

00:00:00 Welcome to the hair of the dog podcast. Today, I have my special guests, Nick from J Nicole Smith, joining us to talk about the power of why and the power of color and how they are related and why you can't ignore them in your business. And spoiler alert. I am dishing a pretty huge development over here and hair of the dog land.

00:00:24 So you definitely don't want to miss this episode. Stay tuned. Welcome to the hair of the dog podcast. If you're a pet photographer, ready to make more money and start living a life by your design, you've come to the right place. And now your host pet photographer, travel addicts, chocolate martini, connoisseur sewer, Nicole Begley. Hey, everybody,

00:00:48 Nicole here from hair of the dog and I have a super awesome special guest. Today. We have Nick from Jane Cole Smith with us, and I am so excited to have her here. Gosh, you've had so much stuff going on, Nick in the, like I've known you go five or six years, I guess now. And man, I mean,

00:01:06 we both just keep evolving. Everyone keeps evolving and we're going to talk about all that evolution and finding our wives and things like that. So yeah. So tell us a little bit about what you're up to these days and we're definitely going to be diving into that. Why? Cause I know that's been a passion of yours for a long time. Yeah.

00:01:22 So just so everybody knows that I'm your people. I started my pet photography business in 2004. So I was like one of the OJI pet photographers back before it was a thing. And when I started, there was only a couple in the entire United States that you could even find it was crazy back then there were like three of you in Seattle. Yeah,

00:01:47 exactly. And like a lot of you guys probably I, you know, got a dog. I had a, I was a college student, got a great Dane puppy cause that's this right thing to do when you're a starving college student. And yeah, so she led me into the world of pet photography and I was also in school to do photography,

00:02:05 but also design. So I immediately started doing a lot of stuff with businesses in terms of commercial pet photography, as well as graphic design marketing stuff. And co-founded another brand at that same time called dog is good, which some of you guys may know you might have the t-shirt or the sticker or the mug, and that's still going really strong in Southern California.

00:02:24 So at the immediately had this world where I was running this service-based photography business and design business and launching a manufacturing unit and figuring out what screen printing was all about doing big wholesale trade shows and Vegas and you know, all of that stuff. So my journey in entrepreneurship has been very varied and I moved to the UK in 2012 and did a masters in marketing,

00:02:48 which I thought like, okay, now I'm legit, right? I've just done 10 years of entrepreneurship. But now I, now I'm legit because I have a master's degree. And it was a really interesting experience because it did cap what I had already learned, but I became doubly passionate about supporting entrepreneurs because like a marketing master's degree isn't as fancy, like it prepared me to work at an agency and,

00:03:10 you know, be one person in a cog trying to sell ads for Coke. You know, it's not what we have to do as entrepreneurs is so much harder, I think all on our own with no team and no budget. So

that's kind of my background in terms of, of marketing. When I came out of that degree, I wrote a book called the million dollar dog brand,

00:03:27 which I highly recommend it's on Amazon. If you want to check it out, it's a great guide for some of the stuff we're going to talk about today as a starting point. And, and so that's kind of my that's kind of my foundation, pet photographer, a designer, a manufacturing business owner, brand builder. One of the things I learned along the way a dog is good in particular was how,

00:03:48 what we were selling. Wasn't just, t-shirts what we were selling was a message and a feeling. And I was really lucky to learn that so early I was still in my twenties and it was watching people react to our products when they came into our trade show booth. And immediately I realized that people were having an experience of being with their dog or thinking about their dog while they were interacting with our stuff.

00:04:10 And so it made them so interested in spending money and becoming friendly with us and being a part of our community because we were immediately associated with that feeling of their own relationship with their dog, which is sort of the thing that everybody wants to capitalize on in the pet industry, right, is, is trying to capture, support, enhance that relationship. And so full circle.

00:04:33 Now I realized, you know, kind of my journey has been coming back to that idea of, of selling with more feeling. And also I realized as I track my career is that as a photographer, as a designer, as a consultant, I was also like a picture framer when I was in college, I framed photos, but I realized that my genius has been about really seeing untapped potential and seeing what's possible and people and things and relationships,

00:05:01 and being able to bring that to life when other people can't see it or, or do it, which kind of spans all those careers and sort of discovered this genius of what I call Y finding, which is being able to help people sort of see and connect with their purpose in particular, being able to turn that into a brand, turn that into something that you can monetize for the right people that you want to work with.

00:05:22 And that you're passionate about serving. And that kind of brings us back to where we are now, where that's primarily, what I do is I help people find their why, and turn it into a profitable, sustainable brand that makes the world better. I love that. And you know, so many times in a pet photography world, we all feel like,

00:05:41 well, we're all pet photographers. Our why is taking pictures of dogs because we love dogs. We love relationships, but it goes so much deeper than that, right? I've loved working with pet photographers specifically over the last few years to help them find their why, because, and it's so funny for me because I work with a lot of people outside of the pet space,

00:05:58 but I still do a lot of work inside the pet industry. And everybody thinks they've got their wife figured out because they want to enhance the relationship between dogs and people or with pet photographers. They want to capture it right. And that's like, I'm super passionate about it. I got a dog I'm super passionate about rescue and I'm really into photography to capture this relationship.

00:06:16 It's like you and every other pet photographer in the world, I can be a bit harsh sometimes when I have consulting clients, cause I'm like, this is not original. This is not a why. This is not

a purpose. This is the top level. This is, you're just skimming the surface. And that's what we do with the beginning. We skim the surface because that's all we know how to do.

00:06:37 And it's the obvious level. And the only one who are the only people who don't do that, I've seen are people who have a marketing background. They know how to do something a little bit more deep and clever. And so they come at it with that skillset, but everybody else just does what is obvious because that's what we do as human beings.

00:06:55 And yeah, most pet photographers think that's enough. And if you want to differentiate now that there aren't just for pet photographers in America, none in the UK, you know, you have to be able to stand out and to compete. And what I see across the board is people are trying to do that either with their photographic style or with their pricing.

00:07:14 And that's just not enough. Right? Right. Yeah. I mean, we can never, I mean, I can speak to I'm blue in the face with the pricing and the fact that you can never compete on price. You guys, there is always going to be someone cheaper and we have to have more substance in what we offer to our clients.

00:07:32 And when we start to dig into these whys, you know, not only does it light a fire under us for our passion, but it also connects you on such a deeper level to your clients, that they can then buy into that why to, and then it's not even a choice, you know? And you know, I don't know why. I don't know why people have a hard time finding their why,

00:07:54 I guess number one is it's hard. It's hard work. You know, that, that, that first question of why do I do this? Oh, to capture the relationship of dogs and people is, is easy. But then you start to get layer two and layer three, and that gets a little harder. And then layer four and layer five gets really hard.

00:08:11 And by the time it got down to like the real magic, which is probably like layer seven or beyond that shit is hard. It's really confronting. Like, oftentimes when I've done this work with people, they sort of feel like I'm a therapist or like a life coach or something. Because what I have discovered is that so much of our deeper truer sort of life purpose,

00:08:32 if you want to call it, that is connected with our trauma. It's connected with pain. Oftentimes not always, but pain that we have felt that we want to help other people avoid. And so, so many people who are drawn to the pet space and drawn to pet photography in particular have had some sort of trauma that has led them to connect more with dogs,

00:08:54 let's say, or than people or it's animals that were there for them when people were not. And that's a theme. I see a lot. That's not always the case, but it makes us especially passionate about helping animals. And we end up combining animals and photography because photography is a really accessible art form and we enjoy it. And it's fun. It's easy to get started and it's sellable whatever,

00:09:16 but not everybody is into pet photography because they're obsessed with dogs. I'm one of the people that is not obsessed with dogs. I've never really been that into helping with animal rescue. It's not what drives me. And so I've worked with people as well, who are like, is that okay? Like it's not really my thing. And I found that people are either really into pets animals and that's their thing,

00:09:38 or really into art and photography is their current, medium and pets are their current subject, but they also like to do all different other kinds of art or they're into kind of building a personality brand and currently pet photography is their thing. So they want to be famous or an influencer or, you know, kind of be known for being themselves and communicating through photography is a way that they do that.

00:09:59 So people tend to fall into one of those three groups generally, and I never fell into that group, those things. Cause I was on this journey to find this whole wifi finding thing and connecting with emotion. And what, for me, the pet industry is, is a beautiful niche of people being extremely motivated to buy based on feeling based on emotion.

00:10:24 And that is an incredibly powerful place to be, which is why you see the pet industry continuing to grow through COVID through the recession, through, you know, some really tough times or other industries because people are so obviously attached to their dogs and it comes out in their spending. Yeah. Yeah. Some of our students at the hair of the dog Academy have had their best year yet even with three months of lockdown last year.

00:10:46 Yep. Yep. Yeah. So, absolutely. So when you start down your path and you're trying to figure out that why I'm with you. I was never, I mean, I, I love animals. My first career is do logically animal trainer like love being around animals. I never had dolls as a kid. I always had animals rode horses since I was eight.

00:11:04 And I of course support rescue and I have raised money for rescue and I rescued my dog and you know, all of those things, but I could always tell that that was never like that. Wasn't my driving force of the reason I got up in the morning. I think the thing that attracted me to photography was the love of business and always wanting to be responsible for my own future really.

00:11:28 And when I left the zoological industry, photography was a medium that I enjoyed and was accessible, but it was really the business for me that just like pulled me in. And then also just that love of animals, you know, as I started doing family photography and pet photography, and then about five years in, I was like, Oh no, we're going only pets.

00:11:48 And then, you know, started the whole hair of the dog teaching aspect of it too, which is also just so much of my passion. And so I have a little personal why story that I just want to share real quick here. So I always thought, I'm like, okay, this is my purpose. This is what I'm doing. This is where I'm going.

00:12:04 This is great. I love it. It's great. I like jump out of the bed in the morning. Monday's my favorite day of the week, but I just found my life's passion. You guys are here in this first right here on the podcast. Cause I haven't announced this yet, but I was at my mastermind group that I'm in just a couple of months ago in February and Sedona.

00:12:20 And I was talking to actually another set of photographers at the, at the retreat, their wedding photographers. And they've been to Africa too. And they photographed some animals and they had a show in New York and LA that raised money through the prints for these conservation projects. I was just like, Oh my God, I need to go with you guys. Next time you do this.

00:12:39 And then I was like, well also if you need contacts for conservation work, I have a ton of contacts in the zoological industry. And you know, all the, the conservation researchers that work alongside them. And then I went to bed that night and I woke up four in the morning and I was like, Oh my God, I have this platform of animal loving photographers.

00:12:59 I have these connections from my 13 years in the zoological industry. And I have this insane passion for the natural world and wildlife conservation that I thought that chapter of my life was closed when I left the zoo world. And no, no it's just getting started because I realized like I need to start a nonprofit connected with hair of the dog. So we have hair of the dog,

00:13:21 the for-profit brand of the company. And we just got our North Carolina corporate incorporation for the nonprofit, for the hair of the dog conservation fund, Inc. So that is starting and yeah, I mean, this is just getting started. I have so many ideas guys, but basically here, the dog Academy is going to be supporting that conservation fund, which will be using funds,

00:13:43 basically connecting those funds to conservation projects. They're doing like real actual impactful work, not just like bandaid conservation, but actual conservation. That's making the difference for wild animals all around the world. And pretty much since that day in February, I have not been able to sleep and I'm like, so ridiculously aligned and have all of these ideas and I just,

00:14:02 I can't stop. I'm so ridiculously excited. And I was like, I thought I knew my why before, but this is a whole nother level. And this all happened on accident, you know, it's, I think maybe a whole lifetime in the making really. Absolutely. And that's, I love this story for so many reasons. One of them is I've heard people describe finding your why is like lightning or there's this like event oftentimes.

00:14:27 And people also describe it as a click where that, I think it's that alignment sort of thinking taking place. And then people often experienced exactly what you're experiencing now, which is they get into the serious state of flow and everything just comes, right? Like all the ideas, all the connections, all the relationships all the time to work on it. Like everything just flows and works and aligns.

00:14:50 And it is such a euphoric place to be so excited for you that this has happened because you're going to be able to have such a bigger impact. You're going to be able to have so much and such an increase in the joy that you experience in what you do. You're going to get more people excited about the work that you do in deeper ways and help them have a bigger impact.

00:15:12 Because I think one of the things that we don't really realize at first is that by aligning our work and our why we're not just giving ourselves more passion and purpose, we are allowing other people to work through us to support passion and purpose as well, by using their dollars as votes basically to say, this is what I care about. And so they get to help you have bigger impact.

00:15:36 You get to help them have bigger impact. And it's a really fantastic sort of win-win situation. And yeah, I think like I've been going through a really, a really similar experience. And what is really funny is how often the thing that is like, you might want to call it legacy work. Like you probably just discovered your legacy work, right?

00:15:55 The stuff that you're going to be doing until you die. And that's going to make a huge impact on the world. And when you kind of discover that legacy work, which I think is kind of what's at

the end of the wifi finding rainbow, you often times are going back to where you started. If you, if you follow your instincts at all,

00:16:11 at any point in your life, if you didn't just, you know, go become an accountant because that's what your parents wanted you to do, you end up going, like I said earlier back to your childhood or back to that first job, or back to that major in college or in my case back to doing actual design work, because it's what you love.

00:16:27 So you've gone back to, you know, your zoological roots to, to leverage those relationships. And in my model and methodology, we look at that of like, what are the resources that you have? What are the things that you have that other people don't have? We had done a wifi finding session. Like we might've come up with this because it would've been so obvious,

00:16:46 right? Like if you had like someone reflecting it back to you, but when you're in your own world and you're not necessarily even looking for this, why take so much time? So it is a really interesting process where not only, and I just, I was just having a mastermind this afternoon before we were chatting and both my mastermind buddy and I are in this,

00:17:04 like coming back to where we started, but in a totally different way, that is our legacy work. And we were having such a laugh about, you know, we have a meeting on Fridays for like six years and we're basically back to where we began, but it's like totally different business models and scopes and like income and all of that. So yeah,

00:17:20 it's, it's oftentimes about being able to take it's about finding in a lot of ways, especially the way I do. It's about finding a business model that will allow you to kind of be able to do what you love by escaping some of the traps that some of our businesses can put us in. So I escaped the trap of pet photography because I didn't want to trade hours for dollars anymore.

00:17:40 And I looked at my life and I was like, huh, how am I ever going to have kids? Like, how am I ever going to be able to take maternity leave in this business? How am I ever going to be able to do this job heavily pregnant? I can't like it's not going to work. And so I had to get serious about that,

00:17:56 but I also lost my heart dog. You know, she was a great Dane with me for 11 years and it was all kind of right around the same time where I was like getting married and lost her and moved to the UK where pet photography is a much harder game. And I just didn't have the energy to start over again in terms of like convincing people to pay what I charge,

00:18:14 you know? And so that's when I actually discovered the why finding methodology that I use now is I had to refined my purpose. I had to look deeper at what I wanted to do. And I started at the first level I started with, you know, who do I know, who am I passionate about helping and how can I help them? And it led me straight back to pet photographers and helping them,

00:18:34 you know, doing business consulting. And that is where I started. And ultimately, you know, that was like six years ago. Now I'm out of doing, just work in the pet industry and I've discovered this methodology, which I call the color brand method because I found a passion that has been there leaving breadcrumbs, like your animal work all along.

00:18:53 And that for me was color. And I did a course in applied color psychology and sort of realized a bit like the why finding stuff. This has been there all along as an, a tremendous skill. So, and it

was the piece that unlocked my ability to go back to doing design stuff, the creative stuff that I love without having to get stuck in that rut of training dollars for hours and doing logo after logo after logo,

00:19:17 because I can help people with a scientific formula to build a brand that allows you to master that first impression and have, you know, all the things we want to have in the marketing, in our business with a formula, instead of just having to hire a designer and hope that they know what they're doing, and they're going to get it right by combining the why finding and color psychology and a company It's so ridiculous,

00:19:40 exciting. And, you know, yeah, we can definitely come to, to get there faster, but I think it's so fascinating how your journey and my journey truly you would not end up where you are without just having these experiences in our lives. So I think so many times people look back and they're like, Oh, why do I have to go through that?

00:20:01 Or I wish this happened faster. I wish this, you know, I wish, I wish I wish, but man, those things that have happened in your life are setting you up for something awesome. Like the reason that you're here, if you can just slow down and listen for it and you know, it has, could have been really easy for me since February to be like,

00:20:18 I don't have time for that. No, I'll do that later. I'll do that. Okay. Just know I need to focus on this right now, but you know what? I make the damn time because it's important. And, and whenever I talk about it and I think about it, like I start to get teary-eyed because that's how much I'm freaking aligned with it.

00:20:37 And yeah. I just think it's, I think it's fascinating to, and so incredible to see people and to feel this for the first time, from the inside of like, wow, this is totally, totally different. And Oh, it's just, it's so exciting. I love it. Given me goosebumps, hearing you talk because the thing is when you find it,

00:20:57 you become so like the language I often use because it gets used a lot. And I think it's the most, I hear it reflected in my clients is this idea of being on fire or lit up. I don't have an inner light. Like I can see it on your face right now. People can't be able to run audio, but I can run video.

00:21:13 And I can feel this energy from you because it is a different, it is a different thing. And when you are coming at, let's say selling something with that energy, Hey, it ceases to be selling. And B everybody wants it because you are magnetic because the are shining this light and people want to get involved, right? They want to,

00:21:33 they want a piece of it. They want to be part of it. They want to share it. They want to, they want to help you shine it further. And that's what, you know, shifting your business into a brand. My version of a brand that's purpose led is all about because it makes everything better. It's better for you. It's better for your customers.

00:21:51 It's better for the world. If you want to get technical about it. It's kind of like this idea of conscious capitalism, where we're only building businesses with win-win outcomes. And we take into account people and planet in addition to profit. And even this idea of having a triple bottom line, that all the things matter. But you know, you, if you want to find your why,

00:22:11 you know, hoping that one day you wake up in the middle of the night to like lightning is not great. And like, you didn't even know you were looking for it, which is the case for so many people that I talked to. But a lot of people who do find me find me because they're at some sort of crossroads, like they're bored in their business or they're making money and now what,

00:22:31 or they're not making money and they should be, or they're in their second career. And they're like, I want to do this properly this time. And that, that crossroads moment is a moment that causes people to ask these questions about their purpose and their why. And that's where I fit in. And that's why I created this sort of framework to help you actually find it because you know,

00:22:51 a lot of people will say, you don't have to go out searching for your purpose, like it's already within you. And I totally agree with that. It's, it's much more of an uncovering, like you said, going down in the layers rather than like going out and trying to discover something it's about looking within. But that is, as you said earlier,

00:23:07 really hard sometimes, Especially if you don't have somebody helping you do it Possible. Yeah. It's hard for me to do on my own. Like I have to hire people to reflect back to me because you do get kind of lost in the vortex of your own stuff. Plus there's also the side of like, there's your life purpose? And like what fuels you?

00:23:27 But the other side, and this is a side I specialize in is what if you want to like align it with your work? It's one thing, if you just have all the time in the world and you just want to have a purpose and you're, you know, independently wealthy or supported by a partner and you can just go do that. But for those of us who want to actually make money or create a global impact,

00:23:46 and we've got a lot of ambition to build stuff, which usually requires either having wealth or creating wealth, then you know, you've got to be able to align that purpose with something that makes money. And that for me is my definition of a brand where you have this idea of human plus business equals brand. And you're pulling your human purpose in, with a machine that makes money and they help each other.

00:24:08 Right? Your, your purpose supports the business. The business supports the purpose and together you're building a brand that has tremendous impact and you wake up happy, right? You love Monday's your hammer day. Yup. So yeah. So safe to say, if you are listening to this, you're like, man, this sounds awesome. I want that kind of like lit up passion in life or business.

00:24:27 Then you need to get in touch with Nick and have her help you dig through your why, because it's there. I mean, every single one of us was put on this planet for something. And you know, I always thought in the past too, it's like, Oh, you know, like, okay, I'm, I'm doing what I love.

00:24:43 I don't know if it's my purpose, but now all of a sudden I'm like, Holy shit, I have a purpose. Imagine like, think of the platform that you have now that you wouldn't have had six, seven, eight years ago where you can display that purpose and press a button and make big impact, like, right. It's not going to be hard for you to just kind of bring this to your people and say,

00:25:03 Hey, do you want to help me? And they're all gonna be like, yeah, I do. Yeah. It's so exciting. It's so exciting. So I want to bring this back around though, for people that are maybe a little bit earlier in their photograph and journey. And they're like, man, this all sounds great, but I like,

00:25:18 I need a logo and colors. I don't even know about branding and I want to hire a designer, but I don't really have an extra \$2,500 or more to hire a full brand guide. Like, can you help them? Do you think of why finding on two different paths? Okay. So the path that if Nicole came to me and said, Nick,

00:25:38 I want to do a Y finding session. I want to find my purpose. And you know, I, I, I need to add this layer. Then she would be at what I would call the deep dive stage, where it's like, she's got a business, she's making money. She kind of knows what she's doing. And she needs to go deeper than that.

00:25:52 And that is deeper. Longer-term work. And it's more expensive to do, but not everybody is at that stage. So a lot of people are just starting out or things aren't working or they hate marketing, which is purpose. Shifting into purpose is a great recipe to actually love marketing, by the way, because I know all of you are rolling your eyes.

00:26:11 Like, Oh my God, I hate it. Please don't talk to me. So For that path, I sort of think of as like the quick fix path and I have a couple of sort of strategies and tools for that, but largely it's around being able to get yourself into basically a really simple framework for understanding how to sell with more emotion, because what works about what Nicole was just telling us about with her,

00:26:36 why is that it's going to connect with people on a much more emotional level. It's bringing feeling in of facts and figures and features and benefits, right? It's allowing us to really make a human to human connection. And purpose is the very best hack for being able to do that without having to be someone else or pretend it's got the most, most authenticity built in.

00:26:58 But if you're not quite there yet, you don't have to wait until you have this big aha moment to be able to do that. And so I've developed what I call the color brand method, which allows you to kind of create a bit of alignment with your own brand personality and your passion, what you care about and how you want to show up.

00:27:14 And then importantly, being able to identify the consumers that are a right fit for you based on that. And then being able to present yourself in a way that they will very, very, very quickly be able to understand that you, whether or not you're a good fit for them. So that whole, you know, all is a success in our business really can come down to this little tiny eight to 15 second window,

00:27:37 that first impression moment where people discover us online or on Instagram or at our booth at an event. And they have to make a snap judgment about whether we're for them, right. Or whether they want to learn more. And what we do as human beings, who are very logical is think, right, okay. I have to tell them all the things and get all the information out there and I'll tell them my price and tell them what I do and all the services,

00:28:04 and like give them all the facts and then put these logos out about who I've worked with. And some of that works and some of it doesn't, but none of it is emotionally compelling, right? So weeding with purpose is about making that first impression about why you do what you do. That's the purpose. And we can find you like a work in progress version of that,

00:28:23 which for most pet photographers has something to do with capturing the relationship, which is fine as a starting point. But the secret formula then is being able to have masterful tools that

make us unconsciously feel trust. And that you're, you're credible so that we, you know, the, the first impression for human beings is driven by trust and credibility. And you have to have both,

00:28:49 if you just have credibility, but not trust, then we might think you're going to manipulate us. Cause we can see you're credible. You're good at what you do, but maybe you're a little smarter than me and I don't want to be outsmarted by you. So you have to also have that trust factor. Trust is most important. And those things get created unconsciously fast,

00:29:06 you know, eight to 15 second version of that. That's all happening based on things that we are mostly seeing sometimes hearing, but, but visual information works 60,000 times faster than reading words. So as photographers, you have a huge advantage in that. So much of that snap judgment is just gonna be looking at your work and being like, do I feel something that I want to feel about photos of my own dog?

00:29:32 Yes or no, which will have a lot to do with style and lighting. And you know, all the things that goes into taking masterful images, but in your marketing, you have to be consistent with whatever that feeling is that your work is creating. Otherwise there's that trust and credibility get jarred because they're like, I see this in your work, but you're super cheap.

00:29:53 Or I see this in your work, but your branding makes me feel like your work is really friendly and warm, but your branding is really cold and exclusive. Like, like if there is that misalignment, then what happens unconsciously is that we get jarring in that trust and credibility or your work is really great, but your website's really shit. So I don't think I can trust you to do a good job.

00:30:12 And these are all due and you didn't get it. And these are all like, Other than the email that one's definitely on the conscious level. But these other things that they notice are happening often on a subconscious level, that they don't even realize that they're making those judgments, you know, so much like, like if you see an image where, you know,

00:30:30 it's a bright sunny day, but then it's shadowed down here cause it's a sky replacement, it doesn't match. Or the lighting's not right. And it doesn't match two pieces that were merged together. We look at that. Yeah. Even if we don't know, Oh, like, you know, the, what, what exactly we're looking at, we know something's wrong.

00:30:48 So that's probably the same thing when they look at these and these pieces don't match. They're just like, eh, something doesn't feel right. Exactly. And that oftentimes people can get over that something doesn't feel right. Depends on how big that gap is. Like you say. Yeah. And then there's all the functional stuff about running, being easy to do business with,

00:31:06 which is its own topic, which is why you exist. Thank God for you. You can help with that, About those psychological triggers that are happening and how to control them, like how to understand what they are and how to be able to make sure that you're being consistent with your images and your words and the pricing and the product that you sell and the colors.

00:31:33 So one of the things that I discovered in the last couple of years is just how powerful color is. And the reason I discovered it is because my whole career in marketing, I've been looking for the silver bullet. I've been looking for the formula for the framework, for the thing that I could give to a pet photographer and say, just do this.

00:31:49 And your results will get better no matter what and not have that thing be really hard and complicated and expensive. And what I found is color, and it's an extreme passion of mine. My grandfather was a color engineer. He worked for a company that actually worked with knots jelly, like the jam to help them have consistently purple grape jelly because all the grapes went in different colors and the jam would come out different color purple.

00:32:17 And so, like I mentioned, with photography design, picture framing, picking out my dad's tie to matches to making sure that the sheets match my curtains and my socks match my shirt. You know, like I've been obsessed with color my whole life. I didn't realize until I started getting into this work. And what color gives us is a formula to basically say,

00:32:40 Oh, this is how you want to make people feel, use these colors. And it's that simple. It really is because across cultures, humans, unconsciously respond to color in the same way. It's not, we're not talking about culturally Facial expressions. We're not Talking about associations, which are different by culture, right? So, you know, it being red,

00:33:00 being lucky and in China where it means other things in the U S and white meaning one thing in India, and it means something else here. Those are associations. And those matter too, but the psychology is happening some completely subconsciously. And that when you start to learn about that, it's really fascinating. But what it gives us when we start to look at that layered with some of these other tools that we can use in branding,

00:33:24 it gives us an actual formula to say like, here's the quick fix. You kind of generally know who you are and you generally know what you want your clients to feel here is the group that you're in. And here's the colors that you should use in order to back up what you're saying with your words and your pictures. And by the way, those are the three most important things to have that emotional connection quickly is color imagery and copy.

00:33:46 So like I said, photographers have a huge advantage here because the photography is inherent, right? Like, you're good at that. So you've got one of the three on lock, which is yucky. Yeah. And if you guys want more copy, I had a podcast interview with Kim wish camper back in early December. I'd have to look up the exact number somewhere in the forties,

00:34:06 I think, but go check that out because she gives you all sorts of great advice for writing more compelling copy, because gosh, that's a big one too. Yeah. What's cool about this method is it gives you what I call trigger words. So within that copy, you know exactly what words to say and what feelings to push on that are going to be right for your client,

00:34:25 not everybody, but the person who is going to be most aligned with picking you, which by the way, will be most aligned with your photographic style, which also has clues for the type of artwork they're going to want in their home. Because one group likes things that are like huge and dramatic and really like, That's what I want. Yeah. The groups will rather have things that are more or neat and that kind of thing.

00:34:47 And all this stuff is, you know, basically given in this formula, it just it's, you know, the combination of color psychology and brand personnel and, you know, personality types. So with pet photographers, you know, the cars were similar and a little niche, but still very different. So do you find

that there's many pet photographers and one or two of the different colors or are they pretty spread out even though we're So basically the way this works,

00:35:18 why finding is the first level? That's the deep dive. If you don't have time for that, then you go straight to finding out your brand personality type and I have a free quiz for that. So if anyone who's listening wants to go find out your brand personality type and you can definitely do that. And we'll include the link in the show notes,

00:35:35 but that will tell you basically, you're one of four groups and the groups are based on seasons. So it's really easy to remember. You're either a spring, summer, winter, or an autumn. And it's, It's probably because I hate it. Sorry, go ahead. And it has nothing to do with weather. What's really interesting. The thing is,

00:35:53 you said you like big and dramatic. That is winter. Yeah. But again has nothing to do with the weather, which is good, but it does have a little something to do. It has a lot to do with color and the color has a lot to do with weather. And we'll have to go into that on a whole nother discussion. We can deep dive into the specifics of the color psychology,

00:36:12 but basically you get put into one of four groups and it will be based either more on you and your, your personality type or the type of work that you want to do and the client that you want to work with. Because sometimes there's a difference there. And sometimes you're like 70%, this and 30% that, but actually you do the 30% thing because it's more aligned with the type of clients that you want.

00:36:34 But again, not going to go into depth there, but once you find out which group you're in, you know, so much about how you should be presenting yourself, what your clients are going to be like, because what you project, what you project out there is what you're going to get back. So if you project that, you're an autumn and you use all these tools that auto,

00:36:54 you know, that make you more autumn, you're going to attract autumn people. And you're going to know a lot of things about them because there's only four groups of people. And if you're putting all them out there, it's autumn people who are going to be attracted to it. And now you all of a sudden know exactly what you need to say and which shapes you should use on your website and which group of colors you're in.

00:37:12 So to answer your question across the pet industry as well, not just pet photography, but especially in pet photography, autumn is by far the most common brand personality type one, because it's the most common in the world too. Because if people are working based on the type of images that they like to take, autumn is most aligned with a lot of the way.

00:37:34 A lot of our work looks right. There's a lot of nature, right? Brown trees and green grass. And you know, the, the warm backlit sunshine, like that's very autumn. And the other three I'd say are quite extreme in some way. So winter is very stark prestigious. That's black, white magenta, like very kind of over the top.

00:37:55 So there's less winters, but, but a lot of people are putting out a winter brand because they're like, Hey, black and white is super classy. So that's what I'm going to make my website. But then they've got these autumn images, which are really warm and heartfelt. And there is your disparity, right? Like the consumer's like, Oh,

00:38:11 this looks edgy and expensive and cool. Oh, but, Oh, but the price, Oh, like, which are you? Like, what are you? I don't know what you are because we've all been taught black and white is expensive, right. So we're going to charge more and then it doesn't match the imagery. And then the consumer is like,

00:38:26 well, what am I going to get? I want a big dramatic piece for my wall in black and white, but you're showing me eight by 10 color. You know? So that's where the problem starts happening. And spring is very, very bright, bouncy and youthful, very light and bright and its colors. And often very yellow, Sarah Petty, Sarah,

00:38:44 Petty's a family photographer, but it's all bright color studio shots. Yeah. If it's bright and warm, then that's probably probably true. And then summer is very subdued. So I see a lot of summer in the pet industry and a lot of people who are autumn summer, because summer is very serene. So it's like cooler, blue based colors with a bit of gray in them.

00:39:07 So if you imagine, like the washed out wood happens in summer, the wisteria blossoms, like the stuff that the sun kind of drenches the life out of everything. And it becomes this sort of literally chilled out kind of palette, but it's much more introverted. And a lot of people in the pet space are introverts, right? Because we'd rather interact with pets than people.

00:39:27 But if you, you again, need to build that brand on purpose. Because if on one hand, you're saying, let's go have fun at the park and we'll take pictures, but all of your colors and images are saying, stay the hell away from me. Cause I don't want to interact with you. Then again, you're selling two mixed messages and your customer doesn't know how to react to that.

00:39:43 So it is really useful to find out which group that you are in and then build a brand around that group. And that group, the season will necessarily give you a group of colors. Then the next step is figuring out what are the key emotions that you want people to feel? What kind of brand are you going for? And that helps you choose like the primary colors that you should be using in your brand.

00:40:06 And that I see a wide range and most of it is accidental, right? Like I bought a consulting client last year when I was in California and I met with her and I had to break her heart because the first thing I said to her was you've got to stop using this black, white, and red. Like, this is not you. This is not your brand.

00:40:23 This is not what your client wants. Like, I appreciate that you like it, but this is not doing any of the things that you say you want to do. And she was really heartbroken and she was a little mad, I think at first. And then like a week later she came back and she was like, I get it. I see it now.

00:40:36 But you know, it wasn't her photography. It wasn't her client. It wasn't. Yeah. I think we just look at things. So we're like, Oh, I like this. And again, the things that we're taught mean, certain things like the high-end, the Tiffany, the, you know, black and white minimalist, Apple, you know,

00:40:52 and then, or we just find a color palette on Pinterest. You're like, Oh, these are pretty. Yeah, go with that. I think we've all I've done that at one point. Yeah. I mean, I'm in the middle of a rebrand now because I have to redo my website, which is a mix of like three things. Like,

00:41:06 you know, we have things that are good for certain things, but you know, we, we also yeah. Pull in those things that we were taught and told. And, and sometimes it's a case of like in my

brand, I have to re I can't use black and white in my brand because I'm not a winter. So I have to replace that with Brown and ivory basically,

00:41:23 which when combined it does make everything work a lot better. And it, it, and you'll notice it because you'll see brands and you'll, you'll sort of arrive at their website and you'll have that feeling of like, like, I just want to be here because it has such a deeply comforting sort of impact on, on you psychologically. Oh, I love that.

00:41:43 I love that. Awesome. So do you have a website, a opt-in URL for people to go get there? Yeah. Thank you. It is. Let me say that A bit more better, where they could go and often to get their color personality quiz and see what season they are. So it's go dot Jane, Nicole smith.com/quiz. So G O dot J N I C H O L E S M I T h.com/quiz.

00:42:14 And that is where you can find out whether you are a spring, summer, autumn, or winter. And I'd love to hear from you. If you get a result that you think is dead on or totally surprising to you definitely reach out on Instagram or yeah. Find me and let me know what you think. We've got a great Facebook group and stuff to chat about it.

00:42:31 Now, where can they find you on Instagram? I'm at Jane Nicole Smith. Again, my nature, my mine, Nicole has an H in it. So you just have to remember that the letter J and I C H O L E S M I T H is a great place. Perfect. Yeah. And we'll add all those links to the show notes.

00:42:46 If you guys listen all the way to the end of this episode, I will have a little, I'll tell you exactly what episode number and that show note URL. Perfect. Yeah. I started saying them in the podcast, but then if we ended up having to switch, you know, the schedule around, then it becomes challenging. And I had this random epiphany,

00:43:05 you know, sometimes I love systems, you know, this is about me, like making a system is like, Oh, that is my happy place. Like give me a Monday board and a automation. And I'm just like, Yes, happy Friday night, James. So much. You guys are peas in a pod. I love it. Give me some automation in my life.

00:43:24 But anyway, so I had this epiphany the other day. I'm like, Oh, after I record the podcast, I can just do a separate audio that we put at the end of the podcast that has the show note URL. That way, if we have to move things around, it's all good. Yeah. I like my core team. I'm 14 was like,

00:43:42 Oh, wait, we moved this or where I felt so bad. I'm like, I moved this one, but I, how you have to cut that out at the beginning. And It's a nightmare, isn't it? Yeah. Managing all of that content creation monster. Hey, we've got, we've got some systems. It's actually, I, that was my rule to myself.

00:43:59 When I decided to start this podcast last year, I was like, really want to do it, but I'm not touching it. Like once I hit stop on this little thing and then I just record an intro real quick, like it's done, my team takes it from there and to my team, I love you and I never want to live with it.

00:44:19 So yeah. Anyway, I love it. I digress. This has been so good. So, so, so good. Thank you so much for being here with us and sharing all of this. And I can't wait to see you guys are what season. So go take the quiz, let Nick know, share in the hair of the dog podcast community.

00:44:38 And we would just love to see what it is. And you can even post your website and your images and your color. And we can kind of see, yeah, A really interesting discussion point inside hair of the dog for them to get their quiz results and then look at their portfolio. And is it the same or is there a huge disparity there and what are you going to do about it?

00:44:58 Are you going to, are you going to change your website or are you going to change your photography style? Create that alignment. Here's a question for you. So say you do your quiz and it comes back as autumn, but you are like super, incredibly drawn to a big white background, like minimalistic negative space, like modern kind of look, would,

00:45:22 would that happen or would, if you're really drawn to that, you probably wouldn't come back as an autumn. Or if there is like that disparity to go with that brand personality quiz, or do you go with like the artwork that you just like, I like it makes your heart sing and you get the goosebumps looking at that art. That's such a good question.

00:45:38 And this is true for all people in all brands. Most of us don't fit squarely into a little box and a quick free online quiz can only tell you so much, right? So it's only going to spit out one result for you. It doesn't tell you you're like 90%, this and 10% that. So it could very well be that you're right on the edge of two.

00:45:56 And you're just like one point more in this direction. Or even if you scored completely evenly in the two, the software has to pick one for you, right? So they'll probably pick them in alphabetical order. I think that's how it does it. If you're 50 50, you might not know what the second 50 is, but you might've gone through the quiz thinking,

00:46:12 I almost answered this one for a lot of these questions. This theme kept coming up and I felt really drawn to that one as well, which means you're probably a really close, but I'm a really close split between autumn and spring personally. But my brand is autumn and winter for exactly the reason that you just said, which is your, your primary personality type is going to dictate your color palette.

00:46:36 You have to stick with one personality and stick with that color palette. And when I say color palette, I mean the group of colors, not the individual colors. So you can learn more about that. If you take the quiz, it's going to turn determined, the color story that you use, everything else is kind of up for negotiation based on what your secondary personality type is.

00:46:55 So if you're really drawn to another one, let's use the example of autumn and winter. So autumn is like rustic wood exposed brick, like that's one version of autumn, but you also like huge minimalistic dramatic spaces. We'll certainly you can have rustic wood and exposed brick and huge dramatic minimalistic spaces, right? So it could be that you're an autumn with a really heavy secondary winter.

00:47:18 So what you would probably be doing is doing very minimalistic autumn artwork. So you're still shooting, you know, in those brick environments or those, you know, in the forest or wherever we're getting those autumn colors, but you're creating big dramatic minimalistic artwork. And chances are the type of images that you're taking are really stripped back. They're not the happy dog running towards the camera images that most pet photographers take.

00:47:41 They're probably more pensive, maybe a bit moodier because they lend themselves to the drama of a portrait like that. Maybe you're doing those like split ones where it's just half the animals face, you know, but they're probably not going to be in black and white because that's going to look terrible on your autumn website. And so, but you might do black and white.

00:48:00 It might just not be in the same page as the autumn stuff, because what happens is if you're a strong autumn with a strong winter secondary, that's what you're going to attract. So you're going to attract people who are really into the autumn colors or artwork and the slightly warmer feeling, but they have this drama inherent in them. Like you said, at the beginning.

00:48:18 Yeah. Give me that big dramatic piece. Yeah, you can do both. The only thing to remember is that the colors are completely determined by one. You don't want to be mixing the brand personality type color palette. And that is a huge, huge secret about creating this harmony that we experienced visually and getting that first impression to line up is by only taking colors from one season.

00:48:40 I love it. I love it. All right, you guys all have your homework, go take the quiz and report back and let us know. I'm really, really curious. I'm going to take it myself cause I want to know. I'd love to know And I can go in and take a peek at your results and see if you have a strong secondary.

00:48:54 Perfect. Thanks. Awesome. Of course. Thanks so much for being with us, Nick, hang on and listen for the show note URL and you guys can go jump over to the show, note page and get all those links and go take your quiz and let Nick know on Instagram, what you came up with. Cause I'm sure she would love to know as well.

00:49:13 And we'll see you guys next week. Have a good one, everyone. Bye. Thanks for listening to the hair of the dog podcast. If you want to check out the show notes for access to any of the links that we shared in this episode, as well as any additional resources, simply go to www.hairofthedogacademy.com/six five. That's just the number six and the number five.

00:49:38 Thanks for listening to this episode of hair of the dog podcast. If you enjoyed this show, please take a minute to leave a review. And while you're there, don't forget to subscribe. So you don't miss our upcoming episodes. One last thing, if you are ready to dive into more resources, head over to our website@www.dothairofthedogacademy.com. Thanks for being a part of this pet photography community.