

## Go-To Gal Podcast. Episode 3. How to Scale by Doing the “Unscalable” with Nathan Barry

JACLYN: Hello gals! I’m so excited to be here today with Nathan Barry, founder of ConvertKit! Thanks so much for joining me.

NATHAN: Yeah, hey thanks for having me on.

JACLYN: Yes. Well you are our Go-to Guy [laughter]. We’re gonna have a couple of Go-to Guys in the mix here.

So before we dive into what we’re doing now, I’d love for you to share growing up, or even on the early days of your career, what were you the Go-to Guy for?

NATHAN: Probably something web design or graphic design-related. I got into that in high school so I did a lot of that. Or fixing a computer. I don’t know why everyone thinks web designers know how to fix computers.

JACLYN: [laughter] They absolutely do that. Oh yes.

NATHAN: Yeah. There were definitely things like that. Actually, one of our designers has a coffee mug that says, “No, I will not fix your computer.” And when he drinks out of it, it had a middle finger on the bottom.

JACLYN: [laughter] No, not on the bottom. Omigosh that’s hilarious!

NATHAN: So yeah, I was the Go-to Guy for that.

JACLYN: Were you actually able to fix the computers or they just asked you for help?

NATHAN: Oh, I was actually able to fix the computers.

JACLYN: Of course.

NATHAN: It kinda made this process of encouraging that behavior of “Hey can you fix this?” “No... okay, fine.” You know? [laughter] But you fixed it last time. So yes, I’ll fix your computer. Then I would do lots of projects with people. Growing up, my dad built a house that we grew up in and he had a shop in. And so various projects around the house. My roommates in college and I would always be the one who would fix whatever problem around the house.

JACLYN: You’re a handy guy to have around. See, I went to a technology school and I’m not techy. My husband teases me. I went to Rochester Institute of Technology, and I have trouble with the remote. And he’s like you went to RIT! And I’m like well we didn’t have a “How to operate a remote” class! [laughter] No, he still gives me a hard time that I can’t do anything techy. I’m like you know that wasn’t my major. But yeah, so stereotypes.

Alright, taking us to now. Tell us about ConvertKit and how you got into it. Tell us about what you did on the way in when you started ConvertKit.

NATHAN: The journey basically went through learning the basics of web design; doing some pre design; getting into design coding; loving all of that; getting into building software. I worked for a company where I led the software design team for three years. Did a bunch of freelance. Discovered iPhone apps, which was really fun to be able to build iPhone and iPad apps. I just loved being able to have a different interaction to have something right there on the device. You can just pull out from your pocket when you’re in line at the grocery store. I feel like every app designer built a flashcard app at some point. I’ve built one of those. But to have so many of those things, you get to interact with it in a different way. So I made some really fun apps. And then really got into blogging. All the way along I followed bloggers like Chris Guillebeau and Tim Ferris, and then a bunch of web design bloggers. There’s a site called CSS Tricks by a guy named Chris Coyier, and I follow his stuff very extensively. And then I always wanted to be like that. I wanted to have an audience online, have a community and sell digital products. So I started a blog a year and a half later. I

published my first book, which is about designing iPhone applications. I started an email list on MailChimp...

JACLYN: Oh! So that was maybe the first bread crumb along the way.

NATHAN: Yeah. And so I built an email list of 800 people; launched my book to that list and to the general web. I was trying to make \$10,000 over the whole lifetime of the book. That's what I thought would be worth it. and I ended up making \$12,000 on the first day. And by the third day I was at \$20,000. And I was just like woah, okay, there's something here. The email really worked to sell all those products. Not just sell a book. I can just convert it way more than social media or everything else. And so kinda from that, I got hooked on selling different products and learning everything I could about email marketing. So I wrote another book about designing web applications. That did even better; it sold \$26,000 in the first day and I was like okay, there's really something here. And then from there, I ended up starting ConvertKit, which is an email marketing platform for creators, bloggers, and people like me trying to solve the problems that I was running into. I was learning the best practices and was writing all these custom codes to work with MailChimp or whatever other platform. And we're coming up now on six years of running ConvertKit. And so now there are 20,000 creators that use ConvertKit. It powers everyone's email list, from authors like Gretchen Reuben and Tim Ferris, to musicians like Tim McGraw. Arnold Schwarzenegger uses us now...

JACLYN: What?! I had no idea. That's so cool. Okay, there's so much good stuff here. Before we get into the current things, though, you kinda glossed over it. And I know this is not the main purpose of our conversation here today, but it's so juicy that I can't skip over it. You're like, "I wanted to make \$10,000 and bam, it was like \$20,000 on day three." And these two launches, these are eBooks. It's not even a physical book. That's amazing. So what do you think it was? And you said you leveraged email marketing for this. What do you think made the difference? Because I'm sure in that same period of time, other people were launching eBooks that were total flops. Some people can't even give their eBooks

away! So here you are making tens of thousands of dollars off these. I have to ask.

NATHAN: Yeah, there's a lot of things that go into that. Pricing. I targeted product selling into people who have that need. There's a lot of nuance to what goes in there.

JACLYN: A very specific niche.

NATHAN: But I think if we go into a few of those... let's take pricing for example. How much is the price of an eBook for, \$5? \$9? So let's go crazy and sell it for \$14 or something. Because they think of it in terms of here's a physical book; it costs money to print and ship. It's hard cover and normally sells for \$25, but Amazon's selling it for \$14. And so an eBook doesn't have any cost of goods sold so it's gotta be lower than that. So we're ratcheting down and you end up with the price for an eBook of \$5 or \$10 at most. And so I think of it entirely differently. I think of it as not what are the costs to produce this thing. How can I make sure I make at least a few dollars of margin on each product? But instead, how can I teach something that's valuable to people who have money? So let's teach a skill that makes money to the people who have money. So if we look at a few versions of this, first on the yes, you can check all the boxes side is what I did of teaching software design, which is for sure a skill that makes money. There's tons of demand. You learn how to design iPhone apps and you will absolutely be able to make money freelancing or getting a job doing that. Now teach it to people who have money. So if you've purchased a Mac, you've purchased an iPhone; these are expensive products, and so we're already in this category that you have money. On the other extreme, we could put out an eBook teaching knitting to 12 year olds. They're not gonna make money with their knitting and 12 year olds are not known for their spending power.

JACLYN: No, they do not have money.

NATHAN: Right. So on one end, you can each sell these products for \$5. On the other end, you can sell an eBook for \$40. Or if you bundle it in

to a full course, you could be selling it for \$100 or \$200. So at each extreme, I need far fewer people to buy the product at \$200 than I need at \$5. Another middle of the road example would be if I was teaching career skills to college students. Career skills – how to get a job, how to negotiate – all those things, for sure are going to make you more money. It'd be the difference of an additional \$3,000 in your starting negotiations. That's gonna be huge over the course of your career. But college students aren't known or they don't have a lot of money. So unless you're selling to their parents or something like that, it's not gonna be the best market. So if you factor in those scenarios, then you're able to charge a lot more. And you're able to make a value proposition based on learn these skills, and then you'll be able to get return on your investment in your career or in your product, or something like that. So I'm thinking about it that way.

JACLYN: Yeah, so smart. And that applies to everything.

NATHAN: And it could totally change a person.

JACLYN: Yeah, and it's not just for eBooks. That applies to everything, really, when you think about it like that. When I think back to early on when I started my business, my target market were moms. And I didn't realize it at that time, but there were moms that wanted businesses. But at that time, their goals were like "I wanna pay for dance lessons". They weren't aspiring to build bigger businesses. So with that, they didn't want to invest as much and they didn't need to invest as much in themselves, in their personal development and the growth of their business because they were only aspiring to make a few hundred, maybe a thousand dollars a month. It's very different than the people I support now who are looking to grow really big businesses. So yeah, I think it's thinking about how can I help people make more money. And how do I target people that actually have that money.

NATHAN: Right. And that's something that's really interesting. Because the audience that you've grown might be different than the audience that you want. You might put out a free eBook or something like

that that attracts a bunch of people. Like something that will have a ton of traffic on Pinterest or something else. And they aren't necessarily the people that you ask for. They're the people that found the thing that you promoted and all that. So then you have the work to do to filter down that group and say okay, I got a thousand new email subscribers from this eBook. Because I got all this traffic and it's amazing. So now how do I go about understanding who it is that I want from this list. And then maybe some of them, it's great to keep them around because you'll know they'll eventually grow into what you want of them trying to go beyond the "I'd love to make \$100 on the side". So that might be a good way to hook people in. You get them to be part of your community. But then you might have a separate email list that's actually the people who are trying to go to the next level or they are tagging you in your email products. You segment them off and talk to them differently. And you're like hey, it's great that everyone came in, but you're my tribe. And I think the rest of you, we'd love for you to make that jump at some point. But it's okay if you don't right now.

JACLYN: Yeah, sometimes we don't know who we attract until we put it out there. I've had that happen for both good and bad. That's how I started working with service providers – just totally by accident. I sold a group coaching program, and everyone that joined was a service provider. And I'm like I did not intend for that. But this is great. I love working with service providers. So then I leaned into that more. And I think Meg Casebolt is a great example; she really thought she would be supporting female business owners with SEO. But when she put it out there, she realized there was this big need for other service providers who wanted to offer SEO to their clients but didn't know it. But she would have never come up with that if she didn't put it out there. So yes, sometimes you just have to put your skills out there and see who you're attracting. But it's important to take that step back and say okay is this who I want to be supporting? Does this make sense? And those tweaks along the way. It sounded somewhere along the lines that you had to scratch your own niche here with developing ConvertKit. So how did that happen along the way?

How did we go from eBooks to you having your own software company?

NATHAN: Yeah. Well, my background isn't software, so I've got to the point where the last year I've been talking about how to design software and spending less time actually designing software. And that started to feel a little bit weird. And I think a lot of people who has become an expert on their field can kind of run into that, where you spend more time teaching than you spend doing.

JACLYN: Absolutely.

NATHAN: You gotta watch that. So that's why a lot of people, when they have their own business, it's related to something that they're teaching. That can be really good. There's someone in the eCommerce space, his name's Ezra Firestone. And he's really well-known for teaching Shopify owners how to sell online. And that's a big business for him; he speaks on it, he sells courses, all this stuff. But he actually still owns several eCommerce companies that he's running himself and practicing, learning all this stuff. And so I thought okay, I wanna get back into building software. I want to put something into practice and teach it rather than come up with artificial examples of here's how to design this, and here's how to design that. So that was part of it.

The other reason is that I wanted to have recurring revenue. So I was looking at the course business, selling eBooks and courses, and then have this big launch – say \$20,000 to \$30,000 in a day. And then it would taper off. And so it really resulted in this launch-driven business model. And I looked at it and say okay, we're gonna get this to the next level; say take it from \$100,000 in a year to \$200,000 to \$250,000 a year from that. And if I wanted to take it to \$1 Million a year, then I didn't see a clear path to doing that in a sustainable way. You gotta hire a team and all that, and then it's based on these big launches. If a launch doesn't go well, then you still have salaries to pay. It just sounded stressful. And then the third and really biggest reason is I did what a lot of entrepreneurs do of looking at something and saying "I can do better". That's the best email marketing product out

there? I can make something better. And so I did, and I set out to do it way longer than I expected and got traction a lot slower. But we did eventually make it work.

JACLYN: You did. Alright. So take us to those early days because this is one of my favorite stories, especially with software and everything online. People think oh you just run Facebook ads, or it's all automated. And a lot of times we skip over the power of personal touch. And I really think that that's the piece that's missing in helping some of these businesses grow. It feels like the slower way or moving backwards and we shouldn't we just be able to automate everything. So how did you get traction early on with ConvertKit?

NATHAN: Yeah. The first year and a half, I didn't get as much traction as I wanted. Like first, I did a lot of the content marketing, promoting to emails and all that. And that got me to about \$1,500 a month in recurring revenue. I realized it's way harder to sell something that's recurring than one-off purchase. But that's the way it is. And then we stayed completely flat at that number, up and down the tiniest bit but right around there for a very long time for a year and a half. And at that point I realized I have this decision to make. I've got to either shut this down because it's not going anywhere because I had several costs and all of that. I'm putting in time and putting in money after a year and a half. Something's gotta change. But I ultimately decided to go all in on ConvertKit and focus on it. so I shut down my course business because I'm not good at doing two things at once. I'm a focused person. And all these people are like oh I'm a serial entrepreneur; I run seven businesses. I'm like great, I'm so happy for you. That is not me at all. I run one business. And hopefully I do it well. So what I started doing was I stopped relying on content marketing and these other channels of ads and anything related to having a funnel and working people down, conversion rates and all that.

Instead I just started doing sales. I said this is a product for professional bloggers; who are the professional bloggers that I know? I listed them all out and sent them emails. And I said hey quick question (and I did a little research on AWeber): I was

wondering if there's anything that frustrates you with AWeber? And what frustrates you with MailChimp or whatever? The reason I ask is I'm working on a new email marketing product, and I'd love to learn more. And I got a pretty decent reply rate. One, because it's a very short email, and generally the shorter the emails that you write, the less likely people will think that it's just copied and pasted and you sent it off to a ton of people. So people would reply and say yeah, actually I'm really frustrated with MailChimp because you can't tag your subscribers. You can't really do content upgrades or give away a free eBook with your form, and so you have to buy a third party tool for you to do that. And then finally if I have the same person on multiple lists, then I get charged double or triple for that one person. And so fascinating thing, when someone writes back I could be like okay those are the exact same frustrations that I have, and that's why I started Convert Kit.

And so that would happen; we get in on a call; talk through the problems that they had and how ConvertKit could solve that. And I ultimately tried to make the sale one at a time. A \$50 a month subscription at a time. The hard thing though is that that actually didn't work super well.

JACLYN: It didn't? Okay. So what happened?

NATHAN: We came across a big... I should say *I*.

JACLYN: [laughter] This was before you became a *we*. Now you're a *we*. This is pre-*we* day.

NATHAN: Yes, exactly. There was a big objection that someone would always come to. They'd say it all sounds great; I'm not gonna switch because it's too much work. And first I try to convince them that it's not that hard; you just export your subscribers; you import over here; you move every single form. Blah, blah, blah. It was not a compelling argument. And finally out of desperation, I said it's not much work. I'll prove it to you - I'll do it for you for free. And they were like okay. It's just interesting. Whenever you try to convince someone of something, they need to give you a

reason they're not gonna do it. If we're on this conversation and I say hey, you wanna buy this thing; you have to say no I'm not going to and here's why.

JACLYN: Right. You can't just stop talking and ignore the person face to face. You have to at least give them something.

NATHAN: Yeah, you can't just stop talking. [jokingly] What's that? I can't hear yah. My phone's breaking up, I can't quite hear you. [laughter] You just go and start the whole thing. And so what people do is they always pick an objection. And instead of listing eight reasons – they're not gonna do it, they tend to pick one and hang everything on that. And so imagine this momentum leaning all on this one objection. And so if you take it away, then they're just like okay, and they kinda fall for it and they're like that was the that I gave and I do wanna do it. it's just at this point, it's like yeah let's do it. And so they would put everything on it's too much work to switch. All of this sounds good, but it's too much work to switch. And so when I took that away and said let me log into your MailChimp account or your WordPress login and all of that, FTP access, and I'll do the whole thing conveniently. I'm a web designer so I know how to do all of that. And so I would switch everything over, and I would do it for any size account. And so sometimes doing that would add \$29 a month in revenue. Sometimes it would add \$100 a month, depending on how many subscribers they had. But then it would slowly stack up from there. And we started making sales and we started increasing revenue. And that's how ConvertKit got all its initial traction.

JACLYN: Wow. Oh, this is such a good story. And so powerful. And probably very unexpected for people that know ConvertKit now. I love how you were just like you know what, even the people that were nos were part of your market research. You would get great insight as to what people would really wanted.

NATHAN: A couple of the things that we did there. First, if you've ever heard someone talk about how they do their business, and the most common thing people say is oh, word of mouth. And as a business owner who's not getting traction, they're like oh why

didn't I think of pulling the word of mouth lever? You know what, you're right. Oh man, I should've just... yep, here we go. Okay, perfect. Now that I know how to engage word of mouth, we're magically successful. And so it's the most irritating answer that anyone ever gives as to how they do their business. The even more irritating thing about it is if they're right. Like that's how they did it. And it grew through all those recommendations and referrals and all that. And so you have to realize that that's not advice for starting from scratch. That's advice for once you have some level of traction. And so what you have to do is think about okay what are the things that I can do to get to the point from 0 to 100 customers? Where I don't have word of mouth through the line; there are no mouths to spread the word. And so let me go and get those initially. That's where sales and this direct approach came from. I'm gonna narrow down on a very specific group of people. Like one group that I went after. It's just email marketing for professional bloggers. But narrowing even more is now email marketing for professional paleo recipe bloggers who are women.

JACLYN: Oh wow. Who are women. Even better. Okay.

NATHAN: Because even then, I can't list all the bloggers out there. But you better believe through three or four Google searches, clicking around on Twitter, following people's sites, checking who they link off to. I can list out all the paleo recipe bloggers who are women who are making a full time living. You could achieve that. You could put that in a spreadsheet. And then what happens is when you reach out and do sales, then they all know each other.

JACLYN: Of course.

NATHAN: And so if you have one of them switch, it doesn't matter that you have some big name and some other industry. If you're like hey, this person who you know uses us; then that works really well. And then we would go industry by industry. Wherever I happen to go, I happen to get, whether it was men's fashion blog or a fitness blog or something like that. I would draw a little narrow circle around them and say okay, who's like them? And I had one

person in the men's fashion space say it feels like every blog in the internet is switching to ConvertKit right now. And I said yes, it's basically what's happening. And at the same time I looked over at my current revenue and it's \$5,000. And so I was like it's objectively not true.

JACLYN: But it *feels* like in his world, everyone was using it. And I think when I switched to ConvertKit, that's what I felt like. Like everyone's on ConvertKit, I need to be on ConvertKit too.

NATHAN: Yeah, because we wanted to be the biggest fish in a tiny pond. And so in doing that, you draw this little circle, and then everybody knows each other. So you're like yeah, I've listened to this podcast the other day; I emailed my friend, so and so; and this other person's talking about it and they just switched, or they're thinking about switching. And then you list it out and it's actually seven people. They're just all in your exact circle. And that's how you go about it. You draw in your circle, reach out to everyone in that, sell through that list. You have a case study or an example. It's not Meg; it's actually someone they actually know or they've heard of or a blog they follow. And it makes it personal. And then you work through from there. And then once you get to a hundred customers actively using you, then you start to hear. How'd you hear about us? Oh, word of mouth. And there we go. Now we have traction and try to turn it into something meaningful.

JACLYN: Oh I love it. This is so good. So many big takeaways with this. And I love it because some people are afraid to niche. But it's not like you were changing your tagline to be ConvertKit: email marketing for paleo bloggers [laughter].

NATHAN: But I did make that webpage.

JACLYN: [laughter] Did you? Okay so say this. So you made a custom landing page for them?

NATHAN: Yeah, because then I would have...I maybe did it for only three or four of them, but to link off to. And it would be the testimonials

would be customized the example. Because it doesn't take very long to do that; to just change your copy, make your examples. And there's even software now. Brandon Dunn has a product now called Right Message, which lets you tweak your page on the fly based on all of these things.

JACLYN: Oh, I'll have to check that out. I love this.

NATHAN: Yeah. The more you narrow down and target a niche, the better. And I will say it is the easiest advice to give and the hardest advice to take. Because you feel like if I choose a niche, I'm going to exclude so many people. But what if someone else wants to use our product and they're not a blogger, they're a software company or something else; and that would totally happen, but they'll look through your examples and see themselves in that. And that's okay. So you're not gonna turn away business by throwing out something specific. But it's probably the most powerful thing you can do in business, to get off your rut.

JACLYN: It really is. And I love how you were able to tailor it so specific to each of these niches and go industry by industry and turn yourself into that big fish in a small pond. So inspiring there. Okay, so now paint the picture of what ConvertKit looks like today. Because it has changed a lot. I take it you're not taking Zoom calls for people that have a couple hundred people in their email lists to see if they want to convert anymore. So tell us what ConvertKit is like now.

NATHAN: There's a bunch of stuff that hasn't changed. Our team is all remote. The size has changed a little bit - we have 37 people running the business now. Everything has changed in the front end. We've actually put out a blog post yesterday walking back to the design of ConvertKit over the years. So I just put out on my blog. We have a number of customers, the features that now, I guess we have 20,000 customers. The business makes \$1.1 Million a month in revenue. We're named the fastest growing company in Idaho and the 72<sup>nd</sup> fastest growing company in the United States.

JACLYN: Oh my goodness! Congratulations.

NATHAN: It's just on a completely different level now.

JACLYN: It really is. And you've done such a good job building a community around software. I take it this wasn't by accident. I've always kinda felt the community feeling around ConvertKit like this summer, I Craft in Commerce. I got to speak there this summer and it really felt like people I've never met before but we're just like old friends. There was just so much energy and community and collaboration, especially getting everyone together.

NATHAN: Yeah. And I think that... the software is definitely important because you have to fulfill the promise that you made to people. It needs to get the job done and be fun, fast and easy to use. But a lot of the community comes from how you go about doing business. So I think what we've had from the very beginning is a couple of mantras of how we're gonna go about doing business. And the kind of community that we interact with. So the first one is teach everything you know. And this is how you grow an audience. You teach. You share. And you work in public. You put all this out there. We did that the whole way through building ConvertKit where I just found a blog post yesterday from the first month that we broke even that we made more money than we spent. And that's out there and I wrote a blog post. Then in that post it also says here's a couple of new features that we came out with, and then here's three featured customers. So we built this product all the way along with the community and let the people on through the whole journey.

The next one is create everyday and that's something that's really important. This giant create sign behind me. And so I think always having this idea that we're more makers. We're creators. And so we're a part of the community that we're serving. It's built by creators for creators. People really latch on to that. And the last thing is that everyone in the company has this little plaque that sits on the desk. And it simply says "We exist to help creators earn a living". And that's our mission. It's why we do everything

that we do. It's not to build a software company and sell it to some private equity firm or something, or whatever people do. But instead, just build things our way and to measure our success by how much money our creators and our customers earn. And so that changes a lot of the focus. It draws everything in. We're looking at the community rather than looking at how to raise money or sell a company or any of those other things.

JACLYN: And I think you can feel that. You've really infused that into your whole team and your whole brand. And people feel that. It's really powerful. So going from the beginning stages where it was like okay, how do we get this recurring revenue going and all of that to wow you're bringing in \$1.1 Million a month. Where there any big shifts that you had to make to scale the company in such a way. I know people who are like oh I want to make a million a year, but most people listening can't even fathom a company bringing in \$1.1 Million a month. With you leading this company, where there any big shifts that you had to make to be able to scale to that level?

NATHAN: Yeah. There were some things that I really learned pretty well early on, like the idea of creating everyday and showing up consistently. Because in order to write my books for my blog, I built a habit of writing every single day. And I have that going for 650 days. But the other aspect that was missing is just how much time it takes to build something meaningful. And so I was always thinking what can I get done in three months or six months? Or what can I accomplish this year? And so the biggest mindset is that the shift that's happened, it is thinking over what the next five years looks like. What can I accomplish in ten years? Not as I work on these other ideas, but just this is the thing that we're doing. And how can we help creators earn a living if we focus on this one exact problem for the next ten years?

All of that growth and success and the reach comes from doing consistent work every day for a very long period of time. My friend, Sean McCabe, has a video and he is in on the poster as well where it says, "Show up every day for two years". You think so many people when they got started there they're like I'll try

this out; I'll try this blogging thing. At three months later, it didn't work. And so you're looking into it and think well first of all, blogging is not for me. And I'm like oh, tell me more. Yeah, I worked on it every other weekend for three months and nothing happened. And I'm like okay first of all, you need to work on it every single day. And then we need to work on it consistently for a long period of time. So we change your time horizon. That makes a big difference. Along the lines, this last summer, about a year and a half now, Martha and I moved from a little house near downtown. A little further but not in the country. We bought five acres. And so we have a little house there now. And I was thinking how we got this big field in the back and we planted a bunch of trees, but I only planted a quarter of the trees that I wanted to plant. Probably around fifteen trees, but I wanted to plant a bunch because it was a big open field. And my thinking was that I'd go back and plant a bunch more trees next spring in the next year. It's okay. Another year. But then I look at how much the trees I planted a year ago have grown, and I just wish that I had planted more early on. And I had that extra year to watch it grow.

JACLYN: Such a good analogy.

NATHAN: And so now I'm just thinking in terms of all these trees that I could plant and then what am I looking at? And that am I totally okay with waiting ten years or more to see the results and to see them look the way that I wanted to?

JACLYN: Yeah, that patience. Patience takes practice. But when you're not just looking at how can I make more money the next three months and how can I make a bigger impact over a decade, you really shift what your priorities are and probably what you're working on every day. So that's huge.

NATHAN: Right. And I think patience is half of it. I almost call it relentless patience.

JACLYN: Oh. What does relentless patience mean? I like this.

NATHAN: There's a lot of people who might accidentally call laziness patience. My business didn't work out this year; it hasn't worked out yet. But that's okay, I'm patient.

JACLYN: They're not taking the action but they're like it's gonna happen. But they're not taking the action that's needed to make it happen.

NATHAN: So they create everyday for two years; they're like great, two years, I've got it. I understand that that's what it's gonna take. But they're not doing the work every single day and learning and folding that back in in order to get it done. And so it'd be very easy to like well, I planted that tree; let's just – in two years, five years, whatever – and it'd grow and be what I want it to. If you don't take care of it and don't work on it, if you don't do the right things, then no, it's absolutely not. And so you have to put in that consistent work and be willing to have a time horizon that is years long.

JACLYN: So it's almost just letting go of that need for instant gratification, which is kind of like saying patience. But I'm thinking of you going back to the beginning of this. If you were just like you know what, I got this content marketing thinking down; I have a really nice business going around making \$200,000 to \$250,000 a year. I'm just gonna be patient and keep writing blog posts on this software, and hope that people will come. If you didn't put in that effort to go all in and to get really uncomfortable and get on the phone with people and start doing those things that were going to make the waves – that patience really may have kept you going nowhere. I like the relentless patience. Yes, we need to embrace that.

Alright. I know we're running up on time. But here at Go-to-Gal, we really value relationships. And I'd love for you to just think back on your journey and what brought you here to this day with ConvertKit. And are there any dots that you can connect along the way of key relationships that have helped you. Because I think that's something that a lot of times it happens behind the scenes. You just see people help each other. But investing in those

relationships I usually what helps those big milestones happen behind the scenes.

NATHAN: There's a few that come to mind. A lot of people have really helped. Back in 2012, I went to a conference called the World Domination Summit. This is when I was getting started in blogging. This was hosted by one of my early inspirations, Chris Guillebeau; I remember a ton from him. And I was still pretty shy and quiet. I didn't know anyone at this conference. I registered. And then I was kinda sitting there, and there were like people around the registration. I thought I can't go this whole weekend not talking to people. I just have to go up and say hi and infuse myself. So there were these two guys. Both tall, both bald, standing and talking to each other across the street. And I walked over to introduce myself and started talking. They already knew each other and they were going to another event and they invited me to come with them to that. And they turned out becoming good friends. They were Caleb Wojcik, who runs a video production company; now he does all the video work for Pat Lyn. He shot the video for Craft and Commerce for a year. Basically we shot a documentary together last year; we've done so much. And the other is James Clear. His book topped at #3 in the New York Times Bestseller List; it's called Atomic Habits.

JACLYN: Oh yeah.

NATHAN: Insanely successful. And this was in the early days. And at that conference, I met someone else named Barrett Brooks. And altogether, we formed a Mastermind group. We have stayed in touch and worked together on each others businesses. We held each other accountable. Twice a month, we come in together. It's been absolutely core. Barrett is now the COO of ConvertKit. Another gentleman in the group, Bryan Dell, is on the Board of Advisers and he's been instrumental in growing the company. Barren Quadro, he was one of our very early customers in helping shape the product. Having a group like that that we keep coming back to; acknowledging each other and making each other accountable has been really quite meaningful.

JACLYN: And that was right at the early stages of ConvertKit, if I'm doing the math right.

NATHAN: Yes, so that was before ConvertKit started. ConvertKit started six months after we started that group.

JACLYN: That's incredible. So yes, and getting out of the house and out of your day-to-day and going to a conference, talking to strangers and starting to build those relationships. And then having a small group like that where you were just able to support each other over a period of time is really, really powerful.

NATHAN: That's part of the reason that we started Crafts and Commerce, because both Barrett and I, that first year that we went to the World Domination Summit; the people we met there completely shaped us. I hate to think about what if I hadn't bought a ticket or if the event was sold out before we managed to buy a ticket or something. There's so many people that I met there that completely changed my trajectory. And so that's why we started our own conference, especially since NWD was coming to a close after ten years. So really thinking about how can we pull these people together and create those same interactions and those same connections that changed our lives.

JACLYN: Wow I love that so much. And it was such an amazing event. Okay, where can we keep in touch with you. I heard you mention in here that you still keep up with your blog which is just amazing. But also ConvertKit.

NATHAN: My blog's at [nathanbarry.com](http://nathanbarry.com).

JACLYN: And we'll link everything too in the show notes.

NATHAN: Yes. And I did. I restarted the blog; it was quiet for a long time but I restarted the writing habit. I'm at 50 days in a row. I'm writing every day.

JACLYN: Oh love it! Is that an atomic habit?

NATHAN: Yeah. It is actually. I've been slowly sacking them up. I'm now at ten weeks of publishing every week, posting every Monday. So yeah, it's just at [convertkit.com](http://convertkit.com). I think if you're just getting started or you want a bunch of helper training, you should check out Tradecraft, which is our publication at ConvertKit. There's an issue that comes out every month, and it's focused on how to do affiliate marketing, design for non-designers; there's an issue on email deliverability, which is a complex and confusing topic and we try to break it down to make it easy for beginners. So that's where to find me.

JACLYN: I love that. Well, thank you so much for joining us today. So many great takeaways. I really appreciate your time.

NATHAN: Thanks for having me.