

# Exodus from the Algorithm

Take Back Control: Story-Driven Email for  
Independent Ecommerce

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We wrote this book for people who are tired of chasing clicks and fighting algorithms that forget them overnight. If you're ready to build something slower, steadier, and more human, you're in the right place.

This isn't a "growth hack" manual. It's a quiet rebellion.

It's for the solo business owner staring at their sixth Instagram post of the week, wondering why nothing's landing. For the creative who keeps refreshing their engagement stats like it's a pulse check. For the brand that built something beautiful, but still feels like they're shouting into the void.

We know how exhausting it is to make something with care, only to watch it disappear in a sea of noise. We've been there. That's why Growalrus exists: to offer a way out of the endless performance loop and into something more sustainable. Something more grounded. Something that's yours.

In this book, we talk about email marketing, but really, we're talking about relationship building. Ownership. Permission. Trust. We believe email is the last honest space on the internet. It doesn't

care about followers, hashtags, or timing tricks. It doesn't forget you just because you didn't post today. Email waits. It listens. It remembers.

We believe that a small list full of real people is worth more than a giant audience that barely pays attention. We believe your voice matters more than your velocity. We believe slow growth isn't just okay, it's powerful.

And most of all, we believe that you don't have to be everywhere. You just have to show up in the right place, with the right message, for the right people.

That's what we hope this book helps you do.

We're glad you're here. Really. And if anything you read makes you exhale, nod, or say, "Finally, someone gets it," then we hope you'll stick around.

We send out content by email that we don't publish anywhere else, deeper dives, better stories, quieter reflections. If you haven't subscribed yet, there's a place at the end of this book where you can do that. No pressure. But if you're looking for a better way to stay connected, email is where we keep the good stuff.

Welcome to *Exodus from the Algorithm*. Let's build something that lasts.

# **The Growalrus Vision:**

**You didn't change, the platform did.**

One day your content soared. Shared, seen, selling.

The next, it vanished beneath a thousand sponsored posts and a timeline no one asked for.

This book is for the people who built something real, and watched the algorithm move the goalposts. Again.

It's for those who are done renting space in a system that forgets them.

And ready to build their own.

**Email is the outpost.**

The quiet, powerful corner of the internet where you still own the conversation.

Where reach doesn't fluctuate with ad spend.

Where trust compounds.

Where relationships grow.

We're not fighting for space in a feed we don't control.

We're reclaiming the conversation. One inbox,  
one real human, at a time.

This isn't just strategy.

It's sovereignty.

And this book is how you get it back.

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# Chapter 1

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## When the Feed Forgets You

One day you're riding high.

The next, you're invisible.

At first, the feed feels like a promise kept. You post something honest. Something you're proud of. It catches and it climbs. People like it, share it, and comment with little fireworks of approval.

And you think *"Maybe this is it. Maybe I'm finally being heard."*

But the feed isn't built to remember. It's built to consume.

The next post struggles. The one after that sinks without a trace. You're shouting into a wind tunnel while the algorithm recalibrates, chases the next shiny thing, reroutes attention like a river cutting new channels overnight.

It's not you. It's never been you.

You did not become less valuable. You did not suddenly forget how to serve or create or connect.

You're just playing on rented ground, and the landlord is a machine that doesn't love you back.

The deeper trap isn't just losing visibility. It's losing faith in yourself.

Every drop in reach feels personal. Every ghosted post feels like proof you're failing. Every quiet launch, every ignored caption, they pile up, whispering:

*Maybe you're not good enough. Maybe no one cares anymore*

### **Because the game is rigged.**

The algorithm doesn't want you to succeed. It wants you to perform. Then it wants you to vanish. So it can move on to the next act.

It optimizes for friction, not meaning. For time spent, not lives changed. For addiction, not connection.

And when you pour yourself into something and it disappears into silence, it doesn't just steal your attention. It steals your energy. Your courage. Your creativity. It makes you question whether anything you're doing matters.

That's the hidden cost. Not just the views lost, but the voice muted.

And yet, if you're like most creators or small business owners, you've been told you have no choice. That this is where the people are. That if you just "post consistently," the algorithm will reward you. That if you hustle hard enough, the machine will love you back.

It won't.

It remembers nothing. It values nothing. It wants you spinning your wheels forever, hoping for one more glimpse of visibility.

But you don't have to play that game forever.

### **Liz Wilcox knows this better than most.**

Liz didn't start out trying to build a business. She was a single mom, living full-time in an RV, documenting her life on the road while figuring it out as she went.

She had no background in marketing. No seed funding. Just a deep love of community, a \$9 offer she believed in, and the grit to show up anyway.

At first, she did everything the experts told her to do. She posted daily. Hopped on trends. Wrote captions designed to maximize engagement.

For a while, it worked.

Then, one day, it didn't.

The reach dropped. The shares dried up. The sales flatlined. It wasn't burnout. It wasn't laziness. It was the algorithm deciding someone else's content was more valuable that day.

And Liz had a choice: keep dancing for a machine that didn't care, or find a new way to reach the people who did.

### **She chose email.**

Not because it was flashy. But because it was *hers*.

She started building a list. Not tens of thousands, just one person at a time. She sent emails that sounded like her, not a brand. Not polished, not optimized. Just honest.

And something amazing happened.

People responded. They clicked. They replied. They stayed.

Liz went on to build a \$20,000/month membership business from a \$9 product, without viral videos, without ad spend, and without gambling her future on the feed.

She didn't win by being loud. She won by being *remembered*.

**That's what email gives you - reach and reliability.**

Every email you send goes directly to someone who asked for it.

There's no roulette wheel. No shadowban. No algorithmic shift that buries your message under yesterday's news.

You're not chasing strangers. You're nurturing a relationship.

And that changes everything.

Because when someone lets you into their inbox, they're not just giving you space on a screen. They're giving you *attention*, willingly. And in this economy, attention freely given is the most powerful currency there is.

You didn't fail. You didn't fall behind. You just outgrew a system that never had your best interests at heart.

The algorithm doesn't want you to succeed. It wants you to depend on it.

Email doesn't want anything from you. It just gives you the space to speak.

And it listens.

So if you're feeling invisible, you're not broken. You're just building on ground that was never meant to hold you.

It's time to plant your flag somewhere they can't move the goalposts. Somewhere you own. Somewhere conversations still matter.

The next chapter is about that place: the last honest space on the internet.

## Chapter 2

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### **The False Promise of the Algorithm**

The algorithm flatters you first.

It gives you a little taste, an unexpected spike in views, a reel that takes off, a post that fills your inbox with comments. And in that moment, it feels like magic. Like momentum. Like maybe this is how it starts.

But it wasn't connection, it was a coin toss.

Because the next day? Silence. The same kind of content. The same effort, the same heart, and yet... nothing.

Not because of what you did, but because of what the algorithm decided.

You didn't get worse. You didn't get lazy. You didn't suddenly lose your spark.

The feed just shifted. And you weren't in favour anymore.

That's the false promise. It looks like opportunity, but it's really just instability.

It rewards you just enough to keep you spinning. And when the reach drops, the engagement dries up, and the sales don't follow. It's hard not to blame yourself.

**But this isn't personal. It's mechanical.**

The algorithm doesn't know you. It doesn't care about your product, your people, or your purpose. It's tuned for time-on-platform, not trust. It optimizes for endless scroll, not lasting relationships.

So if you're building your business inside a feed, you're building on a foundation that was never designed to support you. And when that foundation shifts (and it will) it takes your momentum with it.

The most frustrating part?

You're told this is normal. That volatility is the price of visibility. That you should keep "playing the game," adjusting, pivoting, adapting... until eventually, something sticks.

But here's the truth: the rules are invisible. They change constantly. And the platform will never tell you why.



You'll never know which word triggered the drop. Which image caused the slowdown. Whether it was the caption, the time, the format, or simply the whim of a system designed to test and discard like a gambler cycling through decks.

Creators burn out not from the work, but from the uncertainty. The erosion of control. The sense that no matter how hard you try, it could all disappear tomorrow and you wouldn't even get an explanation.

And you wouldn't be wrong.

Because in the algorithm's world, you are the product, not the priority.

### **The feed trains you to think short-term.**

It encourages virality, not value. It teaches you to optimize for attention, not connection.

But attention fades fast. And when you've poured yourself into something that vanishes in 48 hours, it doesn't just cost you sales, it costs you sanity.

You start making content for the machine instead of your people. You chase trends you don't believe in. You contort your voice to fit the algorithm's appetite.

And little by little, you disappear from your own work.

That's not sustainable. That's not business. That's not the future.

So what is?

### **Let's talk about Dan.**

Dan runs a small online store that sells hand-made leather goods like wallets, belts, and personalized gifts. At first, he did what everyone told him to do: TikToks, Instagram reels, hashtag strategy, influencer outreach. One video blew up. Tens of thousands of views. His inbox lit up overnight.

Then... nothing.

Same products. Same style. Crickets.

Dan tried to recreate the magic. He remade the video three different ways. Changed the music. Re-cut the shots. Posted at peak hours.

Nothing worked.

The algorithm had moved on, and it didn't leave a forwarding address.

So Dan tried something else.

He opened a free Brevo account. Took the 237 email addresses he'd collected during checkout but never emailed. And he wrote something simple:

*“Hey, it’s Dan. You bought a wallet from me a while ago, and I just wanted to say thank you. I’m working on a few new designs and wanted to share the story behind them, if you’re interested.”*

That email got a 68% open rate. He got five replies. One said, “This is the first email from a brand I’ve actually read all year.”

And slowly, Dan stopped chasing the algorithm. He started writing once a week, stories from the workshop, sneak peeks, customer highlights.

Sales didn’t spike. They stabilized.

He wasn’t going viral. He was building something.

That’s what email marketing offers: not fireworks, but fire. A steady burn. A real relationship. You don’t need an unpredictable system. You need a predictable rhythm. You don’t need to guess what the algorithm wants. You need to know what your customers value.

And they value you.

Not the version of you that panders. The real one.  
The one that doesn't disappear when the feed forgets.

**The algorithm isn't your enemy. But it's  
not your ally either.**

It's a casino, and email is a letter.

One builds debt. The other builds trust.

This book isn't about quitting marketing. It's  
about quitting volatility.

We're not opting out. We're opting *in*, to  
ownership, to rhythm, to calm.

You don't need another lever to pull. You need  
something you can build with your hands.  
Something that grows roots.

That's what we'll start doing in the next chapter.

## Chapter 3

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### **A Quiet Place They Still Listen**

When the feed falls silent, it feels like the world stops listening.

But that isn't true.

The world still listens, just not where you're shouting.

There's a quieter place. A space without swipes or scrolls. Where ads don't crowd your message and your words don't have to compete with a hundred dancing distractions.

That place is the inbox.

It's slower. Smaller. Infinitely more human.

Because the inbox is permission-based. You don't sneak in, you're invited. And that changes everything.

Here, you're not another piece of content shuffled into a feed at the mercy of machine whim. You're not clickbait. You're not noise.

You're a guest. A name they recognize. A voice they chose to hear.

### **That choice is everything.**

Because in the inbox, there's no mystery lever that decides your fate. No silent demotion. No sudden suppression after months of consistency.

If someone joins your list, you stay, until you give them a reason to leave.

You're not held hostage by an algorithm. You're held aloft by trust.

And trust is a far sturdier foundation than any trending sound or SEO tweak.

In a world of filtered feeds and manufactured reach, the inbox is a place where conversations can still breathe. Where relationships unfold line by line.

It may not be viral. It may not go wide. But it goes deep.

And depth is what lasts.

## **Let's talk about Ellory & Finch.**

Ellory & Finch is a small menswear brand based in London. They weren't a household name. They didn't have a massive budget or a celebrity endorsement. What they had was craft, a belief in timeless design, quality fabrics, and the small details most people overlook.

For a while, that belief was enough. They built a following through Instagram, ran a few paid ads, got some traction with influencers. Sales ticked upward. The feed worked. Until it didn't.

One season, everything stalled. Ads got expensive. Organic reach collapsed. Their beautifully styled posts, once reliable drivers of traffic, barely moved the needle.

And all the while, the shelves were full. The bills were waiting. And the algorithm was nowhere to be found.

But tucked away in a spreadsheet was a list. Names. People. Customers who had once cared. It didn't look like much. But it was real.

Ellory & Finch didn't launch a campaign. They didn't hire a consultant. They didn't strategize. They took iPhone photos of their current stock.

They uploaded them to a basic shop page. They wrote an email.

Simple. Honest. Human.

“Hey - things have slowed down a bit over here. We’ve got pieces we believe in, made the hard way. If any of them speak to you, we’d be grateful for your support.”

That email made over £30,000 in less than three weeks. No ad spend. No viral hook. Just real people. Real clothes. A real message.

And that moment, when people responded, clicked, bought, replied, it wasn’t just about survival.

It was about remembering what so many brands forget: You don’t need more followers. You need a list that listens.

Email isn’t glamorous. It doesn’t promise overnight fame. It won’t get you trending.

But it will get you remembered.

It lets you build something you can come back to. Something you can depend on.



## **A feed forgets. The inbox remembers.**

And more than that, it remembers *you*. Not the optimized version of you. Not the filtered, high-gloss, high-stakes persona built for social media performance. Just you.

Your tone. Your pacing. Your name in the inbox.

It's the digital equivalent of someone saving your letter in a drawer.

That's what email allows: intimacy at scale. A rhythm of conversation. A chance to become part of someone's life, not just their feed. And once you've been welcomed into that space, you don't have to fight for attention anymore.

You've already earned it.

So no, email isn't a silver bullet. But it is a quiet revolution.

It's a different game entirely. One where you don't have to shout. You just have to show up.

And that's what we'll explore next: what makes an email worth opening? And why, once people do, they'll want to stay.

## Chapter 4

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### **You Don't Need a Louder Voice - Just a Real One**

If the feed taught us anything, it's this: louder doesn't mean heard.

More posts. Sharper hooks. Better lighting. Trending sounds. Catchier hashtags. All of it designed to help you get noticed, only to be ignored anyway.

Because shouting isn't the answer. Being real is.

The algorithm has conditioned us to perform, not connect. It teaches us to chase novelty instead of nurture familiarity. To adapt our voice to its preference, instead of our people's needs.

And that's the trap.

**In a world where everyone is performing,  
honesty cuts through.**

People don't crave more noise. They crave a signal. A voice that sounds like it was written with care, not crafted for clicks.

They don't open emails because the subject line tricked them. They open them because they trust the human being behind the message.

Trust doesn't come from volume. It comes from presence.

Think about the people you still read. The ones who could write three words and you'd still click.

They're not polished to perfection. They're not trying to please the algorithm. They're not keyword-optimized down to the bone.

They just sound like themselves. Their words feel like a table you've been invited to, not a billboard screaming on the highway.

That's the kind of voice you're cultivating now.

Not the one that chases trends. Not the one that pleases platforms. The one that feels like home to the right people. Because writing emails isn't about being raw for the sake of it. It's about being true. It's about writing with clarity, rhythm, and care.

Every line earns the next. Every message is a conversation, not a campaign.

**Liz Wilcox didn't send flashy emails. She sent real ones.**

Weekly check-ins from the road. RV tips. Reflections. Mishaps and memories. No bold graphics. No fancy formatting. Just honest words in plain text.

And they worked.

Her audience didn't just read her emails, they *waited* for them. They replied. They shared. They bought. Not because her subject lines were clever, but because her voice was consistent.

She wasn't the loudest. She was the most *trusted*.

Ellory & Finch didn't build their comeback on paid ads or influencer partnerships. They sent a single email. No countdown timers. No urgency scripts. No emotional manipulation.

Just:

“Hey. We're still here. We made this for you.”

And their audience responded. Because trust doesn't need fanfare. It just needs to feel human.

## Let's zoom out.

Consider a niche skincare brand, family-run and handmade in small batches. On social media, their posts get buried. Product videos compete with viral dances and AI-generated faces. They post twice a day, optimize their hashtags, and get a trickle of likes.

Then they send an email with the subject line:

"Why our founder still stirs every batch by hand."

It gets a 58% open rate. Dozens of replies. And a surge in repeat orders.

Because that story doesn't belong in a 5-second scroll. It belongs in a space where someone can slow down and *listen*.

Now take a travel gear company. On Instagram, they spent weeks prepping a giveaway campaign. The algorithm buried it. Only 12 entries.

Then they send this email:

"How our backpack survived 6 countries, 2 breakdowns, and one stolen passport."

The click-through rate triples their previous high. People forward it. Ask questions. And buy the bag.

Because storytelling doesn't scale well in a feed. But it thrives in the inbox.

Even a humble Etsy shop selling handmade dog collars saw this firsthand. They used to post daily. Photos, reels, pet puns. Engagement plateaued.

Then they sent an email titled:

"What I learned making a collar for a dog who couldn't walk."

And everything changed.

**These aren't marketing hacks. They're reminders.**

That when you speak from the heart, in a place where people are ready to listen, good things happen. You don't need to be louder. You need to be recognizable. Reliable. Resonant. The feed wants you to believe your value lies in volume. That the more you post, the more you matter.

But your customers aren't looking for performers. They're looking for people. And email is where people still write like people.

So if you're tired of trying to be louder, stop. Speak clearly instead. Let your voice be your signature. Let your message be a mirror, not a megaphone.

Because when you write like yourself, the right people won't just hear you. They'll remember you.

And the next chapter is where we put that voice to work.

# Chapter 5

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## **Why They'll Open (and Why They'll Stay)**

An open is an act of trust.

It's not about clever tricks or personalization tokens. It's not about screaming SUBJECT LINES in all caps or slapping on emojis like digital bait.

It's about one thing: belief.

A quiet, invisible moment when someone sees your name in their inbox and decides, maybe without even realizing it, "This is worth opening."

That decision? It's sacred. And it's not earned through force. It's earned through rhythm. Through tone. Through time.

So what makes someone open? What makes them stay?

Let's start at the beginning.



## **They Open Because...**

...you've shown up with something valuable. Not just once. Not by random chance, but by intention.

They open because you've made a promise (spoken or unspoken) that what is inside your email matters.

They remember that the last message helped. That it made them feel something. That it didn't waste their time.

They open because your voice is different from the noise. It sounds like a person, not a promotion.

They open because the relationship has a rhythm. And that rhythm becomes a signal, steady and reliable, worth tuning into.

And because they remember the last subject line you wrote wasn't a bait-and-switch.

## **Real Examples from Real Sellers**

Let's look at some ecommerce entrepreneurs who learned what makes a subject line matter:

### **1. Handmade Soy Candle Brand**

- Subject line: "Why we stopped selling our best-seller (for now)"

- Open rate: 63%
- Why it worked: Curiosity met transparency. It wasn't about urgency, it was about a story. Inside, they shared how supply chain issues affected quality. Readers respected the honesty, and sales increased when it relaunched.

## 2. **Fitness Apparel Shop for Runners**

- Subject line: "3 things I didn't expect in my first marathon"
- Open rate: 58%
- Why it worked: Relatable. Human. A shared experience. The founder wrote about their personal struggles during a race and tied it back to gear designed for comfort. It sold out in days.

## 3. **Zero-Waste Kitchen Brand**

- Subject line: "Don't compost this mistake"
- Open rate: 52%
- Why it worked: Wordplay and relevance. The email explained a common beginner error in going zero-waste and included a gentle product suggestion that solved it. High click-throughs, zero unsubscribes.

#### 4. **Luxury Pen and Stationery Shop**

- Subject line: "I wrote this with a pen I hated"
- Open rate: 60%
- Why it worked: Unexpected, self-aware, and intriguing. Inside was a story about design flaws, testing prototypes, and eventually creating a pen they loved. The honesty drove massive engagement.
- **Online Plant Shop**
- Subject line: "What my cactus taught me about patience"
- Open rate: 64%
- Why it worked: Evocative and metaphorical. A blend of storytelling and subtle philosophy. They connected their audience to care routines, which led to a 34% bump in product page traffic.

#### 5. **Travel Accessories Company**

- Subject line: "Packing for heartbreak"
- Open rate: 56%
- Why it worked: Emotional depth. The founder shared a vulnerable story about a solo trip after a breakup. No hard sell, just presence. Readers stayed for the story, and the gear sold itself.

All of these worked not because they shouted, but because they *spoke*.

Not because they promised discounts, but because they promised truth.

### **They Stay Because...**

...you keep your promises.

You don't just deliver, you delight. You surprise, you honor their time, and you make them feel seen.

They stay because your emails aren't always about selling, they're about showing up. They stay because your voice is one they've come to trust. And when trust deepens, so does engagement.

It's not a trick, it's a relationship. That's what you're building; not just opens or clicks.

*A cadence of care.*

### **The Subject Line is a Promise**

Every subject line is a little contract. A whispered invitation.

*"Come inside - this is worth your time."*

If what's inside breaks that promise, if it's clickbait, fluff, or filler, they won't trust you next time. And once that trust bridge has been burned, it's nearly impossible to rebuild it on the ashes.

But if what's inside holds weight? If it gives more than it takes? They remember.

And they return.

That's not a campaign. That's a connection.

### **Your Readers Are Humans. Not Metrics.**

They're not leads, or list sizes, or conversion rates. They're people.

People with inboxes full of noise. People with a thousand other things they could be doing. People who made the decision to give you a sliver of attention, and might give you more, if you honor it.

So write like it.

Write like your next email is the one they forward to a friend. The one they quote to a colleague. The one they reread later, not because it sold something, but because it *said* something.

It made them laugh. It made them reflect. It made them feel something other than fatigue.

That's how you build not just a list, but a following.

And the next chapter is about what you do with that attention, how to turn a quiet click into a conversation that sticks.

## Chapter 6

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### Story Is the Strategy

People don't remember bullet points. They remember **stories**.

A product spec might convince the head, but a story moves the heart. And in the inbox, heart wins.

Because email isn't just a delivery system. It's a stage. A confessional. A fireside. And the best way to sell on that stage? Stop selling. Start storytelling.

Stories make meaning. They don't just communicate, they connect. They say, *"I've been where you are."* They make your reader feel less alone. Less weird. Less unsure.

When someone feels understood, they listen longer. They lean in. That's why story isn't just an ingredient in your marketing. It *is* the marketing.

Forget the feed's short attention span. Forget the shrinking captions, the dancing hooks, the shouty templates. Those things aren't built to last.

## **Email gives you space. Breath. Time.**

You don't need to spill your life story. You just need one honest thread. One moment that means something. One true thing they can hold onto.

It could be joyful: the way a barista made your morning with a ridiculous pun. It could be sobering: the quiet anxiety before your first product launch. It could be tender: the sound of your child laughing while you work at the kitchen table.

It could be heartbreak, or hilarity, or even just a smell that sends you time-traveling.

Whatever it is, make it real.

Because when your customer sees *their* experience inside your story, something unlocks. And suddenly, you're not selling to them. You're walking with them.

A camping gear brand once emailed its list with this subject line:

"We forgot the poles. And we still laughed."

Inside was a short story from a customer who ordered a tent, drove six hours into the mountains, only to realize they'd left the poles in their garage.



They had to rig a makeshift shelter out of hiking sticks and tape. It was uncomfortable. Cold. And oddly hilarious.

**The email didn't apologize or pitch. It just told the story.**

That email had the highest open and reply rate they'd ever seen. Not because it was polished. Because it was human.

A boutique skincare brand once told the story of a woman who began using their moisturizer while undergoing chemotherapy. She said it wasn't about the product, it was about the ritual. The quiet dignity of doing something gentle for herself while her body fought a war.

That email changed the tone of the brand forever. It stopped being about glow and gloss. It became about care. Intimacy. Resilience.

And people noticed.

Story gives the customer a place to belong. It wraps your product in emotion. It turns a transaction into a memory.

## **It makes your voice unforgettable.**

After Ellory & Finch's emergency email saved their business, they could have leaned on urgency forever. Flash sales. Countdown clocks. Discount fatigue.

But they didn't.

*They told stories.*

Stories about the process. About imperfect sewing machines and late-night coffee and the designer who nearly gave up halfway through the line.

Each email wasn't a pitch, it was a page. Customers weren't just buying jackets, they were buying into a journey.

And that's what stories do: They make your work matter. You don't need a perfect past. You need an honest one.

Tiny stories. Real details. Deep resonance.

## **They sell because they're not selling.**

Because email isn't just a marketing tool. It's a literary form.

A stage for humour. A canvas for heartbreak. A place where you can write something that matters, more than just “limited time only.”

You can write the sentence someone reads on a bad day that makes them feel seen. You can write something they forward to a friend, whispering, “This made me think of you.” You can write something they remember weeks later while brushing their teeth.

You can write something that lingers.

Poe. Frost. Plath. They didn’t write in bulk. They wrote truth.

And you can too.

Even in something as humble as an email.

Especially in something as humble as an email.

In a marketplace full of noise, story is how people remember you. And once they remember you, they trust you. And once they trust you, you don’t have to shout.

The next chapter is about how to make the most of that trust, how to welcome people into your world, one story at a time.

# Chapter 7

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## **Welcome Is a Sequence, Not a Sentence**

First impressions matter.

But lasting impressions matter more.

Most brands treat the welcome email like a receipt.

“Thanks for signing up. Here’s a coupon.”

And then, silence.

Or worse, immediate, desperate selling.

It’s like walking into a house you’ve never visited and getting hit in the face with a sales pitch before you’ve even taken off your shoes.

But a real welcome? It’s different.

It’s not a wave from across the street. It’s an open door. A warm light inside. A chair pulled out at the table. It’s the kind of greeting that makes you feel seen. Not scanned.

And it takes more than one message.

## **The Welcome Is the First Chapter in a Relationship**

Think of your welcome sequence like a first conversation.

If someone says “Hi” and immediately asks you to buy something, you feel cornered.

If someone says “Hi” and disappears, you forget they ever spoke.

But if someone says “Hi,” shares a little about themselves, asks about you, tells a story, makes you laugh, offers something useful, you want to keep talking.

That’s what a real welcome does. It creates resonance and it sets the tone.

It tells the reader: *this is not a blast, it’s a bond.*

In a marketplace flooded with automated noise, this is your chance to whisper something meaningful. And if you do it right, they’ll listen.

### **The 4-Part Welcome Framework**

The most effective welcome sequences usually follow a four-part rhythm:

## 1. The Invitation

Start human. Start warm. No sales pitch, just presence.

Example:

*“Hey, I’m James. I started [brand name] because I couldn’t find a single good travel backpack that didn’t fall apart after one trip. Know what I mean?”*

Include a simple freebie if it’s natural, not forced. A checklist, a guide, a recipe, a playlist. Something useful, relevant, and sincerely helpful.

## 2. The Story

Let them into your “why.” Not your elevator pitch, your turning point.

Example:

*“I launched our shop from my kitchen table after getting laid off during the pandemic. I made five candles, posted them on Etsy, and cried when someone bought one. That was the first spark. The rest is wax history.”*

This creates emotional context, the heartbeat behind the business. It gives the subscriber a reason to root for you.

### 3. The Help

Offer real value before you ask for anything. A tip. A guide. A strategy.

This builds credibility and shows generosity. You're not just there to sell, you're here to serve.

### 4. The Gentle Ask

Only now, once trust is planted, do you extend an invitation.

Not "BUY NOW!"

Instead: "If you're ready, here's what we've made for you."

## Real-World Sequences That Work

### The Baby Boutique

- **Email 1:** "Welcome to the village." A thank-you and a free guide: *"10 Sleep Tips for New Parents."*
- **Email 2:** A story about the founder's 3 a.m. breakdown and the one lullaby that always worked.
- **Email 3:** A curated list of "New Parent Must-Haves," organized by age.

- **Email 4:** An invitation to join the “Nap-Time Notes” email club, where parents can ask questions, vent, and get real tips from the trenches.

**Why it works:** It doesn’t sell. It *soothes*. And it welcomes parents not just as shoppers, but as humans.

## **The Travel Gear Brand**

- **Email 1:** “We’re Wanderers, Too.” Founder intro and their worst lost-luggage story.
- **Email 2:** “The Backpack That Survived 7 Countries.” A customer story with scars, stamps, and pride.
- **Email 3:** A first-time solo traveler checklist with free PDF.
- **Email 4:** “Our Top 3 Travel Picks - Based on 100,000 Miles.” A soft nudge with genuine recommendations.

**Why it works:** It tells stories that make people nod. It makes gear feel like part of the journey, not just a product line.



## **The Candle Shop That Hated Candle Stereotypes**

- **Email 1:** “We Burn the Rules, Not Just Wax.” Welcome and short story: founder’s grandmother used to make candles with leftover bacon grease.
- **Email 2:** A scent memory essay, how their “Sunday Morning” candle was based on old library books and burnt toast.
- **Email 3:** A guide: “Which Candle to Burn for Which Mood.”
- **Email 4:** “Our Weirdest Scent Yet (and Why We Love It).” Includes gentle product spotlight.

**Why it works:** It’s quirky, confident, real. Their audience doesn’t feel like buyers, they feel like insiders.

## **Don’t Automate Warmth Out of the Sequence**

It’s easy to fall into the trap of automating everything.

You copy a template. Insert a discount. Slap in your links. Hit schedule.

But what if your welcome sequence didn't feel like a funnel?

What if it felt like *a letter from someone you'd like to know better?*

Your readers aren't expecting Shakespeare, but they are hoping for something real.

That's why this chapter isn't just about structure.

It's about *intention*.

## **Let's Talk Emotional Resonance**

A welcome email is a tone-setter.

It's not just what you say, it's how you make them feel.

Will your emails feel like:

- A hallway of advertisements?
- Or a handwritten note tucked inside a package?

Will they remember your brand like:

- Another digital shout?
- Or the email they read in the morning light, coffee in hand, and smiled?

Here's the truth:

Your welcome sequence *can* make someone cry.  
Or laugh. Or finally exhale after a long day.

That's not hyperbole. That's connection.

And in a marketplace overrun by "50% off today only," connection is the rarest commodity.

## **Welcome Sequences Across Undeserved Niches**

- **Pet Memorial Products**
  - A story about losing their own beloved pet.
  - "How grief lives in small moments."
  - A guide on preserving ashes respectfully.
  - A gentle note: "We make things to remember, not to forget."
- **Men's Mental Health Subscription Box**
  - Welcome note: "You don't have to man up here."
  - A personal story of anxiety and therapy.
  - 5 tips to start journaling if you've never tried.
  - An invitation to explore the current box: "Curated calm for complicated days."
- **Home Woodshop Tool Brand**

- Founder's story: taught by a grandfather who swore by one chisel for 40 years.
- A guide: "3 Woodworking Mistakes That Took Me 10 Years to Fix."
- "Meet the Makers" workshop photos.
- "Ready to build with us?"

## **Beyond Structure: The Soul of Your Welcome**

Here's the secret most brands don't know: Your welcome sequence isn't about proving yourself. It's about *revealing yourself*.

Not just what you sell, but *who you are when you're not selling*.

Your values. Your quirks. Your voice.

That's what people come back for.

That's what turns a browser into a buyer.

And a buyer into a believer.

## **You're Not Just Writing Emails - You're Hosting a Relationship**

Every message is an extension of your handshake.

An echo of your voice.

A reminder: *Hey, I see you. I'm still here. And I still care.*

A welcome sequence is not four emails.

It's the start of a story.

One that your customer may choose to carry with them for months, years, even a lifetime.

So make it good.

Make it honest.

Make it matter.

## Chapter 8

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### **Build Trust Before You Ask for Action**

Most brands rush the moment.

They meet a new subscriber and go straight for the sale:

“Hey! I’m glad you’re here. Want to spend \$97?”

It’s like meeting someone at a party, shaking their hand, and immediately asking them to help you move a couch. It’s premature. Jarring. Transactional.

In the inbox, it’s fatal.

You might get a click, but it’ll be shallow. You might get a sale, but it won’t stick. Because every ask has a weight, and that weight can only be carried by trust.

**Trust Isn’t the Result of the Ask. It’s the  
Prerequisite.**

You can’t shortcut your way into someone’s confidence.

You have to earn it. Slowly. Repeatedly. Without strings.

Trust is the currency that buys attention.

Not flashy graphics. Not first-time-buyer discounts. Not exclamation marks.

It's built in the spaces between the asks.

The quiet moments where you show up for them without needing something back.

And when you do finally ask (if you've done it right) it doesn't feel like a request.

It feels like a *natural step* in a relationship already in motion.

### **What Trust Looks Like in Email**

Let's start with something simple: what does "trust" actually look like?

It looks like this:

- A subscriber sees your name and opens the email before reading the subject line.
- They forward your message to a friend because it says something that matters.
- They click not because of scarcity, but because of sincerity.

- They reply just to say thanks.

And if they don't open? They don't unsubscribe. Because you've become a voice worth keeping around, even when life gets busy.

This is the power of the inbox when trust is front and centre. It becomes a conversation, not a campaign.

## **A Small Brand That Built Big Trust**

Let's talk about **Rhea**, who runs a handmade ceramic mug shop out of her garage.

When she launched her newsletter, she didn't start with promotions. She didn't blast her list with "Buy Now!" subject lines.

She started with a story.

Her first email:

*"I'm not sure if anyone will even read this. But I promised myself I'd write to you the way I talk to my best friend. So here's what I've been working on. Here's what broke in the kiln this week. Here's what made me keep going."*



People replied. People shared it. And when she finally mentioned she was taking pre-orders, she sold out in four hours.

Not because she had a funnel.

Because she had a *voice*, and people trusted it.

## **What a Trust-Centered Sequence Might Look Like**

Let's say you sell specialty gardening tools.

You just welcomed a new subscriber. Here's what a trust-building series could look like:

- **Email 1: A Story:** “My grandmother grew peonies the size of dinner plates. She taught me everything. This business is her legacy.”
- **Email 2: A Gift:** A free download: “3 Secrets for Healthier Soil.” (It's good. Really good.)
- **Email 3: A Win + Vulnerability:** “Last year, we accidentally shipped 300 units with a faulty clasp. We owned it. We fixed it. And we gained more customers than we lost.”

- **Email 4: The Ask:** “We just restocked our most requested tool. If you’re ready, we’d love to be part of your garden.”

No pressure. No fluff. Just presence, purpose, and trust.

## **The Three Pillars of Email-Based Trust**

### **1. Generosity**

Before you pitch, give something they didn’t expect.

It could be:

- A powerful how-to guide
- A tip that actually solves a pain point
- A story that helps them feel less alone
- A resource curated with real intention

If they open your email and think, “That was worth my time,”

you’ve earned the right to be heard again.

### **2. Consistency**

Randomness breeds suspicion.

Consistency builds safety.

Whether you send once a week or twice a month,  
keep your rhythm.

Be the inbox voice they can count on, like a friend  
who always shows up when they say they will.

### **3. Voice**

Your voice is your fingerprint. Use it.

Don't sound like a brand. Sound like *you*.

Write the way you speak. Crack a joke. Share a  
moment of realness.

It's not about being professional, it's about being  
present.

### **Trust Isn't About Proving. It's About Revealing.**

You don't build trust by convincing people you're  
great.

You build it by letting them see you.

Not just your highlight reel, your behind-the-  
scenes.

Not just your testimonials, your touchpoints.

Tell them:

- What scared you before your first product launch.
- Why you nearly quit after your third failed design.
- What keeps you going when orders are slow.

People don't connect to perfection.

They connect to truth.

## **Across Niches: What Trust Looks Like Before the Ask**

### **Fitness Equipment Store**

- **Email 1:** “How my dog chewed through my first resistance band.”
- **Email 2:** “Three mistakes I made starting home workouts so you don't have to.”
- **Email 3:** “This customer used our gear to stay active through surgery recovery.”
- **Email 4:** “Here's our top-recommended starter bundle, only when you're ready.”

### **Eco-Friendly Kitchen Goods**

- **Email 1:** “The day I realized plastic was taking over my pantry.”

- **Email 2:** “5 surprisingly easy swaps to reduce kitchen waste.”
- **Email 3:** “Why our reusable wraps are made with beeswax, not soy.”
- **Email 4:** “We restocked our starter kits. Here if you need one.”

### **Luxury Candle Brand**

- **Email 1:** “Why scent memory can bring you to tears (and how we bottle it).”
- **Email 2:** “One customer used our ‘Sunday Rain’ candle to remember her father.”
- **Email 3:** “Meet the perfumer behind our signature blends.”
- **Email 4:** “We think you’d love this scent. No rush.”

### **What NOT to Do When Building Trust**

- Don’t bait with subject lines you don’t deliver on.
- Don’t fake urgency where none exists.
- Don’t use someone’s name 4 times in a single sentence hoping it boosts conversion.

- Don't assume trust because they didn't unsubscribe.

Trust isn't neutral. It's dynamic.

Every message either strengthens or weakens it.

## **The Ask Must Match the Relationship**

Let's say you've sent 5 value-packed emails. You've shown up with real content. You've shared your voice. You've made them laugh, think, or nod.

Now it's time to ask.

That ask should feel:

- Natural
- Relevant
- Quietly confident

Not urgent. Not anxious. Not performative.

Ask the way a good host asks if you'd like seconds; like you already know what they love.

And you're simply offering more.

## **What If You're Nervous About the Ask?**

That's okay. It means you care.

Here's the reframe:

You're not pushing.

You're *inviting*.

You're not forcing anyone, you're offering the next chapter of the story they've already stepped into.

And the right people will say yes. Not because you pressured them.

Because they trust you.

## **A Final Word on Timing**

There's no universal formula.

Some customers will buy on day 3. Others on day 93.

That's fine.

You're not just building a list.

You're building a **relationship reservoir**.

And when you need to make a splash, launch a product, clear inventory, pivot directions, guess what?

That reservoir is full.

Not with strangers.

With people who *already believe you're worth listening to.*



## Chapter 9

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### **Sell Quietly, Convert Loudly**

Loud is easy.

Anyone can scream “FINAL HOURS!” into the void.

They can stack urgency, scarcity, and FOMO into a digital battering ram.

Loud is the default, especially when you’re desperate.

But quiet? Quiet is art.

Quiet takes confidence and clarity.

Quiet is built on trust, and when it is, it converts *louder* than any sale ever screamed.

### **Why Loud Fails More Than It Works**

At a glance, loud looks effective. You get spikes. Surges. Attention.

But attention earned through pressure is like a balloon, easy to pop.

Loud selling often creates **emotional friction**: the subconscious resistance we feel when someone tries too hard to win us over.

It's the cringe of being cornered at a party or the feeling to unsubscribe when your inbox screams like a used car salesperson. It's the gut feeling of "I'm being sold to," and not in a good way.

What's worse? Even if loud works once, it usually *doesn't work twice*.

Why? Because the trust account is overdrawn. The audience came for value, but they got volume.

### **Quiet Sells Because It Feels Like a Gift**

Quiet isn't passive. It's precise.

It doesn't shout because it doesn't need to.

Quiet selling says:

- "Here's a story we think you'll see yourself in."
- "Here's a product we made because it solves something real."
- "Here's what we're proud of, no pressure, just presence."

It doesn't force urgency.

It cultivates readiness.

It doesn't prey on pain.

Instead, it speaks to identity.

Quiet is **selling as service**.

Continuity, not conversion.

A next step, not a push.

## **Let's Talk Real-World Quiet Conversions**

### **1. Spice & Sauce Subscription Box (FlavorFoundry)**

Instead of launching with a 40%-off blast, they started their product rollout like this:

*“This is the chili sauce that almost broke our founder's nose. We call it ‘Crying at the Market,’ and here's the story.”*

They included a photo of the team crying-laughing in a test kitchen. No ask. Just the origin.

Two days later, they followed up:

“Here's a sneak peek at our Summer Box, plus a recipe for spicy mango chicken.”

At the end? A gentle P.S.

“We've got a few boxes left if you'd like one.”

Result: highest conversion rate in their history, no coupon needed.

## **2. Minimalist Office Supplies Shop**

A solo entrepreneur who sells pens, planners, and notebooks wrote this in her newsletter:

*“Last week I threw away three to-do lists and realized I hadn’t done any of them. So I made a new kind of planner: one that forgives you.”*

She offered a free printable.

Then, later that week:

*“If you liked the printable, we have a physical version now. Same soul. Pre-orders open.”*

Quiet. Confident. Clean.

And sold out in 48 hours.

## **3. Custom Pet Portrait Artist**

Every two weeks, she sends a short email: a photo of her latest commission, plus a quote from the pet’s owner.

She doesn’t say, “Order now!”

She ends with:

*“If you’d like something like this, my next booking slot is in 3 weeks.”*

That’s it.

And her calendar stays full.

## **What Makes a Quiet Sales Email Work?**

Let’s break it down:

### **1. Start with Story or Insight**

Not the product. The *why* behind it.

Example:

*“Our latest scent was inspired by the smell of sun on old wood floors.”*

### **2. Lead with Value**

Teach something. Entertain. Be useful.

Example:

*“3 tiny design tweaks that make any room feel warmer.”*

### **3. Make the Offer the Softest Part**

No pressure. No countdowns. No fireworks.

Example:

*“If you’re ready to refresh your space, our new pieces are here.”*

#### **4. End with Respect**

Even if they don’t click, make them feel glad they opened.

#### **Redefining “Sales Funnel” as “Story Arc”**

Traditional sales funnels sound like plumbing.

Quiet selling reframes that journey as a *narrative*.

You’re not dragging people down a pipe.

You’re leading them up a path.

The chapters might look like:

- Introduction: Who we are, and why this matters
- Conflict: What we struggled with (and maybe you do too)
- Creation: What we built to help
- Invitation: If it resonates, you’re welcome to try it

When people feel like part of a story, they stay longer. They remember more. They *buy when it feels right*.

## **When You Trust the Reader, They Trust You Back**

Quiet selling is rooted in a radical idea: your customer is smart.

They don't need pressure.

They need permission.

They don't want to be chased.

They want to be *seen*.

And when you show them you trust their timing?

They'll reward you with loyalty.

Because nothing is more magnetic than a seller who doesn't need to shout.

### **Quiet Doesn't Mean Shy. It Means Strong.**

Let's be clear:

Quiet isn't timid.

It's intentional.

Quiet isn't meek.

It's measured.

You're not whispering because you're unsure.

You're whispering because you *know* your offer is good, and you trust the right people will hear it.

## **What Happens After the Click**

Here's the magic: when you sell quietly, the conversion is louder.

Not in volume. But in *meaning*.

Your customers:

- Stay subscribed longer
- Buy again, not just once
- Share your story without being asked
- Defend you in comments if someone misunderstands you
- Say things like: "I feel like I know you."

This isn't conversion.

It's *connection*.

And in a crowded market, connection wins.

## **Final Examples Across Niche Industries**

### **Sustainable Clothing Brand**



Subject: “We designed this dress for three seasons, not one.”

CTA: “If you’re rethinking your wardrobe, we’d love to be part of it.”

### **Bookstore Subscription Box**

Subject: “This novel made me call my mom.”

CTA: “If you like stories that hit deep, it’s in this month’s box.”

### **Digital Wellness App**

Subject: “Screens made me sick. This made me better.”

CTA: “If your brain needs a break, we built one.”

### **DIY Pottery Kit Store**

Subject: “I dropped my first mug. I still loved it.”

CTA: “If you want something imperfectly perfect, our kits are back.”

## **The Quiet Close**

You’ve spent chapters building presence.  
Building rhythm. Building trust.

Now the offer arrives not like a pitch, but like *a promise fulfilled*.

- It respects the reader's time.
- It honors their attention.
- It carries no pressure, just permission.

And when they click?

It's not a reluctant yes.

It's a resounding one.

# Chapter 10

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## **The Metrics That Actually Mean Something**

Not all numbers are created equal.

Some numbers make us feel important.

Some make us look good.

But only a few tell the truth.

In the world of soulless algorithms and vanity dashboards, it's easy to get addicted to noise:

- Likes
- Views
- Shares
- Follows

But here's the truth: you can't deposit likes at the bank.

And you can't build loyalty on views alone.

If you want to grow something real, something rooted, you have to measure what matters.

And that means shifting your lens away from performance... and toward *relationship*.

Because in email marketing, metrics aren't just numbers.

They're mirrors.

They reflect the health of the connection you've built.

### **Think of Metrics as a Conversation Map**

Too often, marketers treat metrics like a scoreboard:

More = good. Less = bad.

But that's not how humans work. And that's not how conversations work.

Email metrics are more like a **map**, highlighting where someone paused, leaned in, responded, or drifted away. It's not about judgment. It's about navigation.

Where are your readers nodding? Where are they tuning out? Where do they feel curious? Confused? Compelled?

Every metric tells a small part of that emotional geography.

## 1. Open Rate (With Context)

Let's start with the headline stat: open rate.

Yes, it matters.

Yes, it tells you something.

But only when you read it like a pulse, not a prize.

A high open rate doesn't guarantee impact. A low one doesn't always signal failure.

What matters more is the *trend*:

- Are people opening consistently?
- Are subject lines creating curiosity or confusion?
- Are open rates climbing after a specific change in tone or schedule?

An open is a moment of permission.

It means someone saw your name and said, "*Sure, I'll give you five seconds of my attention.*"

That's sacred.

But it's not the full picture.

Instead of obsessing over percentages, watch for patterns:

- Did a storytelling subject line outperform a product-based one?
- Did changing your send day improve consistency?
- Did a personal anecdote in the preview text increase engagement?

Open rate is the **heartbeat**.

But don't diagnose the patient on heart rate alone.

## 2. Click Rate (Real Click Rate)

Marketers love click-through rate. It looks actionable. It feels impressive.

But be careful. Many email platforms calculate clicks based only on *opens*.

If you send an email to 1,000 people, 150 open it, and 30 click a link, your reported CTR might be 20%. But your actual engagement is 3% of your total list.

That's a different story. That's the story that matters.

So measure:

- Clicks per send, not just clicks per open.
- What links get clicked.

- Which types of content generate the most engagement.

Don't just ask: "Did they click?"

Ask:

- "What *earned* the click?"
- "What section of the email drove it?"
- "What didn't get clicked and why?"

Every click is a **yes**.

A whisper of interest.

A breadcrumb that says: *this part mattered to me*.

Treat it like gold.

### **3. Replies and Forwards**

This is where most brands stop listening.

And where smart ones lean in.

**Replies** are rare. Which makes them *powerful*.

When someone replies to your email, unprompted, that means:

- They felt something.
- They saw you as a person, not a pitch.
- They wanted to extend the conversation.

## **This is marketing gold.**

If you get even five replies from a list of 500, you're not just doing well, you're building community.

## **Forwards matter too.**

They don't always show up in standard dashboards, but many platforms let you track them.

A forward says:

*"This made me think of someone else. I want them to read it."*

That's not performance. That's *presence*. That's virality without shouting. And it's worth watching.

So when someone replies to say:

- "This made me cry."
- "Thanks for this story."
- "Can I share this with my friend?"

Don't just smile. Write back. Because those are the signals the algorithm can't see, but your audience can *feel*.



## 4. Unsubscribes (When They Matter)

Losing subscribers can sting.

But it's not always bad. It often means your voice is getting sharper.

A strong brand will repel some people. That's okay. That's *good*. That's clarity.

But sudden spikes in unsubscribes? That's data.

It might mean:

- Your tone shifted unexpectedly.
- You sent too many emails in a row.
- Your subject line over-promised and under-delivered.
- You came on too strong with a hard pitch.

Look for patterns:

- Did a particular type of email trigger more exits than usual?
- Was the content too long, too irrelevant, or too aggressive?

The goal isn't to *avoid* unsubscribes entirely.

The goal is to *understand* them.

Use them like pruning shears, not panic buttons.

## How Liz Wilcox Listens to the Numbers

Liz doesn't obsess over open rates.

She watches for signals.

If her opens dip, she examines her subject lines. Not just for clickiness, but for **consistency**. She knows her audience trusts her tone. A bait-y headline would break that.

If clicks drop, she checks:

- “Was I rushing this offer?”
- “Did I build enough emotional context around the CTA?”
- “Was the link buried or unclear?”

When replies slow down, she doesn't panic.

She gets *personal* again.

*“The fewer replies I get, the less human I’ve been sounding.”*

Liz doesn't chase metrics.

She listens to them.

And because of that, her list grows, *not just numerically, but emotionally.*

## How Ellory & Finch Reads the Room

Ellory & Finch doesn't measure success by volume.

They measure *memory*.

Their best-performing emails?

Not the ones with discounts.

The ones with stories.

- “Meet the craftsman behind our newest coat.”
- “The night we almost gave up on tailoring forever.”
- “A handwritten note from our first customer, still framed in our office.”

They track:

- Which story-driven emails generated the most clicks
- Which *sections* of those emails got the highest heat map
- Which emails drove *repeat* purchases (not just spikes)

That's how they know what's working.

Not by being engrossed with money and data, but by watching for connection.

## **Meaningful Metrics Across Niches**

### **A Subscription Snack Box Might Track:**

- Open rates across different flavour themes: spicy vs sweet vs seasonal
- Clicks on taste-test surveys or “vote for our next flavour” links
- Replies to emails that share recipes or snack hacks

### **A Boutique Skincare Brand Might Measure:**

- Clicks on routine-building guides vs product pages
- Replies to customer stories about skin transformations
- Unsubscribes after overly promotional launches

### **A Camping Gear Company Might Observe:**

- Shares of emails titled “How One Family Lived in a Tent for 9 Months”
- Replies to packing checklists
- Purchases tied to story-based gear launches vs comparison tables

The difference?

Vanity metrics show noise.

These show **narrative**.

## **The Five Most Underrated Email Metrics**

### **1. Time Spent Reading**

- Available in some tools, this shows whether your email is actually *being read* or just opened and skimmed.

### **2. Scroll Depth**

- Are people reaching the CTA? If not, restructure. You may be burying the gold.

### **3. Heat Mapping (on Email or Post-Click Page)**

- Where are eyes landing? Where are they bouncing? What content holds attention?

### **4. Reply Sentiment**

- Are replies grateful? Confused? Angry? Indifferent? Don't just count them, analyze them.

### **5. Reactivation Performance**

- When you re-engage cold subscribers, what *type* of message brings them back?

## **Ignore Vanity. Honour Truth.**

A high click rate doesn't mean high trust.

A big list doesn't mean big loyalty.

A viral email isn't always a valuable one.

So before you celebrate a spike (or worry about a dip) ask yourself:

- Does this number help me understand my audience better?
- Is this trend telling me something I can *act* on?
- Does this metric reflect *relationship*, or just reaction?

If it reflects relationship, listen.

If not, let it go.

Because your email list isn't a scoreboard.

It's a conversation.

And the right metrics don't just show growth.

They *guide* it.

# Chapter 11

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## **Grow a List That Grows With You**

Fast growth is exciting.

But fast doesn't always mean strong.

In the long game of email marketing, you don't want a towering, brittle skyscraper.

You want a garden.

Something living.

Something lasting.

Something that survives storms and seasons.

Because when social platforms shift, when ad costs spike, when algorithms forget your name, your garden still grows.

### **A List Isn't Just a Database**

Every email address is a person. A hope. A heartbeat.

Not a tally. Not a target. A *living* connection.

They're not trophies to collect.

They're invitations to honour.

When you treat your subscribers that way, your list stops being something you chase and starts becoming something you *cultivate*.

Growth looks different through that lens.

It's not just about adding thousands.

It's about adding the right ones, the people who will grow with you, not just pass through.

You're not building traffic.

You're building trust.

### **The Algorithm Offers Illusions. Email Offers Roots.**

Social media growth is often a sugar high.

You post something that lands. The views skyrocket. Followers flood in.

It feels like winning.

Until the next day, when the same content tanks.

No explanation. No stability. Just silence.



The algorithm is designed to keep you performing, not connecting.

It rewards newness. Not loyalty.

It shifts the rules mid-game, with no appeal.

And worst of all, it owns the crowd you built.

Your followers? Not really yours.

Your reach? Conditional.

That's why your email list matters.

Because it's not borrowed. It's *owned*.

When the algorithm stops clapping, your inbox still listens.

## **How to Grow a Living List**

### **1. Make the Invitation Matter**

Don't bait people into joining.

Don't dangle 10% discounts or inflate fake urgency.

Instead: *offer something real*.

Examples:

- A DIY shop:

“Seven Surprising Project Templates That Saved My Sanity”

- A pet care brand:

“Dog Walking Behavior Checklist (Translate ‘woof’ to speech)”

- A camping gear company:

“The Ultimate Short-Stay Packing Guide”

The content doesn’t have to be long.

It has to be relevant to reality. To the ground troops of existence. It has to resonate with truth.

And keep aligned with what you’ll keep delivering.

If your freebie feels like a gift, *not a gimmick*, you’ll earn trust from the very first click.

Remember: your opt-in offer is the *tone-setter* for everything that follows.

Start the relationship right.

## **2. Show Up With Rhythm, Not Randomness**

Consistency is love.

If you promise weekly, send weekly.

If you promise monthly, honour that.

Not spammy. Not desperate. Just dependable.

People stay subscribed to reliability. Not to noise.

Your email rhythm doesn't have to be loud. It has to be *felt*.

Even quiet brands grow when they become part of someone's weekly rituals:

Coffee. Morning light. And your voice in their inbox.

### **3. Speak to One, Not to Thousands**

As your list grows, don't let your tone inflate with it.

Avoid writing like a press release.

Write like a postcard. A note. A nudge.

Speak to one person: your ideal subscriber.

The kind of person who actually *reads* your words, not just skims them.

Make your tone feel like a letter, not a megaphone.

And your readers will stay, even as your list scales.

## **Advanced Growth Moves for Human-Centred Brands**

### **Host a “Why I Subscribed” Series**

Ask subscribers why they joined your list.

Publish one or two responses per month. Use first names only. Human stories draw human people.

### **Create a Quiz Opt-In**

Turn your product categories into quiz results.

- “Which herbal tea matches your nervous system today?”
- “What kind of adventurer are you? Your backpacking starter kit awaits.”

Quizzes convert *and* segment your audience at the same time.

Double win.

### **Offer a Free 5-Day Series**

Instead of a single download, offer a journey. Something that builds anticipation and delivers real growth.

- A skincare brand: “5 Days to Better Morning Routines”
- A home office setup shop: “How to Ergonomically Survive Your Desk Job”
- A baby care brand: “5 Emails for Your First 5 Weeks of Parenthood”

This creates rhythm *and* rapport. It prequalifies people who resonate with your brand’s energy.

### **Liz Wilcox’s Growing Community**

Liz didn’t chase numbers.

She chased *resonance*.

Her focus wasn’t on the biggest list.

It was on the *most loyal one*.

Each new subscriber received:

- A helpful welcome
- A glimpse behind the scenes
- An honest voice that felt like a friend

And people stayed.

Not because Liz sold hard, but because she *showed up*.

Over time, her readers became her community.

Her subscribers became advocates.

And her emails became conversation starters, not content blasts.

## **Ellory & Finch's List Evolution**

After their early survival emails, Ellory & Finch shifted their strategy.

They realized the win wasn't just selling jackets.

It was *building culture*.

So they started:

- Inviting customers to share photos wearing their gear
- Hosting Q&As with their design team
- Sending personal notes about what inspired each collection

Growth slowed.

But *loyalty exploded*.

Their customers weren't just on a list.

They were *in the loop*.

Because Ellory & Finch didn't just grow a list.

They grew a *movement*.

## Examples Across Niches

### A Travel Accessories Brand

- Launches a “Where Have You Been?” email series
- Encourages readers to send photos from their trips
- Features one customer’s journey every month

**Result:** Organic content, personal connection, and long-term retention

- A Baby Care Company
- Sends milestone emails during baby’s first year
- “Week 6: Why You’re Crying in the Produce Aisle (And That’s Normal)”
- “Month 3: How to Actually Get Sleep (Sort Of)”

Each message is both practical *and personal*.

Less sales. More solidarity.

### A Gardening Supply Shop

- Offers a regional planting calendar based on subscriber location
- Sends gentle seasonal reminders

- “This Month’s Best Seeds for Shady Balconies”
- “3 Tools That Make Soil Prep Satisfying (Really)”

Their list becomes not just a customer list, *but a community of growers.*

## **What Real Growth Looks Like**

Yes, some people will unsubscribe.

Yes, some will ghost.

But some will stay.

Some will click.

Some will reply.

Some will buy. Again and again.

And *some* (a precious few) will become your loudest advocates.

Real growth isn’t viral.

It’s *vital*.

It’s the kind that thickens over time.

Deepens through story.



Strengthens through stillness.

Your email list is not a lead funnel.

It's a root system.

And when you care for it, when you tend it like a living thing, it begins to feed you back.

### **Because the Algorithm Will Never Do That**

The algorithm doesn't reward care.

It doesn't track depth.

It doesn't honour truth.

It optimizes for noise. For virality. For visibility without intimacy.

But email? Email makes space for the opposite.

It says:

- You don't need to perform. You can be present.
- You don't need to chase trends. You can tell stories.
- You don't need to shout. You can *be heard*.

The feed forgets.

But the inbox remembers.

## **Your List Doesn't Just Grow. It Evolves.**

Some subscribers will leave and some will linger.

Some will become customers and a few may even become ambassadors.

That's natural. That's beautiful.

What matters is that you grow it in a way that feels true to *you*, and nourishing to *them*.

Because an email list isn't a trophy case.

It's a living circle.

And if you care for it like something sacred, it will care for you back.

# Chapter 12

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## **Make Emails Worth Remembering**

Some emails vanish the moment they're closed. Others linger, just a phrase, a breath, a sense that something landed exactly when it needed to. These are the messages that matter. Not because they're loud, but because they're *true*.

What you're writing isn't just copy. It's an anchor. A steady signal in a world built to blur.

## **Why Social Media Trains Us to Be Forgotten**

*The feed forgets by **design**.*

Anything you publish, no matter how thoughtful or polished, is pushed aside in hours, if not minutes. That incredible post you wrote last Thursday? It's buried now, drifting under an avalanche of newer, shinier noise.

Every algorithm rewards interruption, not reflection. It thrives on novelty and friction, not familiarity or trust.

Visibility becomes a moving target, shaped by systems you don't control. Even when you succeed, you remain at the mercy of someone else's machine.

*Email works differently.*

Instead of being swept away, your message waits. It's not subjected to arbitrary filters or time stamps. It arrives with intention, rests in someone's inbox, and meets them when they're ready.

When the timing is right, your words land. And when they land, they stay.

## **What Email Builds That Social Media Can't**

Forget the fireworks of virality. Email isn't designed to dazzle; it's built to last.

The inbox gives you room to earn trust slowly. Messages don't compete with dance videos or sponsored reels. They don't vanish in the morning or get throttled by opaque algorithms.

Here, you can build:

- A voice that becomes familiar.
- A cadence that nurtures belonging.

- A rhythm that creates anticipation, not fatigue.

With social posts, people glance and move on. With email, they pause. They choose to engage, or to save it for later.

That small act, *choosing to open*, isn't trivial. It's the difference between being consumed and being welcomed.

### **What Makes an Email Memorable?**

It's rarely the design or a clever hook that leaves an impression. Emotion carries more weight than formatting ever could.

A good email doesn't need to impress. It needs to connect.

Sometimes, it's a story that hits close to home:

*"I nearly gave up on my business last month.  
Here's what pulled me through."*

Sometimes, it's a moment captured with care:

*"The tailor stitched the final button just before sunrise. We named that jacket after her."*

And sometimes, all it takes is a single unexpected sentence that lingers:

*“If you’re tired, maybe you don’t need a new strategy. Maybe you need a nap.”*

People remember how something made them feel. If your email leaves a trace of comfort, clarity, or recognition, it’s done its job.

## **The Legacy of Liz Wilcox**

Liz didn’t grow her list by shouting louder than the competition. She grew it by sounding more like *herself*.

Her plain-text messages weren’t flashy, but they were unmistakably human. She shared missteps without shame, offered tips without arrogance, and showed up with the same voice each week. Reliable, relatable, real.

What started as a small newsletter eventually became a thriving \$20,000/month membership business. Not because she engineered a perfect funnel, but because she earned trust line by line.

Today, Liz teaches others how to write emails people want to read. Her following hasn’t grown because of growth hacks, it’s grown because people *believe her*.

## **Ellory & Finch's Quiet Confidence**

The London-based clothing brand didn't explode overnight. Their inbox strategy wasn't aggressive or automated to exhaustion. Instead, they committed to narrative.

Emails from Ellory & Finch read like entries from a designer's journal. One told the story of their first failed coat prototype. Another explained why a certain buttonhole required five stitches instead of three.

There were no shouting headlines, no bolded discount codes. Just quiet craftsmanship and care.

Buyers didn't feel pushed. They felt included.

Now, years later, Ellory & Finch thrives as a brand known for timeless quality. Their email list isn't just a tool, it's an archive of trust.

## **From Other Niches, the Pattern Holds**

A travel gear company shared a story about a traveler stranded in Morocco. A local, who spoke no English, offered tea and shelter. The email didn't pitch anything, it simply ended with, "Not everyone speaks your language, but most

understand kindness.” Readers forwarded it thousands of times.

A florist marked Mother’s Day by acknowledging that not everyone is celebrating. Some are grieving. Some are healing. That single message saw the lowest unsubscribe rate of the year.

A wellness coach confessed she stopped weighing herself every morning. “Now I weigh how I feel,” she wrote. “That’s my progress metric.” It wasn’t a campaign, yet it sparked more responses than anything she’d sent in six months.

These examples didn’t rely on hooks or hype. They resonated because they felt *real*.

## **This Is the Breakaway**

Email is more than an alternative to social media, it’s an escape from the noise. A shift in control.

You’ve spent most of this book discovering the tools and mindset to build something durable. This chapter, though, is your reminder: all of this isn’t about tactics. It’s about reclaiming your voice.

You don’t need to perform anymore.

You don’t need permission to be seen.



You don't need to beg an algorithm to remember your name.

You have something better. A direct line to the people who *chose* to hear from you. That's your edge. That's your advantage.

This isn't a backup plan. It's your foundation.

### **And Who Are You Becoming?**

Maybe you're still finding your tone. Maybe your list feels small. Maybe consistency has been a struggle.

None of that disqualifies you.

Every memorable brand began with a single email. The first welcome message. The first story. The first moment that made someone feel understood.

Don't wait to be perfect. Start with something personal. Something useful. Something only you could write.

You're not just an ecommerce seller. You're a guide, a curator, a voice someone might rely on more than you realize.

People don't remember perfect. They remember *real*.

## **What Happens Next**

No checklist can guarantee success. But here's a reliable start:

- Send one email this week.
- Write it like you're talking to one person.
- Say something true.
- Make it useful, even if it's small.
- Sign it like you mean it.

Don't wait for a perfect template. Don't obsess over stats before you've written a sentence. The magic begins in the doing.

This is how connection grows: quietly, consistently, with care.

## **Let Others Chase the Feed**

While the crowd burns out chasing trends, you'll be building something that doesn't fade.

You'll be creating a voice people trust.

A space they return to.

A message they might forward on a hard day.

**That's what endures.**

Algorithms will rise and fall.

Platforms will pivot.

But an email worth remembering?

**That lasts forever.**

# The First Ten Steps of the Exodus

*We've come to it at last: The "What now?" section.*

You've read the stories. You've seen how the algorithm distorts everything it touches. You understand why email is different, why it matters. But understanding isn't enough.

So here's where you begin. Ten small steps, each one doable. No gimmicks. No guru playbook. Just motion in the right direction.

**1. Pick an Email Platform:** Brevo, MailerLite, something that won't bleed your wallet dry. Don't chase features. Pick what works and move forward.

**2. Gather the Emails You Already Have:** Export that dusty checkout list. The contest signups. The people who bought once and vanished. Start there. Don't overthink it.

**3. Write the First Real Email:** No pitch. No funnel. Just a note from you to them. Why you're writing. Why now. Why email. Hit send.

**4. Invite People to Join You:** Post on social. Anywhere you've still got reach. Invite them off the treadmill. Give them a link, a reason, and a breath of fresh air.

**5. Post It Again Next Week:** Because the algorithm is a sieve and half your followers didn't see it the first time. Repost. Reword it if you like.

**6. Sketch a Weekly Plan:** Doesn't have to be perfect. Just consistent. One email a week. Add notes, story ideas, a few product mentions. Start shaping a rhythm.

**7. Tell a Story They'll Remember:** Not a sales story. A human one. The kind that builds trust and sounds like you. You don't need a "hook," you need a heartbeat.

**8. Listen for Replies, Not Metrics:** Open rates are fine. Clicks too. But real gold is in the person who writes back. That's your signal. That's your ROI.

**9. Use the Templates if You're Stuck:** We've made tools for that. If the blank page stares too long, reach for them. Customize. Improvise. The bones are there to hold you up.

**10. Keep Going When It's Quiet:** Don't vanish after two emails. Keep showing up. Keep telling

the truth. The audience you build here is yours.  
That's rare. That's perseverance. That's worth it.

## Afterword: Thank You for Walking With Us

If you're reading this, it means you stayed.

You followed the thread. You paused long enough to reflect. You carved out time to think about something deeper than clicks or conversions. For that, thank you.

Writing emails, *good* emails, isn't just about marketing. It's about choosing to matter, even when noise is easier. It's about being consistent in a world that rewards chaos. And it's about building something you can be proud of, even if no one claps for it right away.

This book wasn't meant to sell you a system, it was meant to help your business **thrive**.

Stop chasing what's unstable. Build something slow and strong and believe that your voice, as it is, might be the very thing someone out there is waiting to hear.

So start where you are. Say what you mean. Keep showing up.

There's a reader out there whose inbox could be a little warmer, a little brighter, because of you.

Let the feed forget. Let the crowd scroll by.

You're building something that lasts.

And we're honoured you let us be part of that beginning.

With gratitude,

**- Adam**



If this book resonated with you, even a little, we'd love to keep the conversation going.

We send out stories, tools, and reflections by email that you won't find anywhere else.

No fluff. No spam. Just honest, human content designed to help you build something lasting.

If you're building with care, if you're marketing with heart, if you're done feeding the machine, we're your people.

**You can join the list here:**

**<https://growalrus.com/subscribe/>**

Let's grow something real together.

