

Day 1 - Cynthia Allen

Summits for Health and Wellness Practitioners

Jan Koch 00:06

Welcome, everybody. Thanks for joining me for this session with Cynthia Allen, who has done amazing work with virtual summits to build her email list. She is a Feldenkrais practitioner, and I have no point of contact with Feldenkrais. So I'm certainly interested in learning more about that. And then also, you are the CEO of Future Life Now. And you have your fair share of experience in online marketing, especially in that kind of obscure niche, as you've described it yourself. And you have held six summits over the past few years and grew your email list by over 2,000%, which is ridiculous if we think about it. So Cynthia, thank you so much for coming on to share your experience with us.

Cynthia Allen 00:53

Oh thank you so much, Jan. And I want to just say first, you do say Jan? Yes. Okay. And first, I just want to say congratulations on pronouncing Feldenkrais correctly, right off the bat. Your background may help. Because it is a German word by roots, but it's one that many, many people struggle over. So good for you. Yeah. It's great to be here.

Cynthia Allen 01:16

Yeah. Yes. So, yeah, I have been a Feldenkrais practitioner for over 20 some years. My original background was in healthcare management, and program development. And I had kind of foot in marketing over the years. So even in building a private practice, of course, what we didn't call it list building, right? We called it getting names, names to send out old fashioned hard copy newsletters. So when I was first building the practice, I worked really hard. And we had built up to about 2000 people locally, which I understand people think is really a large number of people when I tell people that now. And that was important even though we went from old fashioned newsletters to actual email campaigns to share our work, it was important for people to be able to know what classes and things like that were coming up, right. And they would come in to us and see us personally. Or it was a holistic health practice and so we had private clients, we were seeing as well. And actually, that's really where prior my income was coming from was from my own private practice in the Feldenkrais work, and then some from workshops and classes.

Jan Koch 01:16

Lucky me. Yeah.

Jan Koch 01:36

it's very interesting, because your background is not so much the traditional digital marketing space. And it's really fascinating for me, because you've had such an amazing success with your marketing strategies in a field that I personally, I don't know much about to be honest. But then this is the beauty

of events like List Building School, and also virtual summits, in general. They work in so many different ways. They work in so many different facets, as long as you focus on delivering value and bringing people together. So I would love for you to take us back to the beginning of Future Life now and share with us how you were going about building your email list originally, what you tried, what worked, what didn't? And then how important is email marketing in your business nowadays?

Cynthia Allen 03:29

Yeah. Well, I mean, what I tried originally, was really I want to give people a frame that it was really different times really different times. It was basically before internet. And so I was I've had a hell of a corporate healthcare Job at the time and I started inviting people from there to be on our mailing list and they would have to actually originally give me their physical address. And then gradually, I mailed neighbors I just took down addresses, I emailed neighbors and streets in my neighborhood that I thought would be possibly interested in this kind of work. There's certain certain income level that it tends to appeal to, and certainly location matters as well. And we also have in the practice NLP and some other things as well. So it was not only the Feldenkrais work, but it has been more primarily Feldenkrais for a while. And then it became obvious of course, that we had to start doing kind of combinations of hardcopy and email and then it was obvious there's no point in doing hardcopy anymore. I couldn't even count on it to get delivered to people to open it. Like even an important announcement like an open house or something like that. The postcards will show up destroyed. So we just gave it up and probably gave that up and around. I would think I would guess we probably I gave that up around 2014, 2013, something like that. And just stuck with email. And then from there was a lot of speaking engagements local speaking engagements, which for me would be more like, you know, 2550 people at a time, as well as holding my own open houses and clients, inviting their friends etc, to come because they were excited about what we were doing. And they wanted their friends to have the same benefits. And just gradually growing that list over that time and really trying to tend it. And our style, right from the beginning has been, has been low sales, high connection. So we really want I mean, that's what we do. We love people, we love helping people feel better move better, live better. So we were never, we were never writing lots of sales oriented emails. They would have usually some form of touch, and then additional sort of pieces about what else you could sign up for. But in around, I guess it was 2016, I started to think, Oh, hey, I'd like to have some freedom to move, maybe move back to where our families live or just to be able to travel around a little bit. And right now the practice is tied to my ability to see people one to one. I'm getting older, I'm thinking about what I would do in the semi retirement years. And while I intend to practice my whole life, really, I don't see any reason why I can't, I just saw the limitations for me, because if I were to move, the process of building a private practice, and something obscure, like Feldenkrais is a long time. And I did not see myself wanting to reinvest those kinds of years in building a successful private practice again. So I started thinking about a membership. And that was my really first thing was I wanted to try a membership out. And I only saw it as oh, I'll just record my live classes. I'll give people the audio lessons, they can sign up and listen to them whenever they want. And I just launched with our current list at the time, which was around that 2000 people. And it was like, Oh, that's a nice little response.

Cynthia Allen 07:19

And it's not bad. And it doesn't feel like I have to do too much work for it. And I'll see where that can go. And it just kind of stayed pretty much at that initial level, which was a very low dollar volume didn't really

do too much. It didn't grow, didn't go down. And then I started thinking about well, I started watching my own behavior, which was I was interested in these summits I was attending. I thought these summits are pretty cool. That's interesting, right? And then I thought about the fact that Feldenkrais is a community is kind of tight knit because it is so obscure. So there are only maybe 10,000 practitioners around the world. And one of the things that we really struggle with is getting that work out there. So I wasn't really even thinking about a summit for list building to be honest. I don't think that thought had occurred to me. That's what's really funny, really. I don't think that thought had occurred to me. But what occurred to me was, hey, maybe in my lifetime, I could make a difference in people getting to hear about something that could make a really substantial improvement in their quality of life. Maybe I could be part of that. And part of my hypothesis was that the Feldenkrais community is also hungry for other people to know about it, that as a community, they would come together and share it. And that turned out to be pretty much true. It was a little bit of a low, slow burn, that first year in 2018, because Feldenkrais practitioners were mostly not online. I mean, they, they were sort of, but it was a reluctant being online. And most of our clients, a lot of my practice is people over 60 not online, that much. Maybe email, but not sitting around watching video content.

Jan Koch 09:11

Not video content. Yeah.

Cynthia Allen 09:18

Right right. It was a little bit of a slow burn that first year, but even so, I think we had really good results, which is we grew the email list to 7000.

Jan Koch 09:30

From one virtual summit, you 3x your email essentially.

Cynthia Allen 09:35

Parson?

Jan Koch 09:36

From one virtual summit you grow from around 2000 to 7000 people. Like 300% growth.

Cynthia Allen 09:42

Yeah, at least 300% Because we had 7000 who attended and I don't think I know anymore, like how many. I didn't keep good numbers back then. So I don't know anymore how many of them were new to us.

Jan Koch 09:55

How long did it take you from first having the idea to running a virtual summit taking it serious the idea to run a summit to executing? Do you remember roughly?

Cynthia Allen 10:06

No it took us several months. And for me, anybody, and I know you probably would say something different Jan, but I feel that unless you have a full, you have a wide open schedule that you can do this

in. So I'm running a private practice seeing people all day long running the management of the private practice, I have one part time assistant to help me who did a fabulous job. It took us several months, it took several months. And I like to plan a full year out now. So nine months is really as short as I like to cut it for what we're doing now.

Jan Koch 10:44

Tat is still very impressive, though. Because when you think about the 300% list growth, that is what people aim at maybe for a year with traditional marketing strategies. Say you were just relying on YouTube and SEO through your blog and stuff like that. Seeing 300% in a year is very, very rare from my experiences. And you did it as a part time project in a couple of months. That's rather impressive.

Cynthia Allen 11:10

Not a couple it was definitely more than a couple. But it was a part time project. And it was a definite when we were done, we thought we don't think we can ever do this again, that was a haul for us. And let me just back up and say that we use the virtual summit mastery checklist that was free to do this. And at the time, I mean, I read through the checklist, and I felt like I understood the technology enough that I'd have my foot in the technological world enough that we could pull it off. And there were many things that we should have done differently. And all those things that you only learn by doing. And most of which I would say revolved around real life, not really realizing the level of customer service that would be needed for all these people who had never really signed on to a zoom session before in their lives. And we we held that one live, everything was live in that one. So yeah, it was fantastic. And then we went back for it and ended up saying after a few months and getting a little bit of a break, we said we think we can do this again. So we did another one in 2019. We had different learning curve things that time that also resulted in a more customer service than we would have liked to have had on our side. Let me just say anyone who does one, I personally recommend that you never asked people to log in to see sessions. Yeah, that's that you just have to give up some statistics because the customer service is not worth it. And then of course 2020 came. Now by the time 2020 came by our community was like ready to see another summit. They're very excited about the summits. And that has helped. We had not done any advertising in 2018 or 2019. But we did do Facebook advertising in 2020. And the number of people who registered for that one was 30,000.

Jan Koch 13:10

Wow.

Cynthia Allen 13:11

Right? Well, 30,000. So that also had its own interesting customer service challenges, because I was envisioning maybe 10. I wasn't thinking 30. And we asked a deep dive question. When people registered, which was to tell us like and as many words as you want, what you really need the most help with. And people told us pages long, hundreds of people every day. And we also told them that we would respond to them. So rambling because again, we're a high touch organization, we want to be connected with people. So I don't want people just submitting their heartfelt stories, and then nobody even responds to it. So we had every body in the family of every family, we could grab online on customer service, teaching them how to respond. But it turned out to be really valuable information for us because it's sort of giving us the language more clearly the language that people talk about their

situations, as opposed to my language as opposed to a Feldenkrais person's language. So, you know, that was really wild. And I'd have to say, Jan, up to this point, I really hadn't figured out what to do with the list. So I had list growth. I pretty much didn't know what to do with it. And then when I saw oh my gosh, there's gonna be 30,000 people here. It looks like there might be 30,000 people. I realized in the middle of the summit, I realized I needed to launch a back end product. I had not conceptualized and so with just myself and a part time person, and a bunch of people we pulled in to do the customer service, I did something you should never do in marketing. I took the four main product lines that we have. And I put them into build landing pages for each one of those four. And then a week after the summit was over, maybe 10 days after the summit was over, I said, Hey, now it's time to choose and go deeper, pick one of these four that you would like to go deeper in and come to a free workshop. And I thought that they would all that what was obviously the winner would pull out in front. But that's not what happened. All four of them were fairly many actually successful, by my view. And then I had four products to teach that year, four live sets of things to immediately launch into and teach.

Jan Koch 15:49

Talk about a challenge.

Cynthia Allen 15:51

Yeah, it was a challenge. It was a challenge. And what made it not as hard as it could have been was actually COVID. Because basically, my private practice was closing down at the same time. So my schedule Monday through Friday that had been taken up and seeing people privately was available. And so I spent the rest of the year really teaching those courses. And, and then of course, we came into 2021 thinking maybe people would be tired of online, and in many ways I think they were but still needing those connections, and still valuing. Still valuing what we offer. We had a lower signup rate of around 23,000. But it was still quite good. That's still quite good. And a lot of new people came to the door again with that particular one. So yeah, it's been quite a ride. Someone just you asked, what's the importance of list building. So someone, one of my colleagues just posted, that he had this great winter class coming up on how to walk in the winter in Canada, on ice and etc. And, you know, he said, How do I get some students from my class? Right?

Cynthia Allen 17:13

That's list building right there. And I said, Well, you know, you're talking about online. And he said, Yeah, I'm talking about online. And I said, what I mean, you have to choose some mechanism to start building your list. Maybe you want to start YouTube or, you know, so if people want to have a vibrant online practice, I don't know about in person, what we're talking about here, I think this probably mostly relates, I mean, some of the ideas certainly transfer across. But if you want to have a vibrant online practice and and take advantage of the wideness of the world, the bigness of the world that happens when you are online, then you have to have some way of building that list. And certainly for us summits has been the major thing up to now we're trying to diversify now, and get other things. So we're not dependent on summits. But we couldn't be where we are right now, which actually, interestingly, is the first time we've tried to travel and do business. So I'm in an Airbnb bedroom. We rented it for three weeks to try to be with our families around the holidays. And we've worked every day, one computer in the dining room, one computer in the bedroom, and I got to see family that we normally haven't been

able to see rarely. And our hope is we'll be able to do that another at least one more time this year. No, it turns out, it's true. If we're online, we have some freedom.

Jan Koch 18:52

Yeah, you can literally in this world, you can work from anywhere as long as you have power and internet. It's so true. And what I love for you is just the sheer dimension of growth that you've experienced with your email. I mean, when I talked to most people about their email list, and they say I have like 1000 people on my list. And eventually I want to get to 10,000 over the next year or two or three or four or something like that. And here you are starting with 2000 running a couple of summits being dedicated to your community. It's not about from what I understand. It's not for you about the list building itself. It's about adding the value bringing the community that you are a part of together, focusing on building the best experience for the attendees. And then you end up with an event that has 30,000 attendees, another one that adds 23,000 attendees. So just a shining example I feel of being creative and delivering value. I mean everybody throws around this phrase delivering value. But what you do with the summits that you are hosting is you give them actionable materials, give them training, give them teachings, help them understand how to handle the situation better. Give them something they can implement day today. And they reward you by growing your business.

Cynthia Allen 20:21

Yeah, I mean, our work is what I would call has a both magical feel. In the moment, you can notice a lot of change. But also, it's something that is as kind of slow burn, it builds over time, and people get better and better if they engage more. So our summits are, what you see a lot of summits and of course, is the digital marketing world about what you're doing. About how to become better at digital marketing. But the summits that really grabbed my attention, actually, were the ones being done by Nicam and Tammy Simon's out of Colorado. So man, I'm just gonna name mixed up right at the moment. Anyway. These are summits that when you're listening to the speaker, what you're learning about is your deep interior self. You're learning about how you function in the world? And what are some other options for how you can function in the world. So I was interested in, what the Feldenkrais work could bring to that, and what my biggest reward really, I'm very happy to have the extra emails and this freedom, but the biggest reward for me and our team, which now there is a team, right, we now have actual employees and team members. And I hear from them as they answer the emails, etc, the rewarding feeling that we're getting, when we hear people write is saying this last year, you've been a lifeline for us. You helped me with this, I feel like I can now do this. So there's always this balance. For all of us, when you say delivering value, there's always this balance between selling, and what do people get for that. And we just kind of try to keep keeping at the front of our minds that what people get for it is a deeper a better relationship with them, their selves and a better quality of how they they move through their life. And that's really our litmus test for success. And then the second part of that litmus test is, if we can reach more people, then more people can have that experience. So we we want the quality and experience to be there first. And then we've slowly been trying to understand more about what do we do with this email list? And how do we take them to the next step after the summits? And how do our speakers like when I'm done with a summit I always hold for the speakers and affiliates at debrief session. And that debrief session is my investment in them. If they want to become more present online, it's my investment in them and trying to help them understand what their next steps might be, what did you just participate in? How have you grown? And then how could you continue to grow? If

that's of your interest in this direction? Because so many of them have not really had much of an online presence yet. And as you know, that's one of the things I did not realize I was going to enjoy so much was the impact I'm having on speakers. And I'm sure you've had this. So these speakers writing me and saying you can't believe how much participating last year opened the doors for me around x. I can think about myself in this way or that way, or now I find myself wanting to do XYZ. And that feels really rewarding too. And that was never in my intention that that I would be having such a positive impact on the speakers themselves.

Jan Koch 24:11

So that is so amazing. And I would love to dive a little bit deeper into why you think the summit worked so well. You mentioned in the beginning, that this tight knit community was a very big decision factor for you to run these events because you wanted to reach more people and spread the message about faith in Christ in general. Do you think that evaluating the strategy of the virtual summit that this structure of the community that you were in was, let's say a make or break factor? Could you have done a summit like that in the community that wasn't as tight? Do you think you would have seen similar results?

Cynthia Allen 24:53

I don't, but I don't really have anything to test that against right. So I think it would have been smaller, quite a bit smaller. I think it's still would have been successful. I just think the growth phrases probably would have been quite a bit more limited. And although I think a lot of people saw these wild numbers during COVID, so, maybe we would have seen those same numbers. It's been difficult to know for sure, the first couple of years, we didn't do an affiliate program. So we didn't really know for sure, who was coming from where, and we'd have better ideas about that now. We see that while our affiliates bring in some people, and even the contests that we do, like we did an early parent contest in 2021, that would allow us to reward people for smaller numbers of referrals. We saw some, maybe two or 3% came in that direction. So we know that without a tight knit community, maybe, but I don't think it would have been the same numbers. But I don't think it has to be and I'll tell you why. Because like I said, I didn't know what to do with the list. So if you are somebody who is ready to take advantage of any amount of lists growth? Let's say that you managed to grow it by 1000, which I think you will be hard pressed not to do in a summit. Actually, I think you're gonna grow by at least 1000. That's 1000 more people you didn't have before. It's pretty significant. And if you then have taken some time to figure out, hey, like, what is the back end product? Or where do I want to go next with this list? How am I going to nurture it in a way that doesn't just keep them in engaged with you, but keeps them going down a path of growth so that they're starting to grow to go deeper when they're ready. I think it's still very worthwhile. The other piece that I didn't talk about it all was I was fairly unknown in my Feldenkrais community prior to this. And for better or for worse, now I'm known by almost everybody. And, one of the things that virtual summit mastery talks about is becoming an expert in your own field. So as long as you are a pretty decent interviewer, and I don't think it's going to take somebody who really doesn't know what they're doing to make them look great. But I think it takes somebody who does know what they're doing, but has been somewhat, not really visible, and makes you quite visible. And it allows your clients, your students, people who are tuning in to feel really proud of being associated with you. And that is significant. That is not insignificant.

Jan Koch 27:56

How did that change the way you do business now that you are more known in the space?

Cynthia Allen 28:05

Did you say in the States?

Jan Koch 28:07

How did that change the business that you're doing now? How did it change the day to day you go about your marketing and your business now that you are well known?

Cynthia Allen 28:19

I don't know if it changes the marketing that much. But I do make more assumptions that people know me as a baseline. And I don't feel like I have to recapitulate my set of qualifications over and over again. I'm more likely to just say, hey, Cynthia Allen here and go on, in most of my videos, than feeling like I have to somehow embed my qualifications over and over again, to sort of make it clear that I might know what I'm talking about. And, occasionally, that's actually been a mistake. And I need to go back and actually recapitulate my qualifications, but I think it's more a competence level for me, than anything else. I don't know that it changes exactly what I'm doing. But there's a feeling of okayness like, oh, okay, I feel pretty solid. I feel fairly solid here. And I don't have to try to struggle to find my footing or ground or know where I stand. I still make mistakes like everybody else. There's things I say, when I'm interviewing people, when I'm being interviewed, that I wished I hadn't said, but I feel like I know now that we can all recover from those things, move on. And most people, frankly, don't even notice them at all.

Jan Koch 29:49

It's very interesting, and I would assume that now with a better network in your industry, doors are opening a lot easier like you are venturing out doing more speaking now, and I would imagine that with the background of the virtual summits, you have an easier way, getting interviewed on podcasts, building your brand even further, because of the people, you now know.

Cynthia Allen 30:12

You know, that's one of my goals this year is actually you like the first interview. I mean, nobody ever really interviews me, it's very rare. I haven't really been reaching out on that. And so now, that's one of my goals for 2022 is to reach out and take advantage of that, because I'm not without influence. So it makes besides the fact that I think I hope I'm a good teacher or a good speaker. I also actually have, a range in which I can influence people. So it's a win win for people to have me as a part of their events.

Jan Koch 30:13

Yeah. And I can certainly tell how comfortable you are in front of the camera. How used you are, to this. And that goes back to what you earlier said is like, we're all learning. Everybody's making mistakes, I make mistakes, every single day. In fact, I'm doing this interview with a cough right now. That's why I'm muting myself all the time when I have to cough. But that just makes us human. And I think especially these times with the pandemic, and just hard times that we are facing these days, it's amazing to see people who just are human, and to connect with them online if we cannot connect with them in the physical world.

Cynthia Allen 31:38

Absolutely. And, generally, people do want to see something that's not so overly polished, if it's a live session, in particular. They want to see something that is a little bit more feels a little bit more like, Hey, who is that person, and it gives them a flavor of that. And, for me, it's like, there's levels of which people get to know me just like any other friendships or relationships. And so by the time people come into my private courses, that's where then you know, then we will start to slide into a little bit more intimacy together, and I quit wearing makeup and I start spontaneously singing songs and sessions or things that I would not normally feel like I would just do with a group of people that maybe I didn't know as well. So there's hints of that personal time that we're going to have together, hopefully in the sessions that we do that are kind of big and huge. But then as people filter down through and they become more and more connected, we know we have even a much more deeper time together.

Jan Koch 32:55

Yeah, I love this emphasis on building relationships and building connections with people. And we are pretty deep into the conversation already. But I would love for you to walk us through the planning process. Like, can you give us a rough overview? You said you take nine months right now to plan your virtual summits. How do you spend those nine months? What do you do?

Cynthia Allen 33:19

Yeah, the first there's a couple of hurdles to get over in the beginning for me, that's pretty significant. And one of them's been solved now. Because it turns out that we started with naming our summits, things that pleased me as names. So they're called Feldenkrais Awareness Summits, but there was always a larger title name than that. And the larger title name would be ones that were words, or phrases that practitioners would really like. And I think that was probably great at the beginning, because it got them even more likely to be engaged and connected. But it wasn't. They weren't titles that the general public related to and we're trying to reach new people. I always said in the beginning, I'm not really putting this on for other Feldenkrais practitioners. So I understand many of them are getting tremendous benefits from it. And that's fantastic. I mean, we get all kinds of emails from practitioners around the world saying, I felt so alone in my work. I didn't feel like I knew anything about this topic. I'm learning this, that's fantastic. But my major goal was to reach new people who had never heard of it. So we realized that we needed to go with something a little bit more friendly for people. And what we came up with was move better, feel better, very common words that we saw being repeated over and over in these emails to us. And now we have settled for our main large summit. So we have settled on that name. And I haven't talked about the two smaller summits that we've done yet. So we can do that in a bit if you want. And so we've had that name move better, feel better twice, and I feel now it's become its own brand and that we will be sticking with it for a while. And it's something that a person who hears about it can see almost immediately, even if they've never heard about the word, the name of Feldenkrais, which is in small print below now move better feel builder, big print, feldenkrais awareness summit in tiny print. They will almost immediately know, oh, my gosh, this is going to be something that's going to help me somehow navigate life better, I'm going to have comfort in my body, I'm going to get more mobility, I'm going to get more flexibility. I'm gonna get more stability. However, that translates in their mind. So that big thing of naming is actually done now, which was a big struggle each time. But then the second big struggle I have is that we come up with a format, which I think is

good, which is a theme each day and our summits by the way, these large summits are 10 days long. So 10 days, and then we have a day off. And then we have a bonus day. It's really that's an 11th day of content. And then we have an encore day, replay day. So that's a long haul. So we have 10 10 themes then we're going to have three to four talks a day on plus a panel discussion at the end of the day. The panel discussion now is the only live part. Everything else is pre recorded to help us have lives. Yeah, and actually, we've gotten good feedback from people that they like that is pre recorded, and they don't have to feel tied to our schedule all day long for 10 days. They can watch. But coming up with a range of themes, and then recognizing whether we can grab the speakers for those themes. The themes I feel are important for people to identify where do I really feel like I want to focus within these 10 days, since most people are not going to watch every day for 10 days, but also allows us to keep the Feldenkrais community and the people who have come in the past reinvigorated. They see the themes are slightly different each time. So they know there's not going to be exactly the same content, but they're going to get something new from it.

Cynthia Allen 37:40

So the themes is a biggie and then realizing do I really have the people to fill those themes. So that takes a lot of thinking time, and a lot of brainstorming with other people, a co host that I have each year. Olivia New Ponca, who was just an accidental co host in year one. And has just turned out to be a fabulous, fabulous person to be working with through the whole thing. I mean, I did ask her, but I really didn't know hardly anything about to be honest. We didn't know hardly anything about each other. And it's been pretty doggone close to a match made in heaven. So those are big things for us. And then once that happens, I start putting out the requests for a Keynote or two, and then each of the individual speakers, and that takes as you know, recruitment takes time.

Jan Koch 38:33

ages,

Cynthia Allen 38:34

It takes time. So we're talking about, for me, we're talking about recruiting, for speakers, we're talking about recruiting around 30 to 35 people. And then for the panels, we recruit two more for each of those, so two of those for 10 days. So it's a lot of people to recruit for. And then the process of scheduling the interviews, making sure they have what they need. Those things are all going on in the background as well. Thankfully, most of that doesn't happen by me. But I show up for the interview, do the interview. That kind of thing.

Jan Koch 39:11

Yeah that sounds like a lot of work. I see why you now set aside nine months for it.

Cynthia Allen 39:18

Yeah, and I think if people are super savvy, if the audience that you're inviting on are super savvy to speak, they may not need a lot of notice. But a lot of our audiences is super savvy to speak. While I try to follow sort of the VSM template about an A B C list. We don't really have many A players in our world. They're just there's because we're so obscure, then what is an A player to us is totally unknown to the rest of the world.

Jan Koch 39:53

It makes no difference.

Cynthia Allen 39:55

That's right. So our speaker names in terms of reaching new people, our speaker names mean nothing. They're like, okay, that's 30 names I've never heard of.

Jan Koch 40:08

Which is another challenge in itself, like usually for everybody watching the summit lives by speakers bringing people to the event. And if that's not happening, that makes your achievement even bigger.

Cynthia Allen 40:25

That's right. And so we do have people with some email lists, but it's usually maybe three or four. And with all of that, everybody else is probably less than 500 people on their list. And as you know, if we do recruited a list person, which we have usually had an H Summit, somebody that's got a massive following as an author or researcher, they actually don't share it.

Jan Koch 40:50

Yeah, I don't need to be having exposure,

Cynthia Allen 40:53

They're really doing us a big favor by showing up. And they really are, they're doing us a big favor by showing up, I think we give them something we certainly they know that they're going to anytime somebody hears about their book, again, is a good thing. And, they used to go to book signings, then have 50 people, and 30,000 is a nice member. So, but still, they're not going to share it. And so our copy, our themes, our copy, and the descriptions of the sessions has to really be on point. So people go, Oh, my gosh, if I tune into this summit, I could hear about the situation that we have in our family around Parkinson's disease, or I could get help, as somebody who is a skateboarder, there it is, somebody on skateboarding is going to be talking Wow, okay. So whatever it is, we're honing in on, we just have to be sure that for that audience, that the majority of the topics fit them. And then we have a few topics that I orient specifically towards professionals in some related field. So there are other obscure names in this field of somatic education. And then we tend to appeal a lot to Pilates yoga, teachers and physical therapists as well. So we have a few things for them. But I think that's really probably the most important thing for us is to be sure that, we are delivering high value on topics that are interesting to people. We also since we also are a movement modality and we do both a hands on and in person version we've been having at each summit, daily Awareness through movement lessons. So in addition to those sessions, which are mostly interviews, so they might be interviews around, Parkinson's or self image, or how to use the work in acting, or it's a lot of variety there. But the actual lessons then are available for them to do every day. So they get a felt experience of the work throughout the summit as well. And I think that's been a good choice, as opposed to having all of the lessons embedded inside the interviews where the speaker doesn't really get to say much because they're doing the lesson. Now, they get to really talk about a topic that's really interesting to them. And if they want to put in a little tiny movement piece they can, but they don't need to.

Jan Koch 43:31

That is super cool, because that sets your summit apart from what I could do in digital marketing for example. I could make people jump around, but that didn't grow their email list by one bit. But you keeping the attendees engaged and you keeping the thing interactive, because they can share the experience from how they felt throughout that lesson. When they moved in. They felt like blockades coming up or something like that they are moving more freely. For me what the most important takeaway was here is the relevance and the depth of understanding that you have for your target market. And I think this is something that anybody building a business online or building a business in general needs to have and the responses you got from 2020 summit helped you tremendously develop that because as you said, this is just a plethora of data that you have to sort through to know the wording of your attendees. And for anybody who's watching this, if you don't know how your audience describes their pain points, you are having a massive disadvantage compared to your competitors.

Cynthia Allen 44:51

Absolutely. And this has been a really big problem in our work is that we come into our field and by the time we graduate as practitioners, we've learned an internal language that makes no sense to anybody else. And it doesn't just start, it's not just the word Feldenkrais, it's pretty much everything else that we describe. They're like, what are those words? And we think, what do you mean, you don't know what those words are? Because they become so important to us now. So, one of the people I do follow online is James Wedmore. And, James is always saying, he's got a couple of sayings, like almost everybody has that are just important, and one of them is, you don't get to sell them what you want to sell them. You sell them what they want, you deliver what they need. And I've really been trying hard this last year and a half to really get that in my head, that the name of the summit that thrills me is not, I mean, I guess if it keeps me going, that's important. But that's not where I should be getting my juice from, I should be getting my juice from the fact that I actually were able to connect with people around their specific need. So that's, something that I have to ask myself fairly frequently. And then where I'm expressing my more creative part of myself, is actually inside the programs where people are going deeper. And then when they get into the program, I get to do all kinds of clever things with series names. So I got a series coming up called winning by a neck, which is all for the neck. And I just love these clever names, right? I love clever names. You know, I taught a series, once called 50 ways to leave your lover and I just love that. Nobody's gonna sign up for that. They do. They're going to get disappointed because it's not really what it seems like. It's all ways of navigating a way in space. It was always navigating in space. So how would you roll out of bed? How could you roll on the floor? How do you crawl? It was all these things. I just thought I was like, it's been in my head for 20 years. Someday, I'm going to use 50 ways to leave your lover is a name for a series.

Cynthia Allen 47:11

But it will never make it in general marketing, right? Nobody would know what it was about.

Jan Koch 47:20

Yeah, but you could bring it as a joke once people enroll, and everybody will have a fantastic laugh.

Cynthia Allen 47:25

That's right. They get it. They get it now cuz they're in it. And now they feel like they're on the inside joke kind of with me.

Jan Koch 47:33

Yeah, you're building community with that joke? Yeah. I love it. Cynthia, I had a blast in this conversation. But I have to be respectful of your time. And unfortunately, we're coming up to the end of this recording. If you were to summarize your lessons that you've learned through hosting the summit, and then building that email list from that, what is the most important takeaway that you've realized?

Cynthia Allen 48:00

Well, I believe that the most important takeaway really is learning how your audience speaks about their pain point, the one that you brought up, I think that is somehow the most elusive for most of us. And, vital. So there is that piece of it. And then I think on a personal level in virtual summits, you have to keep showing up, and that you have to get comfortable with being seen. And that includes getting comfortable with getting emails that occasionally are quite not nice. So you really have to be ready to step up to the plate and growth in lots of different ways. From taking really valuable constructive criticism that people give. Totally worth it, you go, man, that's a great idea. I wished I'd have thought of that before I'm putting that in next time. To the things that are wonderful. And saying, you're changing my life. And then the ones that are like, you know, not nice and, and those are very far and few between, but that whole range, at least for me, was a big growth experience to have so many people telling me how much difference it was making in their life. That was a big growth experience. It's a lot of light. It's a lot of light coming in, and then a lot of attention coming in. And so it takes some extra time to invest in yourself to manage that without ending up getting confused about what your importance is because in the end, my business, my name, it's not going to be known in some ginormous way for the rest of lifetime. And I don't have some kind of influence to change the world in some Einsteinian kind of way. But I do. I do I absolutely do and everybody listening does have an a capacity to change a much larger corner of the world than we ever had the chance to do before, or impact it in a positive way. And that's really thrilling.

Jan Koch 50:12

Fantastic way to wrap up the session. Thank you so much for coming on, Cynthia.

Cynthia Allen 50:16

Thank you, Jan. It was a pleasure.