

# **THE COMBUSTION CHRONICLES**

**EPISODE SIXTY-THREE  
HUMANIZING YOUR  
BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS**

**HOST: SHAWN NASON**

**GUEST: RACHEL BECK**

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**Shawn:** Welcome to the sixth season of *The Combustion Chronicles* podcast, where bold leaders combine with big ideas to make life better for all of us. I'm your host, Shawn Nason, CEO and founder of MOFI. As an experience evangelist, I believe the only way to build a sustainable and thriving business is by putting people first.

This season is all about human-obsessed, maverick-minded influencers who are changing the business landscape by standing up for what's right, prioritizing relationships over transactions, and taking a few risks along the way.

Mavericks think differently. And, human-obsessed mavericks take all of that mavericky stuff up a notch. Filled with empathy, these special mavericks put their heads and hearts into action to think bigger and more boldly about changing the world each and every day.

Ready to blow up the status quo and ignite a people-first experience revolution? Yeah, me too. Let's do this.

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**Shawn:** If LinkedIn ever names a chief inspiration officer, Rachel Beck would be perfect for the job. She fills her feed with words of encouragement that bring hope daily to her followers, who now number more than a quarter of a million.

Rachel is an international award-winning photographer, has owned and run a photography business in the Midwestern United States for eight years and counting. Through her lens she has developed a unique perspective and now weaves her vision into words. She has one goal: that her stories of triumph through tragedy inspire as many as possible before she leaves the planet. Welcome to *The Combustion Chronicles*, Rachel.

**Rachel:** Thank you for having me.

**Shawn:** Well, it is such an honor, first off, to meet you virtually. I know some pretty compassionate people in my life, but I have rarely met someone with a heart for other people that's as big as your. Could you walk our listeners through your amazing journey in life, three near death experiences, to this incredible presence you have on LinkedIn? And a word that I would use loosely here, but as a pastor, and I would even call it your ministry on LinkedIn.

**Rachel:** Sure. And thank you very much, Shawn, for your kind words. My story is very complex, very complicated. I was born in India. My mother died two days after giving birth. I was taken by somebody to the home who was starting an orphanage. So she was the founder of the orphanage. So she was one of my moms.

I stayed with her until I was adopted at 11 months old. So I've had five parents, right, the two biological, then I have the two parents who adopted me who are my parents, and then the foster mom who started the orphanage. And I actually go back there and I stay at the orphanage. And part of the proceeds from my book are being donated. So Shawn, everything you're seeing me do is try to hit a goal that I have inside my heart that I want to reach. It has to do with helping the orphanage.

And you're correct. I've had three near death experiences. One was almost drowning, that was a couple of years ago. I've also had an experience where, when I lived in the Midwest, I was de-icing my car, scraping the snow off. And I fell and my car was still going, so it was like a hell. And I heard my ankle break. Then I heard my leg break and my head landed behind the tire. So I was extremely, extremely terrified that the car was actually going to roll over my head.

**Shawn:** Wow.

**Rachel:** Yes, it was horrifying. Luckily, I had my cell phone in my pocket. And that's what saved my life because I already threw my purse into the car. I was going to meet people for breakfast.

So I've had EMTs on my show and we talked about, and they said that every accident happens, the big ones, when you're alone. They always tell people, "Put your cell phone in your pocket and that it could save your life." So I promised the EMTs and the paramedics I would share that story.

I battled a disease for 20 years. I battled endometriosis that caused a lot of issues. I've lost two children to miscarriage. I've also had a failed adoption. And I had a hysterectomy in 2017. So, I'm deeply passionate about using my story to help other people. I also have PTSD. So I use my voice for mental health to end the stigma.

[04:19]

**Shawn:** Well, Rachel, I had no idea how much our stories aligned. So both of my children are adopted. And my wife and I tried for 10 years. She was not able to have a baby. And so it reaches my heart to hear, and you did write this amazing book, *Finding Your Way When Life Changes Your Plans: A Memoir of Adoption, Loss of Motherhood and Remembering Home*.

This particular season, Rachel, we're talking with people who we say have maverick mindsets. It's a concept that we came up with within our company at MOFI. And we like to celebrate mavericks, people who ignore the way society says they should go

or act and step bravely into an unknown future. And I would say that describes you pretty well, and that you challenge the status quo in such a beautiful way.

I want to dive into this mindset. And, you know, we don't shy away from things here on the podcast. Last year, I was honored to write a book with my business partner, Michael Harper, and a very, very dear friend of ours, Robin Glasco, called *Kiss Your Dragons*. So I know what a labor of love can be, like you did with your book.

A few years ago, in writing your amazing memoir that we mentioned, what convinced you to write this book and tell your story? And what did you learn along the way about blazing new trails and that maverick mindset that we talk about?

**Rachel:** First of all, I'm really excited to learn that you adopted children. So because part of the book I actually...it is written for people who have adopted and to hear it from an adoptee's perspective, because there's so many books out there on adoption, but they're not written by people who have been adopted. So we have kind of a different perspective. And yes, there are fantastic adoption books out there. I've actually read many of them. So I love that your children have been adopted.

**Shawn:** Thank you.

**Rachel:** I think they're very special. So I've never walked the path, ever. I'm just not that person. I'm not a cookie-cutter person. I don't want to be. I'm an Indian Jewish woman, not common. And yes, there are Jewish Indian women in the world. There's Jewish synagogues in India. I don't want to be that way. You know, I threw out the box a long time ago.

We all were stuck in middle school and high school. It was like, "You have to fit in. You have to fit in." And something like when I became like 18 or 19, I just said, "I'm done" because I'm not.

You know, everyday people ask, "Are you a mother?" And I'm like, "No." So I'm not that cookie-cutter person. And I don't want to be. I just truly don't want to be. And I'm in my mid-40s on my way to my 50s. And it's taken me years, and I say years, for me to be comfortable in my own skin. And I'm just at the point where I'm like, "I'm done. I'm done apologizing for who I am."

**Shawn:** Listen, I love that. I'm past the mid-40s, almost to the 50 stage.

**Rachel:** Me too.

**Shawn:** You know, my friends and my team will tell you that's where I'm at. I'm done trying to be a people pleaser. And I was a pastor as well, in one of my careers. And still am a pastor, but I just look at it very differently today. And listen, in a society where, in the United States, white male Christians have usually called the shots. You've achieved huge success, as you said, as an Indian American, a Jew, and a woman.

So how has your beautiful, as we call it, triple heritage affected how you look at the world then, and do you see something in your background that led you to be this maverick? Can you pinpoint it to something besides just saying I'm done? Or is there some moment when you, like you said, "I'm really done," right? You said like at 19 or 20. I really want to dig into that because I think we need to understand that triple heritage piece. And I'm Native American as well, so I get some of it, but nothing like what you experienced.

**Rachel:** I'll be honest with you, Shawn. So this year, I've had the worst racist experiences that have ever happened to me in my life that were extremely scary, downright scary. So I know it's still going on. I'm very aware of it. So when people are like, "Oh, it never exists in this country. It's not going on." I'm like, "Please wake up, you know. Please wake up. This is still very happening. It's still going on."

So I had somebody bang on my car window asking me what I looked like. I have to justify if I have a credit card. Or the neighborhood I live in, people are following me. Getting kicked out of the store, because of the color of my skin, I was told I can't even afford to shop in a place. All this stuff is still going on. And so I'm determined because I'm determined to spread more love and educate people about it.

The problem is that the hate groups in this country are very organized. And they have a very loud voice. So what I'm trying to do is to create a movement of kindness and love, where our voice will finally silence the hate. That's what I'm trying to do. And I think it is possible, and a lot of people out there are trying to do it, to make that voice of kindness and love bigger. I think it's possible.

[09:32]

**Shawn:** I do too. And I think it's absolutely beautiful. And, you know, part of the reason we wrote our book was around how to address the fears and have those conversations that people aren't willing to have and to provide a place. And it's going to be uncomfortable.

But I do believe, in the book, I preach a three-point sermon, as they call it, to leaders in business that you need to learn how to build relationships. You need to love people. And I don't understand how a leader in a company can't love people and be a leader. And you need to learn to be transparent and provide those spaces.

And I want to talk a little bit about humanizing business. And in particular, we do this thing called the Experience Ecosystem™, Rachel, which wraps all things experience — customer experience, employee experience, digital experience, vendor experience, market, all of that. And that comes from my days at Disney. Disney did it beautifully.

But in particular about humanizing these business ecosystems, and my team jokes with me that when I go to conferences, I don't go to conferences to sell our business, I go to conferences to make friends. And I know that human connections are what life is really about and leaning to what you're talking about. And I have to say that your posts on LinkedIn are amazing because they're so encouraging.

And I want to read a sample of one. It says, "We are a community. We are here to help each other. We are here to lift others up. We are here to shine a light on others." And yes, there are a lot of heart emojis in that, right, Rachel?

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Shawn:** What gives you the drive then to continue that, to uplift your network? Because you are taking LinkedIn on in a very different way. And what kind of reactions have you gotten taking this stand on LinkedIn?

**Rachel:** I think it's necessary for people... I'm trying to humanize social media. You're talking about humanizing. I'm trying to teach people that they can use social media as a positive thing. It doesn't need to be negative. That you can encourage. You don't have to write hateful comments to people. It's not necessary. So I'm trying to teach the way.

And my hope is that people will pick up the messaging of, "Wait a minute. I can use social media for good? It doesn't just need to be for bad. I can encourage other people. I can inspire other people." That it is capable, and that it can be done through a place of serving others.

That's one of the biggest mistakes I see people doing. They have an opportunity. If you have your network, it is a serious responsibility. Social media is a responsibility and that's something that people are not getting.

So you have that choice every day. When you get up, "How am I going to use this? I'm sending this message out into the world. What kind of message do I want to put out there?" I don't just write my posts. My posts are deeply, deeply thought about. I am conscious of every word that I say because it is a responsibility.

**Shawn:** I love it. And I'm learning more and more about that every day as I'm diving deeper in with LinkedIn and trying to find my voice, you know, around being the experience evangelist. There's a reason we use the word evangelist in there, because I do think it is a deep responsibility. Particularly on LinkedIn, it's a different type of responsibility.

And so you've built this incredible following, as we've talked about, on LinkedIn, Rachel. Again, more than a quarter of a million people who either follow you, share your content, and post comments. I'm a small business owner and I know other small business owners that would love to have that level of engagement with their customers. Can you tell us what's the secret? To the small business owners, to a CEO like me, what is the secret? What's one tip you could give us?

**Rachel:** I can tell you right now. I've been a small business owner for 15 years. I ran my photography business as a small business. And what I'm doing now, I'm a small business. So I'm deeply passionate about supporting other small businesses.

What it comes down to is, what are you doing? Are you out there communicating with people? So I'm deeply loyal. I have certain small businesses that I love a lot and so I'm deeply loyal to it. But it comes down to the relationship.

So the small businesses like when we first locked, you know, everybody got locked in. There were only a couple of restaurants that might have been open. When restaurants started opening, I went to those small businesses because I wanted to support them. I thought that that was extremely important.

So are you out there using social media right now, as a small business? I tell small businesses all the time, they'll call, they'll text, they'll ask me to say, "Rachel, we are really, really struggling. How can we use social media to increase revenue?"

And so they're getting that now, they're understanding over the last two years that they can do it. It doesn't cost you anything, right, to write a post, turn on a video, show your business, talk to customers, have people in a video and talk about the customer experiences that they had with you. Those are all options that small businesses could be doing right now.

[14:37]

**Shawn:** Great stuff. And I love, again, how you're approaching it, Rachel, from the humanizing piece. Because that's what I hear you saying. And I hope that people realize that's a big takeaway from this episode is, how do you humanize your business, your relationships, even though they should be human? Right, but we get so businesslike.

So I want to talk a little bit about a trend that's happening. As you know, we have our first woman and first Asian American vice president. And of course, the last couple of years have really brought attention to the injustices that so many Black Americans faced. How do you see inclusiveness in the workplace changing over the next few years?

**Rachel:** I think it's gonna be huge. And I can tell you this because I've studied it. So I've been speaking on diversity awareness. It's going on 15 years now. I've spoken in colleges, I go to churches, I go to synagogues. I go in all different areas, companies. I've gone to the military because their jobcorp, you know, program, 2050, this year, it's going to be like, 50%, across the board. That's how much the demographics of this country is changing.

So when I go in and I tell them, train your employees, like, understand the importance and the beauty that is diversity. Because if these companies don't get it now, and they don't train, they're gonna be in complete shock come 2050. That's what's gonna happen. So it's crucial for companies to understand this, to train people right now. Because that is, if you look up the statistics, 2050, this whole country is going to look very different.

**Shawn:** Okay, so then I'm going to ask you another trend that I want to jump to, is we talked about social media and how to prioritize content and how to use content. How do you think then LinkedIn will look different five years from now? And how do you recommend to people to stay on top of those changes?

**Rachel:** Now is the time, and I can't say this any stronger. Now is the time to be on LinkedIn. Now is the time. And stay with it and keep staying with it. Because it is in your benefit, if you're a person. I'm a person/business. You know, people have two different accounts. They run the business side. They run the personal side. And business is obviously very personal for all of us. Now's the time. Get out there.

I told people two years ago, right, when we had the lock-in and a lot of content creators saw it happen the day, let's say, the word shut down. People started



getting really nervous and scared and said, "I can't go to my meetings. I can't give talks. I can't go in as author and, you know, do big talks." And they didn't know how to do it.

And we explained, "Okay. You better adapt right now. Get it now." So if you're doing it now, two years down the line, you're going to be prepared, you have upskilled, which is necessary over the last years. And we all know what the trend is.

Many people think we're going to lock down again, because of what's going on, because numbers are going up. So you need to take the time and invest. If you're not going to invest in your social media, which can greatly help your business, why should other people invest in you, right?

It was necessary two years ago. I'm hoping people understood that. I saw a lot of people who did. And it was like, boom, they created their business page, or they worked on themselves and understood, "Oh, my gosh, like the resumes and the interviews, everything is going to be digital, everything is going to be online right now."

The market is flooded, as we know. It's important for job seekers out there to stand out. And I talk to job seekers a lot because they'll say, "Rach, how do I do this?" So if you're not innovating right now, and you're not willing to invest in yourself, you need to ask yourself the question why?

**Shawn:** I love it. And I couldn't agree with you more. Thanks for your insights, Rachel, and thanks for your transparency in telling your story. We've come to this point in our podcast where we ask these things called the Combustion Questions, which are three randomly selected questions that I just was given. So, are you ready for your Combustion Questions?

**Rachel:** Let's roll.

**Shawn:** So Combustion Question number one, Rachel. If you had a tree or plant renamed in your honor, which tree or plant would it be?

**Rachel:** Okay. So my favorite flower in the whole wide world is sunflowers. That's like a deep soul connection with sunflowers.

**Shawn:** Now every time I see a sunflower, I'm going to think of Rachel Beck. I'm going to call it Rachel Beck. So I love that. Combustion Question number two. Would you rather be a famous director or a famous actress?

**Rachel:** Both. I love producing my show every day. I absolutely love it. I started two years ago, you know, to help people during the pandemic and educate my network. So both sides of it. And I love doing things like this, Shawn. So I love all sides of it.

**Shawn:** Yeah, I love it. All right, Rachel. Combustion Question number three, and this might be the most difficult one. What do you think about ceiling fans?

**Rachel:** Very necessary. So I split my time between the Midwest and Florida. And yes, it makes a huge difference on a hot Florida day.

**Shawn:** Yea, I remember those hot and sticky Florida afternoons from when we lived in Florida. Ceiling fans were a necessity, for sure. Well, Rachel, thank you so much.

Before we go, what's the best way for our listeners to connect with you? I think it's pretty obvious on LinkedIn, but I want to make sure that you share with us.

**Rachel:** I want to say you can find me on LinkedIn because it's the only social media platform that I'm on.

**Shawn:** Awesome. Well, Rachel, thank you for sharing your story here. Thank you for giving us some really great gems today. And we will talk soon.

**Rachel:** Thank you very much.

**Shawn:** Thank you so much for listening to this episode of *The Combustion Chronicles*. If you've enjoyed this episode, please take a few minutes to subscribe, rate, and review.

Remember that I'm always looking to meet more big-thinking mavericks, so let's keep the conversation going by connecting on LinkedIn.

If you want to discover more about human-obsessed, maverick-minded experience ecosystems, go to [MOFI.co](http://MOFI.co) where you'll discover ideas and resources to help you ignite your own experience revolution.

And be sure to check out my book, *Kiss Your Dragons: Radical Relationships, Bold Heartsets, and Changing the World*, available on Amazon. Then head over to [ShawnNason.com](http://ShawnNason.com) to engage resources, a discussion guide, and information about everything from self-paced learning to personal coaching.

As always, stay safe, be well, and keep blowing sh\*t up!