### Facebook

Facebook is the largest social network out there- that means there is a larger pool of people with which to connect and a greater chance that the people you want to connect to are already there.

One of the benefits for practitioners who have local businesses is that people on Facebook have a local network they belong to. For example, because I live in New York City, I'm a part of that network. This means that you can "friend" people in your local network who have something posted on their profile that indicates an interest in health and wellness. Be sure also to beef up your profile with links to your website and info about who you are and why you do the work you do.

Another way to utilize Facebook is to create a group or fan page where people can gather around a common theme and then post relevant and useful articles, videos, etc to it. A straightforward way to do this is to create a page for your business. You can also create a group with a larger theme to attract more people. For example, if you live in Boston and you want to get more yoga clients, you could

create a "Wellness in Boston" group and then add relevant content. On occasion, you could always post openings for new students and see who might follow up.

#### Facebook Inspiration:

Mari Smith: If you want to get to know the ins and outs of how to generate buzz and business for yourself on Facebook, I highly recommend learning from the master, Mari Smith. You can learn a lot from reading her [blog](#), and she also offers courses and consulting.

#### Twitter

Twitter is a micro-blogging application (a blah, blah what?). This basically means that you can type in something within a restricted amount of characters — 140 to be exact. The way this functions as a social network is that you can "follow" people and gain "followers" where you each get to read one another's mini-updates. The result is what a colleague of mine calls, "an ongoing networking party". Everyone winds up tweeting back and forth and a conversation gets going.

I was slow to fall in love with Twitter. At first it just seemed like a stream of half conversations that I couldn't follow. Nowadays I'm a big fan- I've found that it's an amazing way to reach out to people in real time. Twitter is one of those tools that comes around every once and a while and makes us totally re-evaluate how we communicate. It's only gaining more momentum and I think Twitter is definitely here to stay. I daresay that treating Twitter like a fad — or just another social network- is kind of like writing off email as a passing thing back in the day. More and more of us will be communicating via this medium- so get yourself on there sooner than later.

The best way to get followers is to start following people you want to be connected to and- as always!- obey the cardinal rule of social networking: be social! Don't only post work stuff or promotional tweets. Take your mom's age old advice and just be yourself.

### Twitter Inspiration:

- 🌿 **Havi Brooks** and **Laura Fitton** have put together [a fantastic resource](#) on “the strategy of not being strategic” with Twitter. Described as the antidote to, “the fact that [classes on using social media to promote yourself] are (often as not) just manipulative and inauthentic ... and then you have to go take a shower every time you want to talk about what you do, which is *totally time-consuming* and also uses up a lot of water.” Good stuff.
- 🌿 **Mari Smith:** I mentioned Mari above in the Facebook section — she also talks a lot about Twitter and is a great resource.
- 🌿 **Twitter Tips by Top Twitterers:** In what else, a convenient Twtttrlist! Follow the links in these tweets and you have yourself your very own guidebook to the Twitterverse.

## Online directories

There are a variety of online directories. Some are purely a database to list your business, but the most useful and successful of these are the ones that rely on customer reviews. Creating a profile on one or several of these sites is infinitely more valuable than listing your business in the yellow pages and can go a long way towards making you more visible to potential clients. With the review sites, be sure to make it easy for your happy clients to gush about you in a public forum by sending them a link to your profile.

### PROS:

- 🌿 A great way to gain insta-visibility, as more and more people search for local businesses via these sites.
- 🌿 Social proof, aka testimonials, is one of the top ways to grow a business. Most of these directories allow you to have your social proof posted in a very public space.

### CONS:

- 🌿 There's always the chance that a disgruntled client will post a bad review of you. However, I think we're all pretty accustomed to seeing the occasional bad review these days, and they usually only make all the positive reviews more credible.
- 🌿 To get the most mileage out of your listing, it's best to follow up with clients to get them to post positive feedback- in other words, if someone leaves your office saying, “You're a genius!” ask them if they'd be willing to repeat that on your listing. I don't mean strong-arming them into saying nice

things. This means you have to be willing to ask for testimonials and to be organized enough to remember to send them a link.

- Most of the review sites are set up for major cities, so if you're not close to any major hub, you may feel left out.

### RESOURCES:

## Review Sites

- [Yelp](#), [CitySearch](#), and [Insider Pages](#) are the most widely used review sites for businesses. I believe there are some advertising fees on some of these sites (definitely on CitySearch) for setting up a business profile. Click the link on each of the directories listed above to scope out how to set up your business profile.

## Local and Professional Directories

- Google Local:** A great tip is to list your business on Google Local so that it's on the Google map. By doing this, when someone types in "Yoga St. Louis" a link to your business will show up at the top of the search engine results with a flag on the Google map. This one is free (yay! Google!)
- Yahoo Local:** Yahoo also has a listing service for local businesses that is designed to get you the attention you want when people search through Yahoo. A basic listing is free, and they also offer reasonable enhanced and featured options.

- Your town:** Many cities and towns now have their own websites where businesses can add a listing. To find out if your hometown has a website, do a Google search and see what comes up.

In addition, there are often local websites with directories targeted to your niche. I have a friend who's a Feldenkrais teacher in New York City and she gets the vast majority of her business- which is targeted to runners- from a paid listing on a website for- what else!- runners in New York City. Keep this in mind and also do a search for local websites targeted to the kinds of clients you'd like to work with, or in areas where you have expertise.

- Professional directories:** Many of our modalities and/or the schools that we graduated from have websites where people can search for a practitioner. These sites are put to good use by clients seeking out a particular specialty. If your modality has such a directory, make sure you're included in it.

## Collaborating

If your strengths lie in relationship building, you can't miss by collaborating with complementary businesses. This could be a local business that is very different from yours- like a large corporation, or another wellness related business. As a side note- often times we get trapped into thinking that we're in competition with all other local wellness providers. I encourage you to adopt an abundance mentality and to think creatively about how you and your fellow wellness practitioners can collaborate in ways that will be mutually beneficial.

To start forming a relationship, follow all the advice from the earlier [community outreach section](#). Collaborating differs from community outreach in that you'll eventually develop the relationship with a colleague to where it's comfortable to pitch ideas that can grow both of your businesses. However, the same key piece of advice applies - when you're approaching other practitioners, make your mantra, "What do you have to offer *them*?"

For example, if you're a massage therapist and you want to collaborate with your local yoga studio, why not approach them about an offer that gives their students a gift certificate for \$10 off a massage when they buy a new yoga class card? What about having the cashier of the local health food store hand out the same gift certificate when customers purchase at least \$40 in groceries? In both of these examples, you've given their customers an unexpected bonus in exchange for something they would have done anyway.

Another possible collaboration would be to offer a talk at their business that is helpful to their customers or clients- in other words, not a thinly veiled pitch about why they should really want to get massage from you- something to try could be going a local corporation and offering a talk on self-massage for cubicle dwellers.

Or consider creating a product together. "Product" can seem daunting, but there are a lot of options here. For example, a local naturopath and a local pediatrician could put together a great resource- a book, a supplement package, or a series of talks that are recorded and handed out at each person's office- for parents about supplements and homeopathy for common infant and toddler issues. The sky's the limit. Decide who you'd want to collaborate with and do some brainstorming- you'll be amazed at all the options you can think up.

## Giveaways

Giveaways fall into two categories: discount offers you give out on promotional materials and free or cheap sessions that you offer to those who you hope will be a source of referrals. The key thing with giveaways is to be strategic about them. While I'm a big believer in abundance mentality, I encourage you to also value yourself appropriately. If you are giving too much of yourself away for free, you will be several steps closer to burnout and therefore not much good to anyone.

When it comes to discount offers that you hand out to prospective clients consider a few things. First, offer a good but not stellar discount. If you give people anything from 50% or more off, they'll start to consider how valuable your offer really is. For good or for ill, we live in a world that values things based on their price tag. If it sounds too good to be true, people will unconsciously value you and your service less. Second, put a boundary on your offer and then stick to it. Do not offer \$20 off a session forever. Tell people by what date they have to show up or lose out. This serves as a call to action and will greatly increase the response you get from any offer you give away. Remember, we live in an ADD world these days, so give people a reason to follow up with you before they're onto the next thing that's competing for their time and attention.

As for free or cheap sessions that you give to potential referrers, I would recommend that you pay close attention to who will be the recipient of your generosity. Before you give of your valuable time and effort (and outstanding skill no doubt) be sure you are giving these freebies to people who are genuinely interested in what you do, and who are likely to spread the word to others. For example, there may be a holistic MD in your area and you're thinking she might be a great source of referrals. Ask yourself first if this doctor

has a track record of referring out for anything and what those things are. Also, anytime you want to approach an owner of another practice, think about who the true “gatekeepers” are. In the case of the holistic MD, maybe she has an enthusiastic receptionist who loves learning about new modalities. Not only will you be reaching someone who is open minded, but also someone who also has direct contact with every patient who walks through the door. Another example might be giving discounts to yoga teachers, as opposed to the owner of the studio. Ask yourself, who is in the best position to spread word of mouth. [Seth Godin](#) (my marketing hero) calls these people “sneezers”. In other words, who is most likely to spread or “sneeze” the word to others? Keep your eyes peeled for sneezers and shower them (sorry- I couldn’t resist) with freebies and generosity.

## Rewards

Rewards are an opportunity to thank the glorious people who’ve helped to grow your practice by giving them discounts or other incentives. A common way that people create a rewards program is to let your current clients know that they’ll receive a discounted or free session every time they refer a certain number of people. If you choose to have a rewards program, make it very visible- post it on your website and consider a discreet sign in your office. You can even mention it on your business card.

In addition to this standard rewards program, you can also run a special for a limited period of time. For example, in your slow season you could offer a ‘two for one’ discount to any two people who book sessions together over a specific number of days. You could also send birthday cards to offer a discounted session anytime during the month of their birthday.

I’m of the opinion that it’s best to be more generous with your rewards than with your giveaways. As we discussed, by making your giveaways too large you run the risk of decreasing your value in a potential client’s eyes or burning yourself out. Rewards differ because you are giving to people who you already know value you. These are the people who are building your practice for you- so go nuts and be incredibly generous!

## BREATHE DEEPLY

We’ve covered loads of information that will, if put to good use, jump start your practice. However, I realize that sifting through all of this and coming up with a plan that works for you can have your head spinning. Because of this, I recommend you read the last section in this course to keep overwhelm from taking hold.



## Part Three Onwards

### GESTATION PERIODS

So you've sounded your own starting gun and crossed the starting line — you're up and running! However, if you're already anticipating that your calves might cramp up you'll likely find yourself asking, "So... where *is* the finish line anyway?"

In nature, all things have different gestation periods. We know a human baby takes about nine months. A rabbit takes just over a month. A strawberry plant will bear fruit in about three weeks. An elephant takes an astonishing twenty-two months (yeesh!) So how long is the gestation period of a wellness practice? Exactly six months. OK, I couldn't resist joking. The thing to know as you undertake this adventure is that, while you can't know exactly how long it will take, there is a gestation period for all things. In short, there is a time to sow and a time to reap, and you just plain can't do both at the same time. The reason why things take as long as they take is so that they'll be fully formed and ready to greet the world when they're birthed. An elephant that is born at what is a healthy gestation period for a rabbit won't be an elephant. It has to take whatever time it has to take. Have faith, keep at it, and embrace the knowing that you are, without a doubt, on your way to a thriving practice- don't dig up the dirt to see if the seed you planted is sprouting yet- give that seedling the space and resources it needs to push up through the soil.

### THE DREADED PROCRASTINATION VIRUS

Ugh. I just wanted to be a [insert modality here]. Why do I have to do so much work to get this going? Why do I feel like my feet were encased in concrete while I slept? Ah, the dreaded procrastination virus. Just what is procrastination anyway? Clearly you want to grow

your practice or you wouldn't have invested your time, energy, and money in training in your modality. *And* you reached out for help by getting your hands on this course and reading this far. If you're stumbling at the finish line, take some time to get clear on the big why behind it. OK, I'll save you the soul-searching- it's fear. We are *all* afraid- no one escapes that feeling. The thing to understand about fear is that it's a shadow. On a blindingly sunny day, your shadow will look so dark and clear that you'll be tempted to believe it has real substance. The reality is, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." (Thanks FDR) The only cure for this troubling virus is to feel the fear and do it anyway (as Susan Jeffers wisely advises in the title of [her book](#)).

## A DAILY PRACTICE

I once heard Jack Canfield talking about he and his co-creator, Mark Victor Hansen's, experiences in trying to make their Chicken Soup for the Soul series a reality (last I checked, over 112 million copies sold, 170 titles and in 41 languages- not too shabby) Early in their journey they were feeling winded and so decided to visit a psychic and ask how they could possibly make their dream a reality. The psychic replied that it was as if they were cutting down a redwood tree. If they only took one swing of the ax every day, eventually, it would fall. Rather than taking this with a groan about how long that would take, they got to it by adapting this into their actual model for making their dream come true and multiplied it by five. They decided that they would both do five things each day toward their vision. When you consider five press releases sent out, five publishers contacted, five connections made to possible interviewers, *every day*, it adds up quickly. As evidenced by their tremendous success, it's also a pretty good work schedule (and for the record it happened far more quickly than cutting down that redwood might have).

I consider the "5 things" plan the accelerated track. If you have the time and wherewithal to get there quickly, go for it. If you want to start slow and build confidence in your follow-through skills, aim for one thing a day. With one simple thing accomplished every day, you will see results more quickly than you imagine. It is truly the small daily steps that get you where you're going (and without all the drama of flinging yourself at huge tasks haphazardly).

## Resources

For inspiration and concrete information on how to make progress I highly recommend [Leo Babuta's](#) book, *The Power of Less*. His blog, [Zen Habits](#), is also full of good stuff. [Havi Brooks](#) also has a fantastic resource: [The Procrastination Dissolve-O-Matic](#).

## THE MAP IS NOT THE TERRITORY

At The Rolf Institute "the map is not the territory" was used to explain the fact that no matter how long you stared at your anatomy book, every time you touched a foot it was going to be a different experience based on the *individual* foot you happened to have your hands on that day. Yet without maps (or anatomy books) it's so easy to get lost. Maps are excellent resources, but they don't come close to conveying the reality of the journey. I invite you to take care in knowing your direction. Set a clear and joyful intention. Take consistent action that is targeted to the vision that you have of your finish line. Feel the fear and do it anyway. And then? Let go and walk your path. Be receptive to what comes up and allow things to unfold naturally. In his excellent book, [Goal Free Living](#), author Stephen Shapiro says to, "Carry a compass and not a map." I couldn't have said it better myself. Onwards.

## YOUR MISSION (IF YOU CHOOSE TO ACCEPT IT...)

As I said in the beginning of the book, I'm on a mission here. I want the people who need our services to know we exist, and I want to see all of us thriving in our practices. If you're with me and you want to help integrative medicine towards its tipping point- that glorious place where it becomes the most natural thing in the world for *everyone* to have a benevolent army of practitioners in their lives- there are a few things you can do.

First, use the goodies in this book, get out there, and create the practice you and your clients deserve. Go on and rock it — you know you can.

Second, if you feel like this book has earned your endorsement, please spread it far and wide. You can [post the link to your website](#), or pass it along to your friends and colleagues. Don't forget about your school — if you feel like this would have been handy before you graduated, have mercy on the soon-to-be-grads by letting your school know that this is a free resource they can hand out to students. I even have my very own reward program for those who want to get this on their school's reading list. If you're interested, feel free to [get in touch](#).

## WANT MORE SUPPORT?

After my first release of this ebook I started hearing from a lot of people that they wanted more step-by-step support (I also heard a lot of very warm thank yous- so thank you for letting me know it was valuable). Initially I thought I would offer consulting to those who wanted to take things a step further or who just plain wanted more help on their path. However, the bummer about consulting is that it's expensive for me in that it costs me a lot of my time (and then I feel lousy that I can't help everyone!) and ongoing consulting is expensive for you in that it costs you a lot of your, well, money.

So I created the online course and community [Practice Abundance](#) as the place that has all the resources you need to grow your practice, as well as a warm and supportive community of like-minded wellness practitioners who can all cheer each other on and problem solve together. It opens for enrollment a few times each year and I keep student numbers limited each time it opens, so if you think it might be for you, you can [get on the list](#) to hear about the next enrollment period.

If it doesn't sound like your thing, fear not! [The Well Practice blog](#) and this ebook should help to keep you moving forward.

Thank you for spending your most valuable resource — your time — with me and Practice Building 101. I'm incredibly grateful.

