



SOULPRENEUR SUCCESS CODE

## Irresistible Testimonials Made Easy

*The fastest, easiest way to get fabulous, compelling testimonials for your business*

### What is a testimonial, and what makes it powerful and irresistible?

A great testimonial is a *truthful* and *enthusiastic* endorsement of a person or business or product, in which a person who has direct personal experience with that person, business, or product testifies to:

- the *quality* of the product or service and/or the *benefits* they received from that experience, and,
- ideally, the *overall experience* they had in working with that person or business, and,
- (the secret sauce) *it tells a story that others can relate to*

### What makes it great, irresistible, and powerful for your business?

- It's the truth, and therefore it "has the ring of truth" when people read it! This happens because it's the real words of the person giving the testimonial – they say things the way they think, the way they say them, usually it's not the same language *you* would use to describe your business, and it *sounds* authentic because it *is*.
- It's enthusiastic, and that genuine enthusiasm comes through – for someone reading it, there's an experience of what it's like when someone they know is just so excited about something they can hardly wait to talk about it. "You've got to go see this movie!" "That was the best restaurant meal I've had in years, let me tell you about it!" "They took such good care of me, it was amazing, I'll never go anyplace else again!"
- It mentions specifics – that can be specific qualities of the product, or of the experience the person had in receiving the service, or anything else specific about why the person making the testimonial just *had* to talk about it.
  - *If you have a product, or a service that's seen as a commodity or something many people offer, you want to be sure to get testimonials that not only talk about the*

product, but also about you, the care you give, the excellence of your communication, what you taught them, why they are glad they bought the product from you or worked with you in particular. There are VERY few products in the world today that people can only get from one place, so you want people to choose to buy from you, and testimonials are a great way to give them a reason to do that!

## 3 Steps to Amazing Testimonials:

### 1) Let's start with the 3 key components:

I find the very best testimonials create a story in the mind of the reader – therefore they have a beginning, a middle, and an end. And the good news is, putting them into the story format makes them very easy to collect!

**Beginning:** This is where the person talks about what it was like before they did business with you. This might include:

- what problem or pain or issue they were struggling with
- how long they were dealing with it
- how nothing else they'd tried had helped
- the impact the issue was having on their life
- how important this was to them, how much they wanted a solution
- or other ways they may want to describe what it was like for them "before"

This helps the reader identify with the story – "Yes, I know what that's like" or even better, "Yes, that's what I'm looking for help with right now!"

**Middle:** this is where your client/customer can say something about the experience they went through. What did they like about the interactions or any part of the experience? That might look like:

- what was interesting
- what was new for them
- what did they learn
- how did they feel during it
- what was the quality of the communication from you
- how long did it take
- how responsive were you

- did they feel understood and validated
- was it fun
- was it exciting
- what were their expectations and how was it different or the same as what they expected
- what was exceptional beyond what they thought would happen or what they thought they would get
- or many other things, depending on your business.

**Please note:** *if you have a product, or a service that many other people offer, then this Middle part is often where the gold is for you, it's the place where you shine, the great care you took of them, why they would want to go back to you instead of someone else with the same or similar product or service.*

**End:** This is where it all gets summed up into the ultimate benefit(s) your customer got from working with you and/or buying your product. It could include any of these, or more:

- what they love about their life now, as a result of working with you, or purchasing your product
- how much better they feel
- specific results they achieved or received
- what it feels like to have this problem solved
- how much they enjoy the change they experienced
- what they got that they didn't even know was possible
- how much they appreciate what you did for them
- what's possible for them now that wasn't before

The more specific, the more powerful, and lots of *feeling* words are very effective here!

## 2) How to collect the testimonial:

The best and easiest way to have your client or customer tell their story is very simple – *interview them*. This makes it super easy for them, all they have to do is answer your questions, and you can direct the flow of the testimonial so that it tells the story in a clear and compelling way!

**When to ask:** The very best time is when they are happy and excited about you and what you do or your product. (It's also the best time to ask for referrals, but that also is another training!) But if you didn't ask right then, don't let that stop you! The second best time to ask is right now, as long as they are happy about working with you.

**How to ask:** Something like (in your own words): “I’m so happy to hear how excited/happy/satisfied you are – it’s been such a great experience for me working with you too! I would love to get a testimonial from you, so that other people who are struggling with the same thing / looking for solutions / wanting help with this will know they can get help too!

*If I could make it really simple and easy for you, would you be willing to do a testimonial for me?”*

(I’ve never had anyone say No to this.) So if they say Yes:

“Great – I find the simplest thing is for me to just ask you a few questions, kind of like a short interview. You can just answer the questions, and I’ll take your answers and your words and organize them a bit into a short testimonial. Then I’ll send it to you, and you can make any changes you want, or just say that’s perfect and we’ll use that. I find that way it’s really easy for you, but it’s still your own words, which is what I want – how does that sound?”

I find that occasionally people say they’d rather write it themselves, and if they really want to do that, of course they can do that instead – but most people are really happy to do the interview instead.

*Then all you need to do before the interview is write up your questions, which will be about asking them to tell the beginning, middle, and end of their story with you.*

The exact questions you should ask will depend almost entirely on two things:

1. The type of transaction you had with this client/customer – was it a product they bought, a service, a program – you would naturally ask different types of questions based on that, and
2. Your and their “natural” language patterns – more formal, more informal and colloquial – the way of talking that feels natural and authentic to you in your business and with this particular person.

**Remember:** AFTER you collect all the key components, you will be editing and crafting the testimonial for them and then sending it to them for approval before using it. So this collection part can be relaxed, get everything you need without worrying about it being perfect, you’ll have time to clean it up and polish it later!

### **Examples of questions to ask for each stage of the testimonial story:**

#### **Beginning:**

“What was it like for you before we started working together?”

“What were you dealing with before?”

“What had you find me in the first place?”

“Why were you looking for a (what you do, or your product)?”  
“What had you already tried before, that hadn’t worked?”  
“How long had you been dealing with XYZ?”  
“Tell me about why you came to me at the beginning?”  
“What problem(s) were you dealing with before?”

**Middle:**

“What did you like about working together?”  
“What were you expecting, and what happened?”  
“What was it like for you during the process?”  
“Was anything surprising for you?”  
“What do you like best about it?”  
“What had you decide ‘This is for me?’”

**End:**

“What’s it like for you now?”  
“What’s changed?”  
“What’s the best part?”  
“How has your life changed?”  
“What’s something that happened you weren’t expecting?”  
“What have you noticed that’s different for you?”  
“How do you feel now?”  
“What made it worthwhile for you?”  
“What’s it like for you having XYZ (the benefits or results they got) in your life?”

\*Please note that you might get all you need for each section just from asking a single question, or you might need to ask follow up questions at times. Follow the flow of the conversation – what do you genuinely want to know from them?

### 3) Crafting the testimonial:

**Order of the three key elements:**

One obvious order to put these in is a Beginning, then Middle, then End. And that works!

*However...*

Sometimes it’s even more effective to move them around. For example, you can also do:

**Beginning, then End, then Middle.**

**Example:** “I first started working with Donna because I’d been struggling in my business for years – I knew I could really help people, but somehow I never could find the right words or message to attract the right people, the best clients for me. I’m so happy to say that I now have a waiting list of clients and get to choose who I want to work with, I’m finally making the income I wanted for years, and I no longer waste time or money on expensive “hit-or-miss” marketing. With her brilliant 5 Step process, Donna walked me through exactly the key concepts and targeted steps I was missing, so that even a “marketing nitwit” like me could understand it, and even enjoy it! She’s amazing!”

Or even...

**End, then Beginning, then Middle:**

**Example:** “I feel better now than I have for 30 years, and just completed a two week hiking trip on the Appalachian Trail! Before I started working with Jim, I’d been struggling for over 10 years with severe low energy and chronic joint pain -- I’d tried everything but nothing had touched it for me, or lasted more than a day or two if it did. But Jim helped me unlock the real underlying issues so my body could finally recover, and the best part was how simple he made it, and how eye-opening and fun it was working with him. My life is truly unrecognizable, and I can’t say enough how much I recommend working with him!”

*How do you know what order to use? First, get the testimonial using the steps above. Once you have all the key components, you can play with it to see what order works best for each one.*

**Length:**

How long should a testimonial be?

Answer: It depends on what you want to use it for!

Some of the most powerful testimonials I’ve seen were very short – here’s one I got in an email from a healing client, and there was no need to ask her to say more:

“Thank you so much. It’s a miracle!  
My neck is back to normal now....  
The excruciating pain is totally gone...  
Thank you- I am so very grateful!! “

When it says it all, it says it all, don’t mess with it! (But do ask permission to use it – more on that later).

But other times a longer testimonial can be very powerful. In an email or on a sales page for example, a longer testimonial that really takes people on a short “journey” can be very effective.

As a rule of thumb, short and to-the-point testimonials are your best bet for first impressions, when people are new to you and trying to decide if they want to find out more – a testimonial like the short one above will get people to read on if they are struggling with neck pain, but two paragraphs about neck pain might have lost them.

And longer testimonials are usually best for when people are already more engaged with you, they know that when they read what you sent them, they are glad they did, so they're willing to invest a little time to read the whole story.

## **How does this fit into the interview process?**

What I recommend is to get as much as you can from the interview, and record it if you can, so you can transcribe it later. (If that's not possible, just take notes as fast as you can, you'll tidy it up in the next step).

Once you have everything they said, then you can take your time going over it, take out what's unnecessary or redundant, move things around if needed, smooth it out a bit and, most important, make sure it *flows*.

The flow is actually the most important thing – in some ways more important than the words saying how amazing you are. Remember, it's a story, and when stories flow, they work. When they don't flow, they are jarring, and they don't work.

*So you take what they gave you, their words, and be the editor, have it flow into a great story.*

What you'll probably end up with is more than one testimonial you can use. You'll have the whole story with lots of details that can be used in some places. You may also find that there are one or more single sentences that you could use on their own, or one paragraph that works in the whole story but also works by itself. That's why you don't need to be afraid of getting too much material, or it being too long – you make it the length or lengths that work for you.

Then just as you promised, you send it to the person you interviewed, and ask for them to okay it. If you are planning to use it in more than one way (for example, the whole thing, but also a shortened part of it) just let them know that, and make sure you get permission for both uses.

Something like: "Thanks so much for providing me with this! I took what you told me, and organized and polished it a bit, please let me know if there's anything you would want to change or take out or add, I want to be sure it's what you would want to say. Once you're happy with it, do I have your permission to use it in its entirety, or any excerpted parts of it, in my marketing?"

Occasionally you may find people making a change or two, but in my experience, the most common response is “That’s perfect!”

## **Legalities:**

Disclaimer – I am not a lawyer, and should you have any questions about the use of testimonials it is recommended that you do your own research and/or consult an attorney to make sure that you are in compliance with any and all applicable statutes.

Writing from my own experience and knowledge (and not in any way intended to be viewed as legal advice): It’s good practice and basic courtesy, as well as being legally required, to always get permission from the person making the testimonial to use it in your marketing.

**Their Name:** In addition to asking permission to use their words, ask for how they want their name to be used. As a general practice, I usually give them three options: Full name, first name and last initial, or first initial and last name. *They get to say.*

**Multiple versions:** If you are going to use multiple versions of the same testimonial (the short and long versions discussed earlier) you want to also get permission to explicitly do that.

The phrase I use is “Do I have your permission to use this, as a whole and/or excerpted parts of it, in my marketing?”

**Do this via email, and keep the email so you have a record of the permission given** – a simple way to organize that would be to have an email folder dedicated to all testimonial-related correspondence.

**Picture:** And if you want to use their picture, of course you also need permission to do that – and adding a picture does add more credibility and “social proof!”

That’s it! I encourage you to pick at least one enthusiastic client or customer and get your next great testimonial this week! All you need to do to prepare is **prepare your questions** for the beginning, middle, and end ahead of time, so you have a few different ways to ask -- that will have you feel prepared but also give you some flexibility, and both of those things will help you to be relaxed and be connected with the person you’re talking with.

Rapport is still always your first focus!

*One last tip*, if you are at all nervous about this: Just let the person you choose know that you are new to doing this, you are learning a new skill for getting testimonials, and you’d love it if they would let you practice with them. That takes all the pressure off, and will help you be yourself, and you’ll do great!

To your unbridled success *doing what you love!*

*Ann Hession*

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