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# Become a PROFESSIONAL AUTHOR COURSE

PART TWO:  
SELL STORIES EFFECTIVELY  
Marketing Lesson Two:  
Your Marketing Message  
Grant P. Hudson

**BECOME A  
PROFESSIONAL  
AUTHOR  
COURSE**

**PART TWO:  
SELL STORIES EFFECTIVELY**

Marketing Lesson Two:  
Your Marketing Message

Grant P Hudson

CLARENDON HOUSE  
PUBLICATIONS

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## **How This Course Works and What to Expect by the End:**

The Become a Professional Author Course is made up of three basic parts:

### **1. Write Stories That Work**

In eight Lesson Modules, you will learn the basic structures of all successful fiction and be encouraged through practical exercises to produce stories of your own which grab, glue, guide and control readers' attention.

### **2. Sell Stories Effectively**

In four Lesson Modules, you will discover how marketing really works and work through several practical exercises so that you will have customers who like, buy and recommend your work to others.

### **2. How Clarendon House Can Help You**

In two Lesson Modules, you will be shown how Clarendon House lays out routes of opportunity for you to get published and acquire a readership of your own.

**IT'S IMPORTANT THAT YOU DO ALL THE EXERCISES TO THE BEST OF YOUR ABILITY TO ACHIEVE THE MAXIMUM BENEFITS FROM THE COURSE.**

# LESSON TWO: YOUR MARKETING MESSAGE

Conventional marketing says to pin down the demographics of your ideal prospect, and there's some validity in that, as we shall see — but it falls short of a deeper truth. It's a truth which should appeal to your instincts as a creator of stories.

Stories attract readers (and turn them into fans) when they have clarified their messages.

The same thing applies to marketing:

**Products attract prospects (and turn them into customers) when they have clarified their messages.**

What we're going to do is create prospects from the raw material presented by the world's population, just as writers create stories from the raw material presented by their imaginations.

**Your story message is a searchlight with which to find prospects.**

It works like this:

1. Your story message shines out from your book (and the way you present it, including **where** and **how** you place it, as we will see).

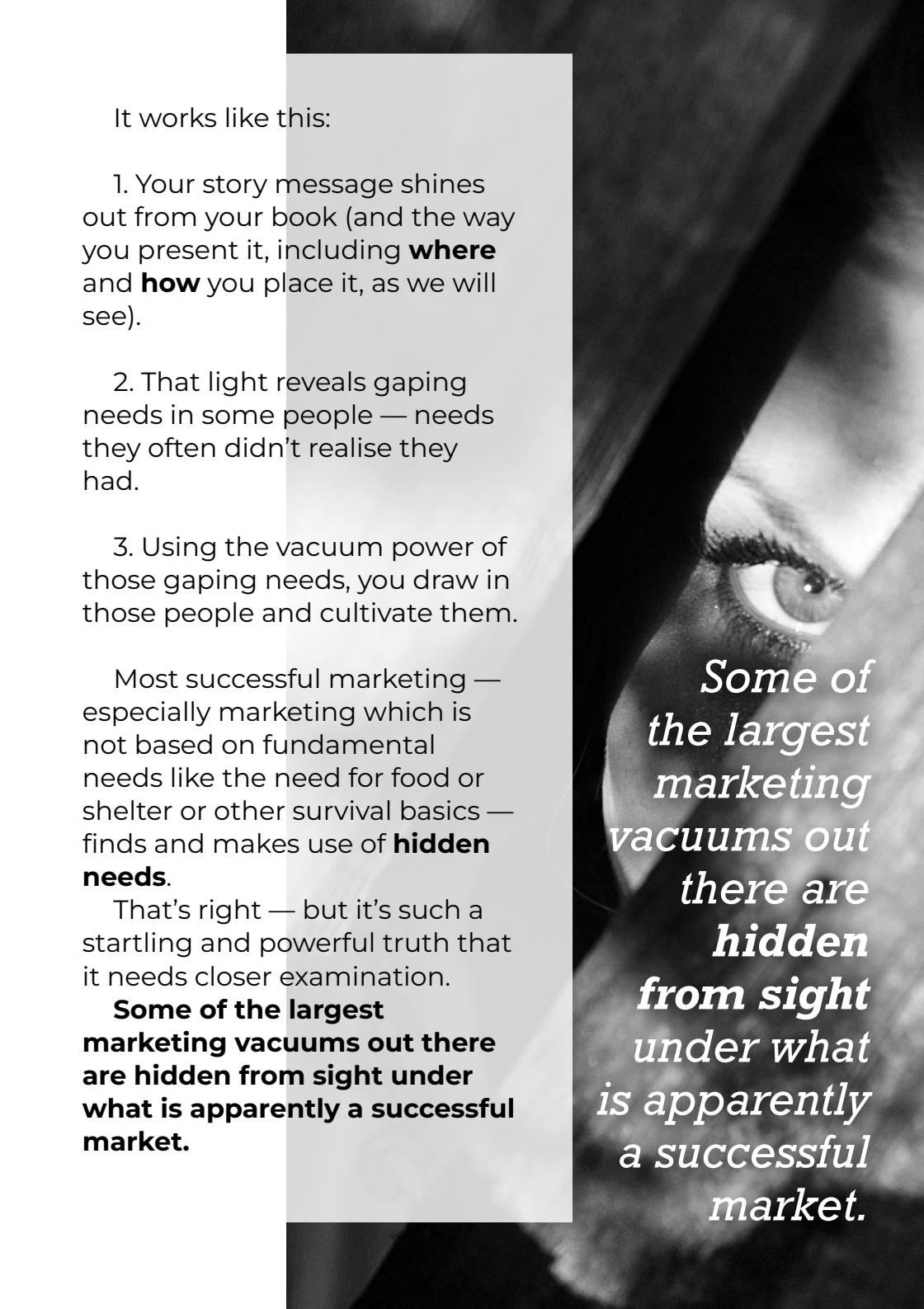
2. That light reveals gaping needs in some people — needs they often didn't realise they had.

3. Using the vacuum power of those gaping needs, you draw in those people and cultivate them.

Most successful marketing — especially marketing which is not based on fundamental needs like the need for food or shelter or other survival basics — finds and makes use of **hidden needs**.

That's right — but it's such a startling and powerful truth that it needs closer examination.

**Some of the largest marketing vacuums out there are hidden from sight under what is apparently a successful market.**



*Some of  
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**hidden  
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market.*

Huge and convincing examples, using some of the most famous marketing campaigns ever devised, are presented in an appendix to this course.

The world's most successful products ride on the back of vacuums which their marketing campaigns unearthed and made the most of.


**The true genius of marketing is finding vacuums that no one else can see.**

## **Course Marketing Exercise # 7:**

**Have you ever had the thought 'If only someone would come up with a product which does...?'**

Can you think right now of something which might qualify as a 'hidden market'? Some wanted product or service which does not yet exist?



A person is silhouetted against a vast, starry night sky. They are holding a flashlight, which is directed upwards, creating a bright, glowing beam of light that cuts through the darkness. The background is filled with numerous stars of varying brightness, and the overall atmosphere is one of wonder and exploration.


In our fiction examples just now, we saw how the Harry Potter series, **The Lord of the Rings** and **Star Wars** stumbled upon or created vacuums which ensured that they would be immensely successful in commercial terms. With Potter, it was an easy and fun release from the stultifying boredom of school; with **The Lord of the Rings**, it was escapism from a modernism that was closing in, in one way or another; in **Star Wars** it was a desire to burst out of the bleakness of the surrounding culture at the time.

There's something niggling inside the people who will read and love **your** books, an itch which only **your** books will scratch.

Your challenge is to find out what that is exactly.

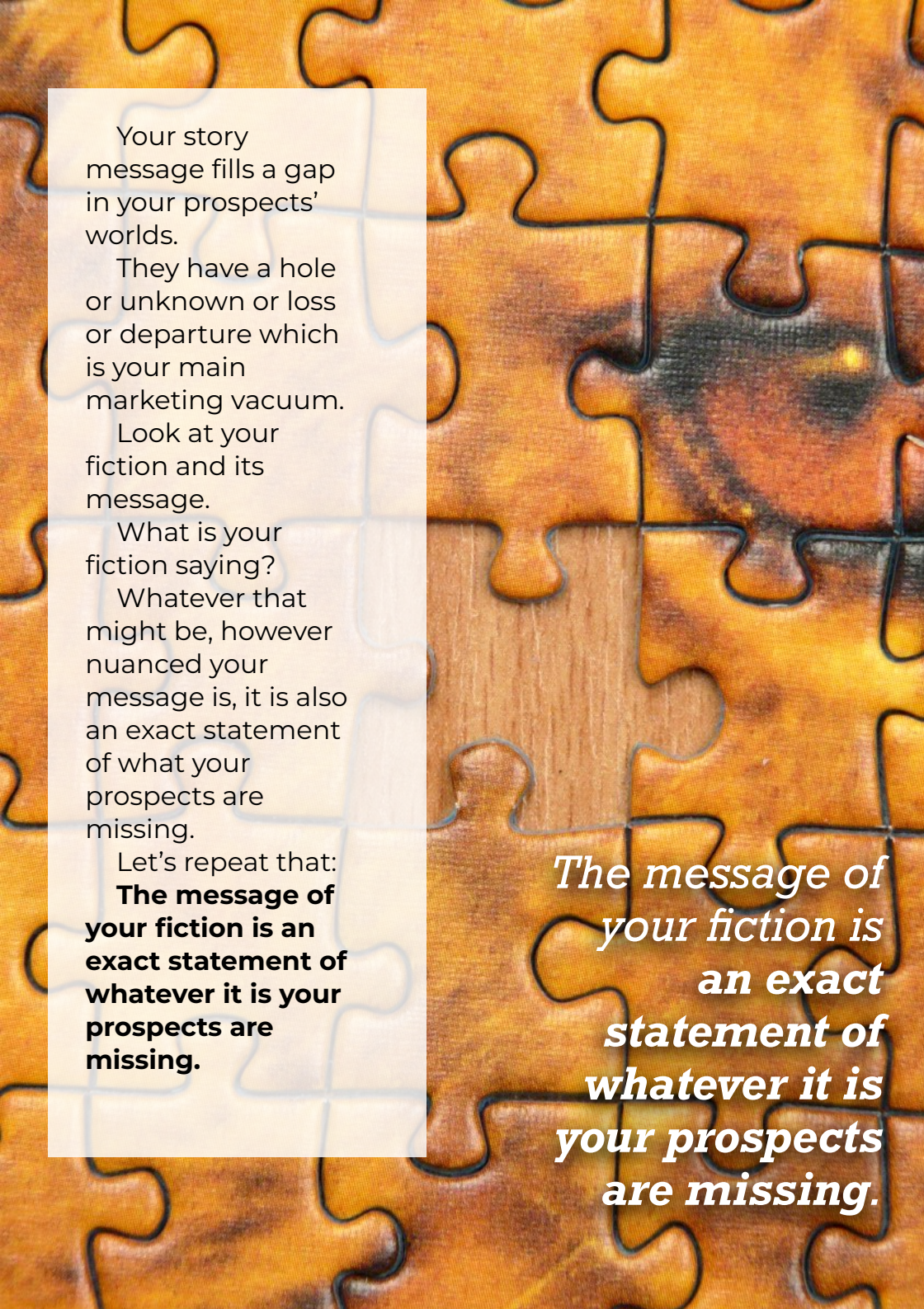
How?

**Using the searchlight of your story message.**



This is done to you all the time by marketers around you. They create campaigns designed to scratch your various itches. You are drawn to your favourite reading material and movies using these exact principles. The latest movie you have a hankering to see, your favourite book, that story which you want to get your hands on — they have all found the little (or large) vacuums inside you which motivate you to acquire them.

They have done so by **clarifying and strongly projecting their story message** until it discovered or created that vacuum inside you.



Your story message fills a gap in your prospects' worlds.

They have a hole or unknown or loss or departure which is your main marketing vacuum.

Look at your fiction and its message.


What is your fiction saying?

Whatever that might be, however nuanced your message is, it is also an exact statement of what your prospects are missing.

Let's repeat that:

**The message of your fiction is an exact statement of whatever it is your prospects are missing.**

*The message of your fiction is an exact statement of whatever it is your prospects are missing.*

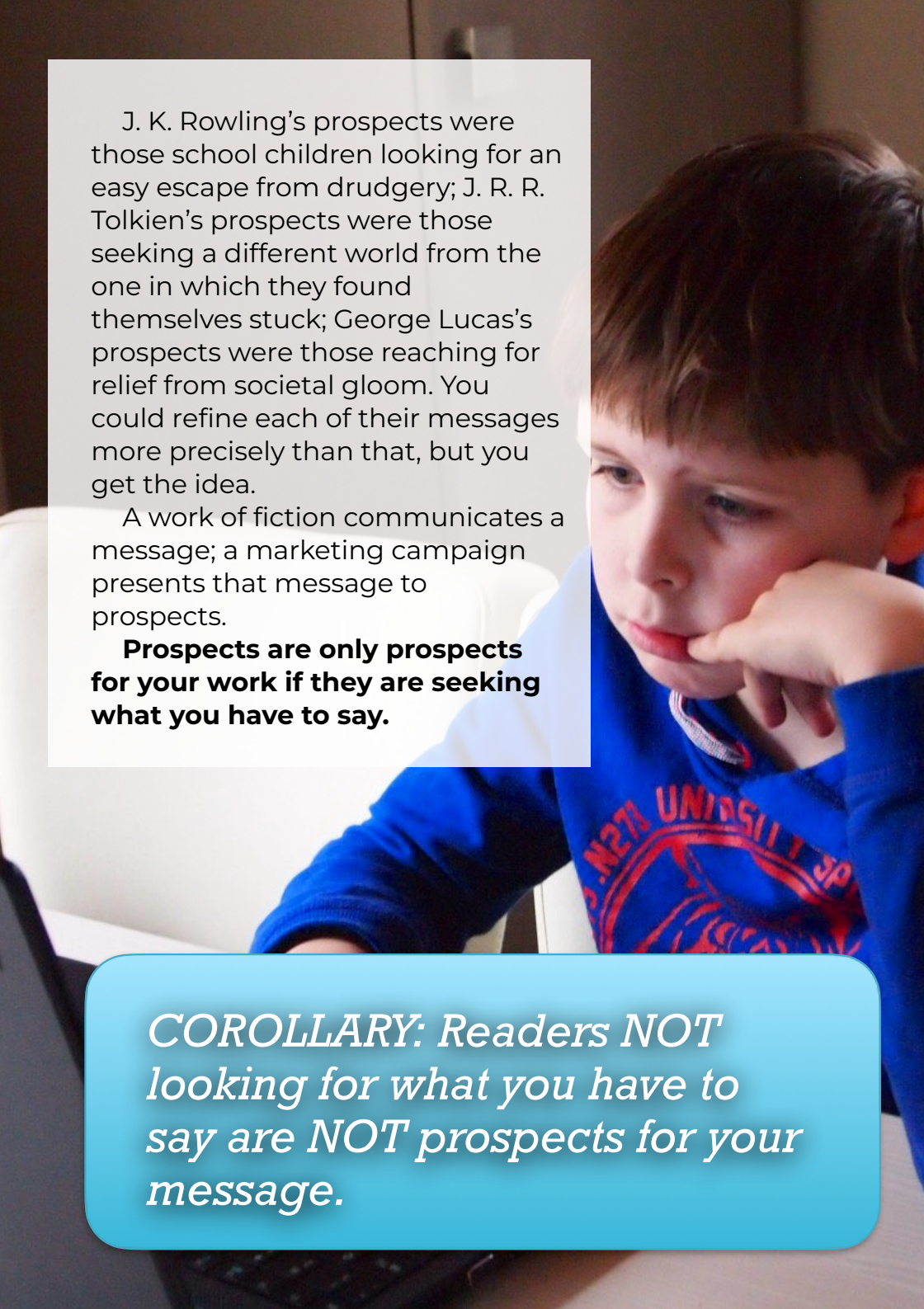


Your fiction might have the message 'Pride is wrong' or 'Society is stifled by rules' or 'Love conquers all' or 'There is hope for the future' or any other communication, subtle or not subtle, common or uncommon. You should have worked out more or less what your message is in Part One.

Now that message becomes the thing which fills the gap for your prospects.

**Your prospects are (by definition) precisely those people looking for your message.**

**DEFINITION: Your prospects are *those people looking for your message.***



J. K. Rowling's prospects were those school children looking for an easy escape from drudgery; J. R. R. Tolkien's prospects were those seeking a different world from the one in which they found themselves stuck; George Lucas's prospects were those reaching for relief from societal gloom. You could refine each of their messages more precisely than that, but you get the idea.

A work of fiction communicates a message; a marketing campaign presents that message to prospects.

**Prospects are only prospects for your work if they are seeking what you have to say.**

***COROLLARY: Readers NOT looking for what you have to say are NOT prospects for your message.***

Again, we come back to the same thing: what are you trying to say through your fiction?

Whether you're writing a comedy, a romance, an epic fantasy, a science fiction tale, a dark gothic horror novel, a movie about contemporary politics or a family saga, you already automatically know who your prospects are going to be: the people seeking to hear your message.

You may have come to believe that marketing is


the number of times your book is seen by the world at large and the variety of exposure your book is getting; you think 'getting wide exposure' is what you have to do to get sales.

No.

Anyone who is a genuine prospect for your book is going to love your book, by definition.

**The kinds of readers who love your kinds of messages are just waiting for you to make a connection with them.**





What you have been calling marketing has really been largely clutter and confusion getting in the way of your book and its prospective readers.

Don't let noise and its marketing myths deceive you.

The reason bulk marketing occasionally works is because sometimes it accidentally reaches the right prospects.

Don't waste time and energy on marketing that doesn't work.

Stop trying to make people burn energy finding out about your book.

Use their own vacuums to draw them towards you.

## Your Secret Marketing Superpower

Once you have worked out what your story message is, the rest is simply engineering.

**Marketing condenses vacuums and puts them into sequences which draw attention along towards sales.**

Using vacuums gives you superpowers as a marketer.

Vacuums draw prospects' attention along like water flowing in channels. Anything missing in a sequence or context acts as a vacuum or 'hole' in the channel, helping the water to flow.

When marketers want to add 'details about benefits and features and so on', those details hold up the flow of water. You don't want this. You want prospects to reach the checkout and pay.



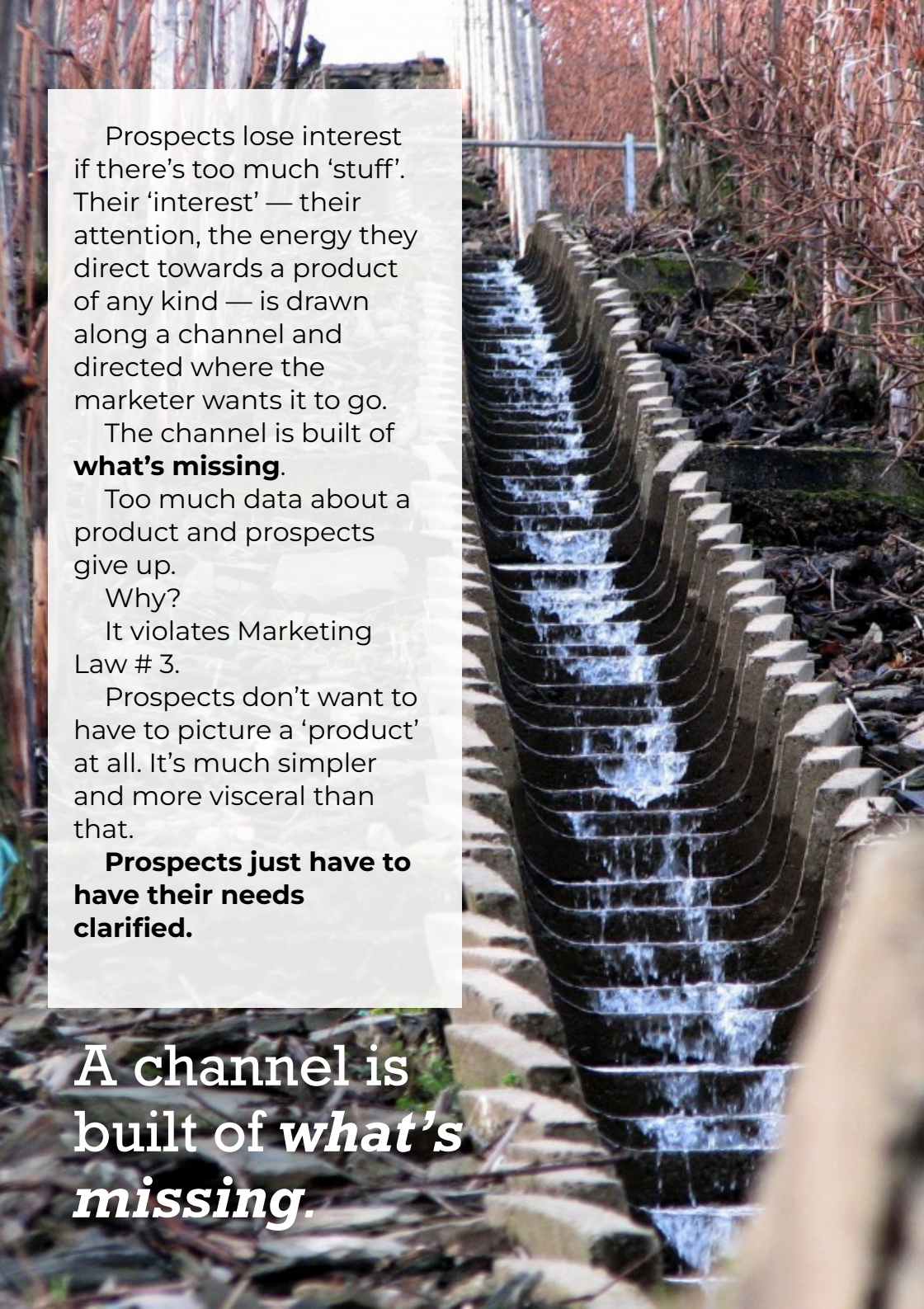
ATTENTION

Vacuum

Vacuum

Vacuum

SALE



Prospects lose interest if there's too much 'stuff'. Their 'interest' — their attention, the energy they direct towards a product of any kind — is drawn along a channel and directed where the marketer wants it to go.

The channel is built of **what's missing.**

Too much data about a product and prospects give up.

Why?

It violates Marketing Law # 3.

Prospects don't want to have to picture a 'product' at all. It's much simpler and more visceral than that.

**Prospects just have to have their needs clarified.**

**A channel is built of *what's missing.***

If prospects felt complete, they wouldn't buy.

A vacuum occurs when something that prospects perceive should be there, isn't. If your prospects are completely happy with their lot, they're not prospects for what you're offering.

Why do so many marketers waste time talking about their products? Because they don't realise that they are creating **noise**. They don't understand the power of vacuums. They think that good marketing and selling is about the things that you tell the prospect about the product, when the reverse is true.



Anyone attempting to market in a way which doesn't use vacuums usually a) never completes putting together a proper campaign, or b) never reaches the appropriate prospects. Unsuccessful marketing campaigns are unsuccessful precisely because they have not been able to attract and hold enough attention from the right prospects.

Every piece of successful marketing you can think of works in this way. Marketers can be as original as they want to be as long as they never forget these mechanics.

Examine your own experience of being marketed to. Upon close inspection you'll discover two things:

1. You end up taking things to the checkout that you have been convinced fulfil a need, and

2. You don't go to the checkout unless you're convinced.





***The main work of knocking your marketing into shape is taking out anything other than these principles.***

The main work of knocking your marketing into shape is taking out anything other than the above.

Every social media post you make, every website you run, every link you promote, you're either serving your marketing message or descending into confusion; you're either creating music or generating noise.

Nobody remembers a 'noisy' marketing campaign.

If you have filtered out all the stuff that bores your prospects, used the mechanics of vacuums and emphasised your message throughout, your campaign will be remembered and your book read and recommended.

## Attention Becomes Action

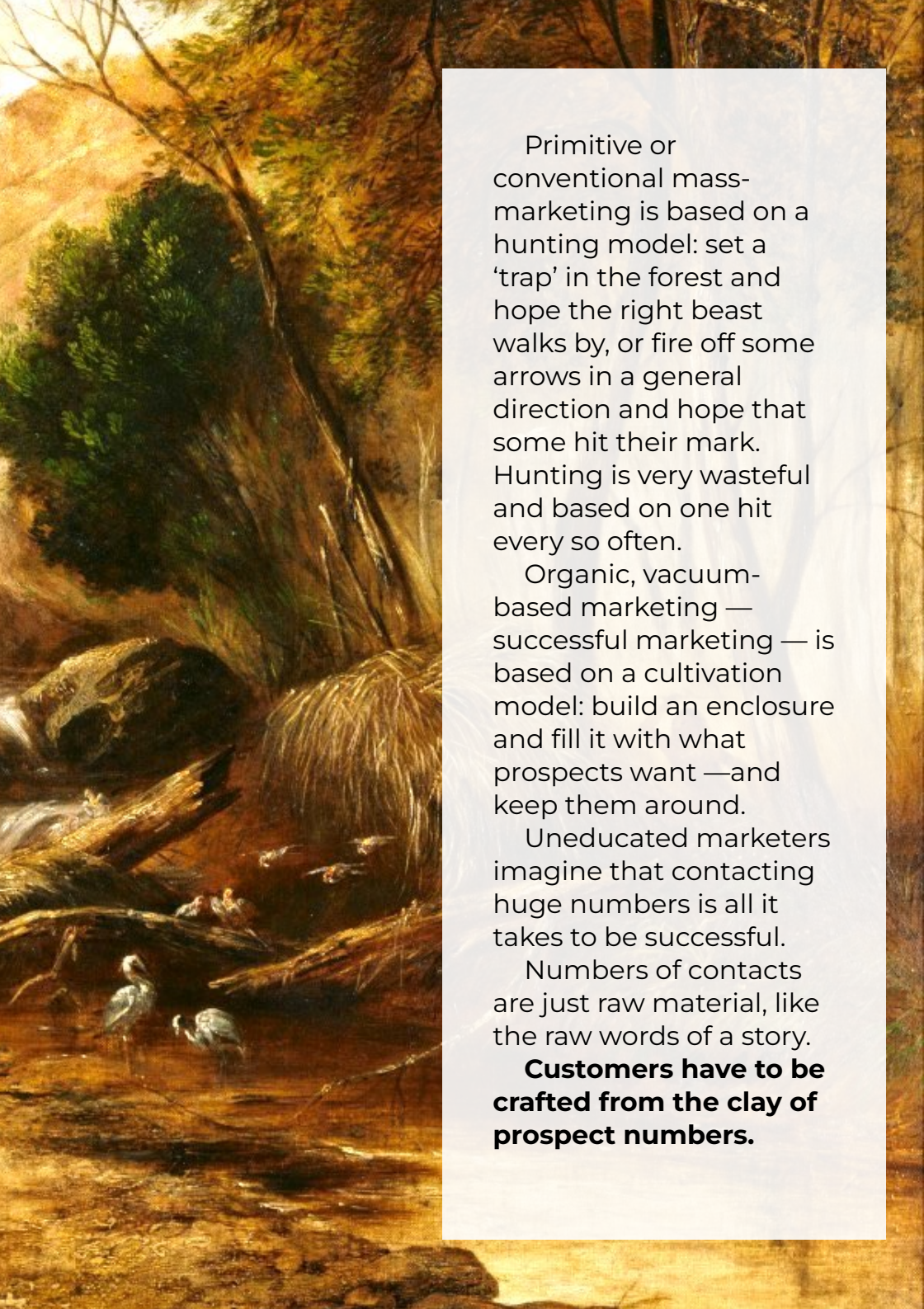
As we learned in Part One, if your story contains strong enough vacuums, customer attention is transmuted into emotional commitment.

The same principle is at work in marketing.

You can try skipping straight to the sale, like someone standing on the street trying to sell a product to passers-by, and almost everyone will do exactly that — pass you by. To them, you're just more noise, part of the background confusion of their environment.

Primitive marketing does this: it skips straight to the sale at the end before doing the work of building up prospects to care what is being offered. Look at a roadside billboard: it's simply saying 'Buy this now', without any preceding attempt to find out if you're interested. Like most basic 'marketing', it's simply stating that a product is available and hoping that the right traffic comes along once in a while to buy it.



A detailed oil painting of a forest scene. In the foreground, a stream flows over rocks, with several birds, possibly herons or egrets, standing in the water. The middle ground is dominated by large, gnarled trees with dense foliage. The background shows a hazy, sunlit landscape with more trees and a bright sky. The overall color palette is warm, with browns, greens, and yellows.

Primitive or conventional mass-marketing is based on a hunting model: set a 'trap' in the forest and hope the right beast walks by, or fire off some arrows in a general direction and hope that some hit their mark. Hunting is very wasteful and based on one hit every so often.

Organic, vacuum-based marketing — successful marketing — is based on a cultivation model: build an enclosure and fill it with what prospects want —and keep them around.

Uneducated marketers imagine that contacting huge numbers is all it takes to be successful.

Numbers of contacts are just raw material, like the raw words of a story.

**Customers have to be crafted from the clay of prospect numbers.**

You have to build an **action generator**.

Action generators convert emotion into motion.

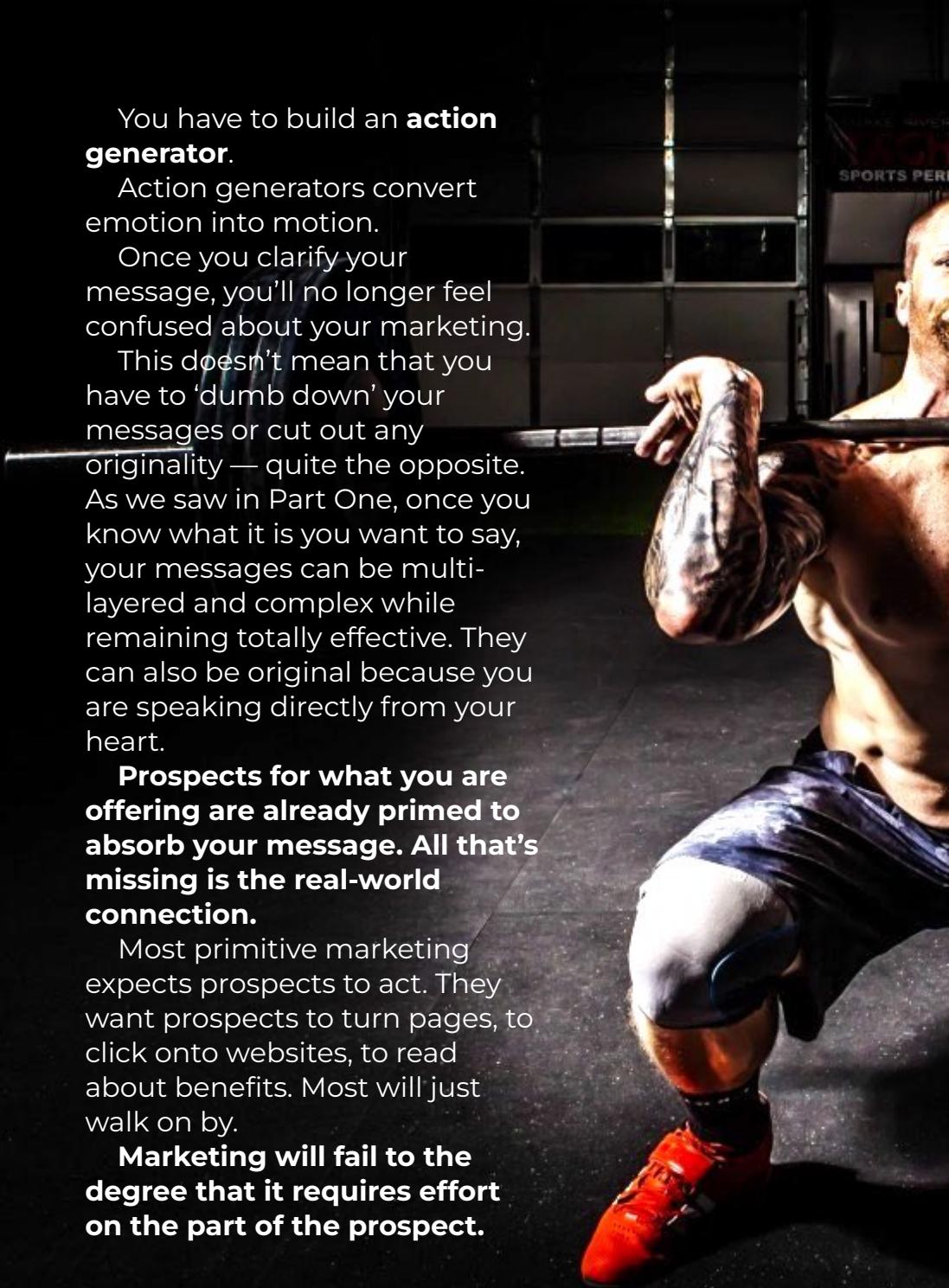
Once you clarify your message, you'll no longer feel confused about your marketing.

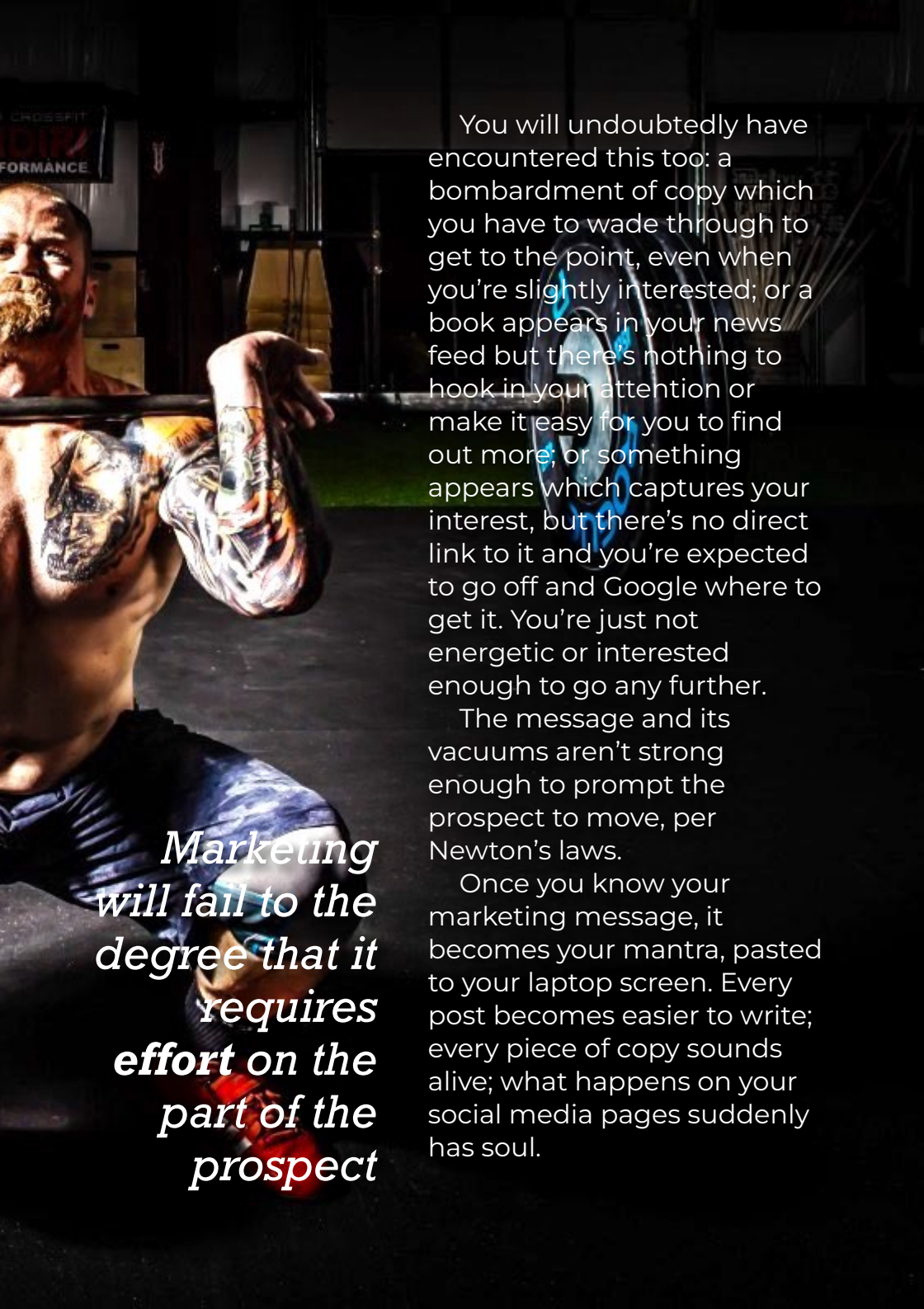
This doesn't mean that you have to 'dumb down' your messages or cut out any originality — quite the opposite. As we saw in Part One, once you know what it is you want to say, your messages can be multi-layered and complex while remaining totally effective. They can also be original because you are speaking directly from your heart.

**Prospects for what you are offering are already primed to absorb your message. All that's missing is the real-world connection.**

Most primitive marketing expects prospects to act. They want prospects to turn pages, to click onto websites, to read about benefits. Most will just walk on by.

**Marketing will fail to the degree that it requires effort on the part of the prospect.**





*Marketing  
will fail to the  
degree that it  
requires  
effort on the  
part of the  
prospect*

You will undoubtedly have encountered this too: a bombardment of copy which you have to wade through to get to the point, even when you're slightly interested; or a book appears in your news feed but there's nothing to hook in your attention or make it easy for you to find out more; or something appears which captures your interest, but there's no direct link to it and you're expected to go off and Google where to get it. You're just not energetic or interested enough to go any further.

The message and its vacuums aren't strong enough to prompt the prospect to move, per Newton's laws.

Once you know your marketing message, it becomes your mantra, pasted to your laptop screen. Every post becomes easier to write; every piece of copy sounds alive; what happens on your social media pages suddenly has soul.

Soul in the marketing sense is defined like this:

**The soul of marketing is the invisible message, inhabiting the body of the website or image or blurb or book cover or other marketing element.**

The soul of your marketing campaign shines out into the world, attracting your prospects like moths — and virtually compelling them to head for the checkouts

**Attention under vacuum pressure becomes emotion; emotion under vacuum pressure becomes action.**

We saw that in stories, vacuums usually start small and escalate in both magnitude and type, progressing from irritations to real losses to increasing danger and finally to the ‘life and death’ scenarios which form the climax of tales.

It will probably come as no surprise that the same escalating principle can be applied in marketing.

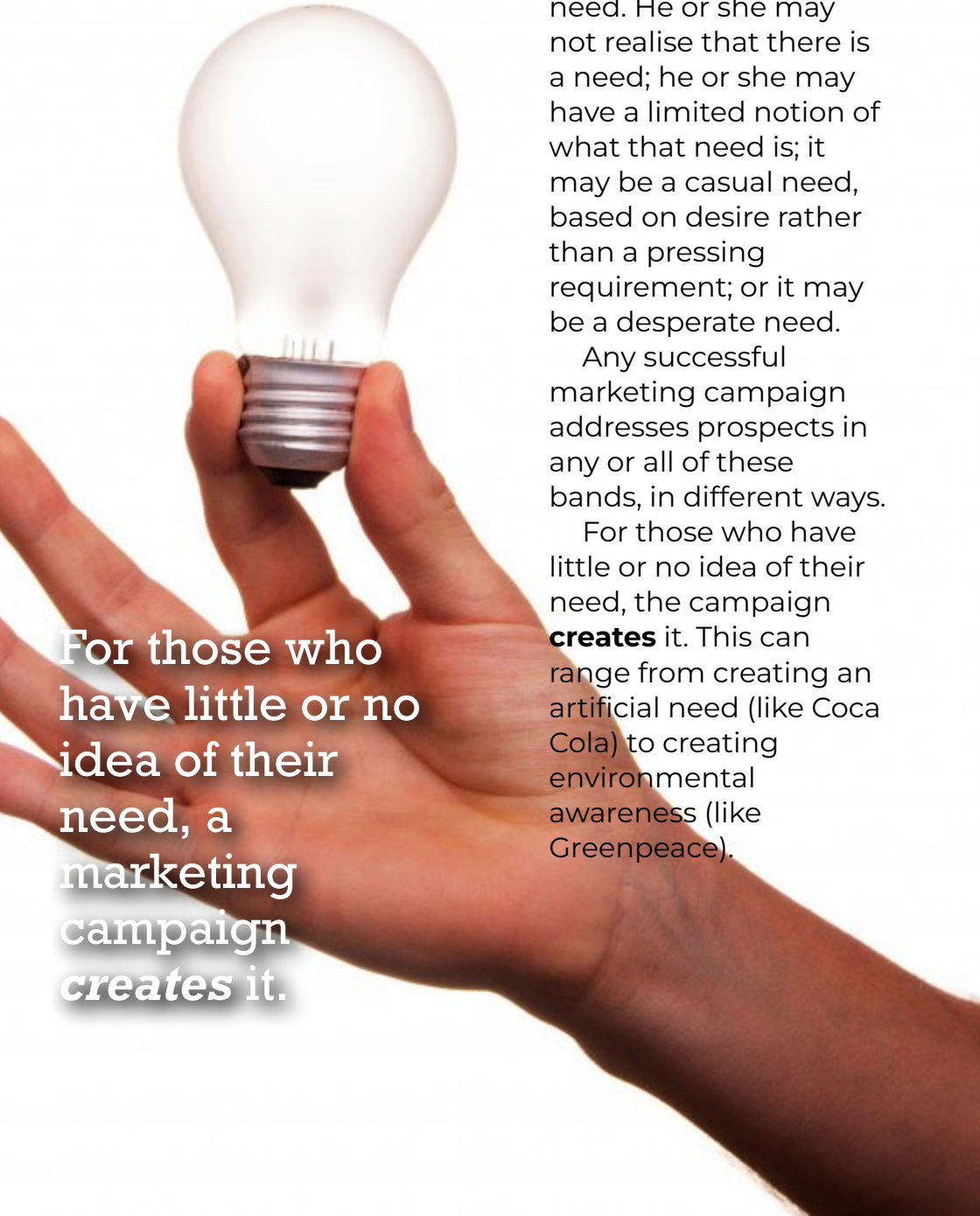
## **Course Marketing Exercise # 8:**

**Choose a couple of your favourite products.**

**What would you say was the ‘soul’ of their marketing message?**

**Is it hard to describe? See if you can put its emotional appeal into words.**





For those who have little or no idea of their need, a marketing campaign *creates* it.

It goes like this:

A prospect has a need. He or she may not realise that there is a need; he or she may have a limited notion of what that need is; it may be a casual need, based on desire rather than a pressing requirement; or it may be a desperate need.

Any successful marketing campaign addresses prospects in any or all of these bands, in different ways.

For those who have little or no idea of their need, the campaign **creates** it. This can range from creating an artificial need (like Coca Cola) to creating environmental awareness (like Greenpeace).

For those who have only a vague notion of their need, the campaign **clarifies and focuses** it. For those who have only a casual need, the campaign **excites and attracts attention**. For those who have a desperate need, the campaign simply has to point the prospect in the right direction and **remove barriers between them and the product or service**. A smart marketing campaign will contact and attract prospects who didn't even know they needed the product as well as those who had a desperate need for it.

No one knew they needed a fantasy about hobbits; no one knew they needed a galaxy-spanning tale featuring light sabres; no one realised they needed a story about a school for young wizards.

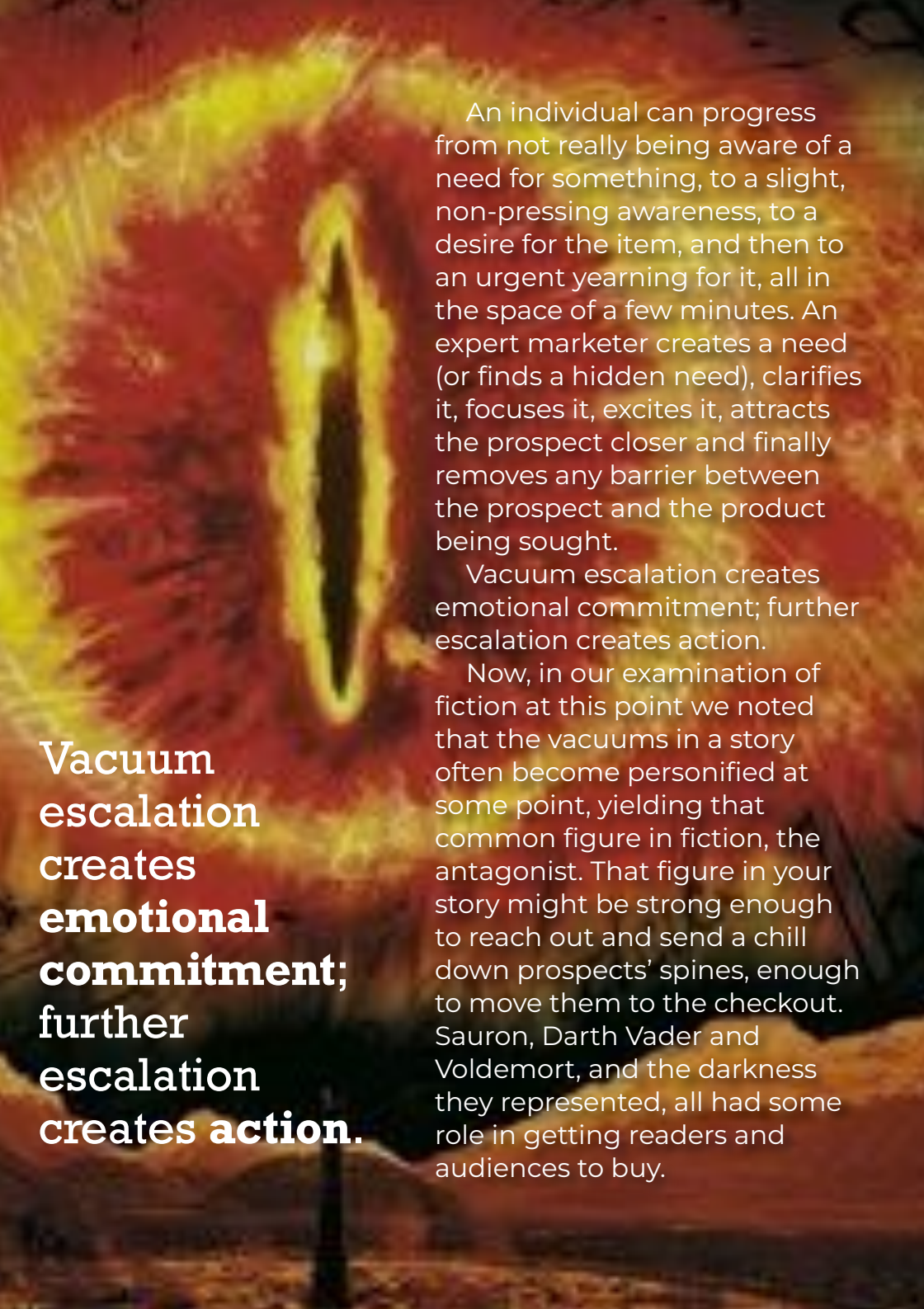
NEED

Clarify and  
Focus

Excite and  
Attract

Remove  
barriers

PRODUCT



**Vacuum  
escalation  
creates  
emotional  
commitment;  
further  
escalation  
creates action.**

An individual can progress from not really being aware of a need for something, to a slight, non-pressing awareness, to a desire for the item, and then to an urgent yearning for it, all in the space of a few minutes. An expert marketer creates a need (or finds a hidden need), clarifies it, focuses it, excites it, attracts the prospect closer and finally removes any barrier between the prospect and the product being sought.

Vacuum escalation creates emotional commitment; further escalation creates action.

Now, in our examination of fiction at this point we noted that the vacuums in a story often become personified at some point, yielding that common figure in fiction, the antagonist. That figure in your story might be strong enough to reach out and send a chill down prospects' spines, enough to move them to the checkout. Sauron, Darth Vader and Voldemort, and the darkness they represented, all had some role in getting readers and audiences to buy.

In literature, we've seen that there are physical, tangible vacuums which protagonists must overcome in order to save the day or achieve goals. Along with these are subjective barriers which they also have to defeat, and, if you want a story to be treasured, wider moral obstacles need to be dealt with too.

To be a successful marketer, you have to replicate this in marketing terms.

Just as all story worlds are created to have some semblance to the real world of readers in order that the illusion can have an effect on them, so must the vacuums which prospects face in the invented world of a marketing campaign resonate and echo for them.

Marketers must 'world-build' in the same way as fiction writers — but there's an underlying fundamental here: the purpose of convincing world-building in a marketing campaign is **to convert prospect attention into action.**



Prospect:  
Inaction,  
unawareness



Action =  
Customer

Certainly, campaigns have to present real-seeming external barriers to success for their prospects — but unless those obstacles resonate subjectively, they won't have very much effect on those prospects.

At the end of most successful tales, the protagonist's battle has become subjective, which communicates more powerfully than any challenge presented by simple external barriers. At the end of a marketing campaign, the prospect's battle must also become subjective.

Many, many marketers make a critical mistake over this. By assuming that prospects simply want their external problems solved, they fail to engage prospects on a deeper level. Marketers must create strings of convincing vacuums which convert customer attention into emotion and then emotion into action.

How?

Just as vacuums which are also objectively wrong within the value framework of a story create tales which last in the cultural memory, so marketing vacuums which touch on wider ethical values in society create lasting impressions on prospects.

The principle from storytelling is this:

**The larger the vacuum, the more emotion it can condense.**

Stories that are about defeating something morally wrong within the value framework of the story transcend circumstances and become treasured. But the same thing applies in marketing. A marketing campaign which is about defeating something morally wrong will impinge upon prospects' awareness and move them closer to action.

## **Course Marketing Exercise # 9:**

**Does your fiction contain elements of defeating something morally wrong?**

Note down some ideas.

Take your time doing this until you find one or two things that pertain.



When buying a book from you becomes a contribution to triumphing over some kind of external moral wrong, prospects are more likely to move to the checkout. You will have escalated the vacuum pressure and your prospects will reach for their money.



## Levels of Marketing

Per Newton, prospects are passive and will stay where they are or pass by unless **you** get them to move.

There are three distinct levels of action prospects take, depending on how you have managed them:

### 1. Primitive Marketing

A simple marketing campaign presents a product and just asks people to buy it. Some of these can be popular, but they have no real emotional longevity or power. The vacuums used are simple, straightforward; the prospects most likely to respond are the ones who already have a need for the product and are looking for a channel leading them to it.

This is your book ad, your spammed post, your desperate link hoping people will buy.

Sadly, this is the only type of marketing known to many authors. When it fails — and it does in over 90% of cases, because the people seeing it have no use or desire for what is on offer and are not being controlled in any way towards it — authors just can't understand what has happened and tend to give up.



## 2. Conventional Marketing

A deeper campaign features prospects triumphing over external obstacles and internal, emotional difficulties caused by something that they are missing. This type forms the bulk of the marketing which fills the airspace, newspaper pages, social media and television ads all over the world. Vacuums used are a little more complex, conjuring emotions; they are nuanced and longer-lasting. They serve to clarify and focus needs and desires and to urge action — but they are still only effective on those prospects who already have an inkling of what it is they are looking for.

This is the type of marketing which probably worked on you last time you bought something.

Think about it: when was the last time you purchased something other than food or some other essential item? What marketing was used to guide you to make that purchase?

That analysis might be revealing for you.




### 3. Advanced Marketing

The deepest sort of marketing campaign, though, is one which has described external obstructions and evoked internal impediments **in the right people** — but also presented **larger moral reasons** for the purchase. A campaign which communicates something meaningful to us not only about our needs but about the needs of a wider world, using vacuums which grow from small beginnings to immense proportions, correspondingly produces large and lasting emotional effects and guides prospects into acting.

This is when you've done all of the above but have attached profound, 'zeitgeisty' reasons why prospects should head for the checkout.

Then advanced marketing— and this is really what makes it 'advanced'— **it keeps the prospects and new customers around and actively cultivates them.**





In all cases, the production of action is dependent upon the manufacture of vacuums of one kind or another.

Which level of marketing are you using?

Are you simply presenting your book and asking people to buy it? (No matter how many times you 'spam' the internet like that, you won't get viable sales.)

Are you creating deeper effects by using emotional vacuums which impinge upon the subjective reality of your prospects? If you are, you're probably getting some sales because you'll be attracting the right prospects to some degree.

Or are you doing both the above, plus presenting moral dilemmas and difficulties with wider implications which a purchase of your book will help to solve? And then using further vacuums to keep your new customers around?

Clarifying your message and its corresponding vacuums, then using those vacuums in your marketing will move prospects into action.

**Advanced  
marketing  
keeps the  
prospects and  
new  
customers  
around *and*  
*actively*  
*cultivates*  
*them.***

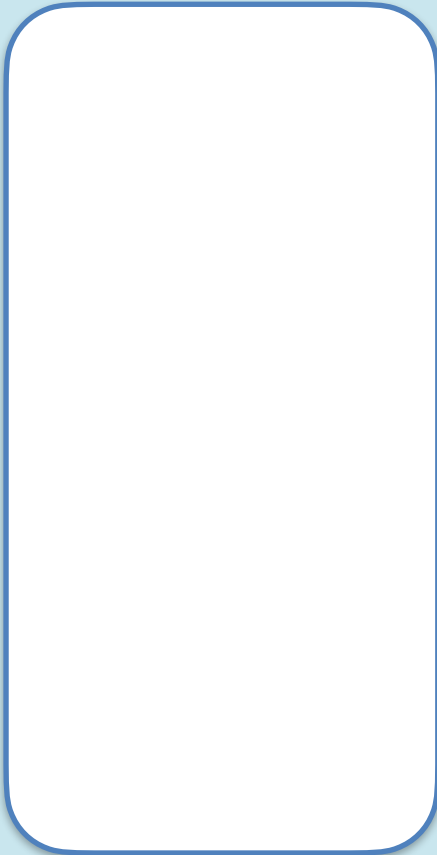


**Marketing Lesson Two:  
Your story message acts as a  
searchlight to seek out and  
find (or even create) those  
who need it; then their own  
vacuums are utilised to the  
fullest to cultivate a customer  
base.**

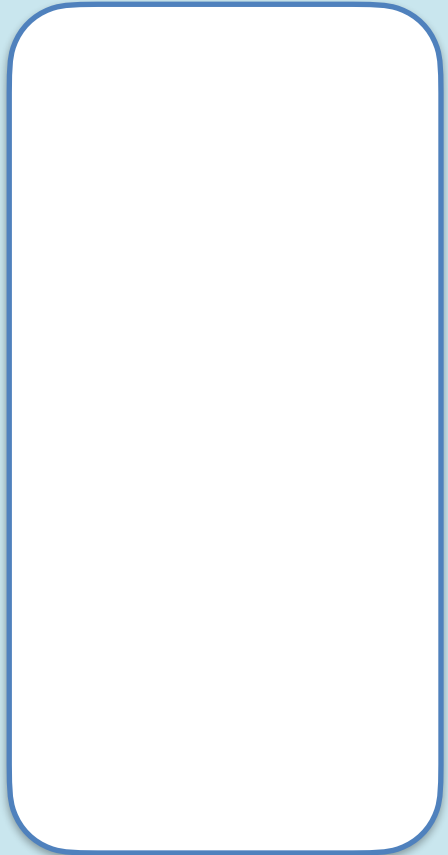
## **Marketing Lesson Two Exercise: REFINING YOUR MESSAGE**

**Make two separate lists. Spend some time on these lists as they will be crucial to your marketing success.**

**Who your prospects might be (readers of particular genres, particular age groups, etc.)**



**Who your prospects are definitely NOT (readers of particular genres, particular age groups, etc.)**



**Try to describe some emotional needs which your fiction might fulfil for readers:**



**Examples include: a need for companionship, a need for action, a need for knowledge, a need for sensation, a need for validation, a need for moral rightness, and so on — but be as specific as you can in relation to your stories .**



## **MARKET RESEARCH**

- 1. Using Marketing Lesson One as a starting point, research at least seven social media groups which cater for readers of books like yours.**
- 2. Join as many as you wish — but don't do anything except OBSERVE.**
- 3. What are the main topics being discussed? What are the main agreements and disagreements?  
Note all this down carefully.**

**Your next  
module:**

**BECOME A  
PROFESSIONAL  
AUTHOR  
COURSE  
PART TWO:  
SELL STORIES EFFECTIVELY**

Marketing Lesson Three:  
Your Marketing Machine

Grant P Hudson