

5: Pick the Perfect Name For Your Podcast, Book, Business, Blog, or Brand Using Kaneisha's Perfect Title Principles



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Kaneisha Grayson

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You are listening to *Scale Your Joy* with Kaneisha Grayson, episode five. Let's get started.

Welcome to *Scale Your Joy*, the only podcast that teaches high achievers with heart how to craft a life and build a business focused on freedom, joy, self-expression, and social impact. I'm your host Kaneisha Grayson, a Harvard Business School and Harvard Kennedy School grad, author, essayist, and self-made entrepreneur. I did it and you can do it too. Let's get started.

Hey everyone. Welcome. So, for me it is March 4, 2021 when I'm recording this. It's Thursday and *Scale Your Joy* launched two days ago for me, on March 2nd. That's *Scale Your Joy*'s official birthday, March 2, 2021. And the night before the launch felt like the night before my wedding.

In case y'all didn't know I used to be married. I am a divorcee. I say it like that because the word divorcee is French and it sounds very fancy. I'm a divorcee. And the night before my wedding, I got married May 16, 2015. And the night before my wedding I felt calm and I felt excited. Everything wasn't 100% done and perfect. But me, my mom, my sister, my besties, we had done our best, right? Me and my fiancé, and we were just ready to move forward and enjoy the big day. Everything wasn't perfect.

And that's what the night before *Scale Your Joy* felt like. It just felt like, "Hey, there's like 100 things we could have done more to promote the podcast. But we have done a pretty good job and tomorrow is going to be great." And then y'all, the day of the *Scale Your Joy* launch felt like my wedding day. Meaning it was exciting, it was fun, it was wonderful. But everything did not go perfectly.

Y'all, on my wedding day, well first, even before my wedding. Just days before my wedding me and my mom realized I did not have a wedding cake. I was a pretty chill bride to be. I planned my wedding. It was beautiful. If you search online you can still find the photos. It was a lovely day. But it was not one of those bridezilla, super over the top, super expensive

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weddings. There was no paid wedding planner, whatever. Days before my wedding me and my mom realized that I did not have a wedding cake.

So my mom made me, in my mama's kitchen, she made me a lemon cake for my wedding, which sounds amazing. The reason it sounds amazing and we don't know it was amazing, is because on the day of my wedding my beloved dad dropped my wedding cake. And my friends Leah and Laura, Laura Roeder, who I mentioned in episode one. And Leah Walter, who I mentioned in episode one. They had to go and buy me a cake. Like a birthday cake type cake. Like a sheet cake type cake from the grocery store, from Central Market, which I also mentioned in episode four.

That's where me and Tyler were going to get our Valentine's Day dinner, HEB, which I also mentioned in episode four. Central Market is the fancy version of HEB. And HEB is the beloved grocery store chain of Texas, best grocery store in the nation. I used to work there; I love it. And so anyway, Central Market is a fancy version of HEB.

Laura and Leah had to run while I was getting dressed. And no one told me that my cake had been dropped, and go get me like a white cake from Central Market and have them write like, "Yay, you're married!" Or whatever on it. And that's also what my launch day for Scale Your Joy felt like. A little bit of pandemonium and unexpected chaos in that my hosting provider, that I will not name, they had technical errors. And so my podcast was down for hours. And when I say down, I mean you couldn't access it anywhere.

But you know what? I took it in stride, just like I took it in stride that my dad that I love very much dropped my wedding cake. And I just was like, "Well, it's the launch of Scale Your Joy and the podcast is down on every single platform. But it's fine, we survived.

And now the podcast is launched. The launch happened and now I am ready to experience life after launching. Right? Just like when you get

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married. The wedding is beautiful, then you have a honeymoon. But the most important part is the marriage.

Same with this podcast, it was super exciting being engaged, right, the lead up to the launch. The wedding was exciting, and imperfect, and beautiful, meaning my launch. And now, I think I'm in the honeymoon phase, right? I'm just still super in love with the podcast, all my reviews are positive. That doesn't mean it's going to stay this way, right? Over time the haters going to come, or the deserved constructive criticism will come. The three-star ratings will come, or hopefully not two and one star. But you know what I mean. The marriage, the ups and downs. And that's what I'm excited for is the long game with my podcast.

So overall I feel really proud, really grateful, really grateful to my producers. Super grateful to my podcast focus group. And to my friend Ana, who came on full time at the last minute to help me with marketing, and graphic design, and promoting the podcast. And who's going to stay with me for the next three months to help me with the podcast and everything audio visual that we're going to need to grow The Art of Applying, my full-time business. As well as grow Scale Your Joy, my passion project that you're listening to right now.

All right, so today we are going to be learning about how to name your next project. Whether it be a podcast, a book, a business, blog, or brand. And we're going to use Kaneisha's Perfect Title Principles in order to learn what it takes to name things a memorable, evocative, beautiful, big, awesome name. And so that's what we'll be learning today.

But before we go into that, we have our listener spotlight. And our listener spotlight is actually about a two-minute voice memo clip that Ana sent me after listening to the first two episodes of Scale Your Joy. She sent it to me right in the midst of the Texas snowpocalypse. She didn't realize I was in survival mode, so she's just sending me all these lighthearted voice

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memos. And I thought that this voice memo would be a great listener spotlight for today. So go ahead and enjoy.

Ana: I just listened to two of the episodes. One I finished yesterday and today I listened to the second one. And actually, I think I'm hooked on your show. You know what I really liked about the first episode? Like what my favorite part were like the last 15 minutes, where you said, like you got a little bit philosophical. And you were going into like what makes you a writer is that you write. You know, and how entrepreneurship is a spectrum. And you can have a job and a side hustle, or you can have your own business, that being the main thing.

So that kind of like, if I didn't really feel like I fit into your audience by the other criteria, like having your own business or, you know, being this high achiever having graduated Harvard, and then I felt like, "Oh yeah, actually like the way I try to move around I would love to be like employee and to have a business. That would be cool." Yeah, so I really like that part.

And the second show, you mentioned me once and I was like, "Oh my god, she made a whole episode about me and how amazing I am." And I was so excited. That was really cute. The second episode actually did feel like talking to you. Like the first was, I don't think it was formal, but like the second one actually felt as if talking to you as you are in a usual like friend conversation. Yeah, which is like a friend conversation which is a bit more mentoring than just talking about life stuff. But still it felt very, like very natural, very real.

Kaneisha: Okay, so let's get into it. Kaneisha's Perfect Title Principles. One thing you all should know is that Scale Your Joy was not always the title of this podcast when it was first thought up of as an idea in my brain. The podcast I wanted to create was originally titled The Bold Soul. And I was really proud of the title, very attached to the title. I loved the title. My executive assistant actually came up with the title one day while we were

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eating fried chicken during our two-person leadership team retreat for The Art of Applying.

We were in California. So I think we were in Long Beach, or we were in Huntington Beach in California. It was fall 2019, right? So over a year ago. And there was this big sign that said, "The bold fold." I think we were at some sort of fried chicken taco shack place. And she was like, "Kaneisha, your next business, where you're going to do business coaching, and life coaching, and dating coaching, it's going to be called The Bold Soul." And I was like, "Oh, that's beautiful. That's amazing. That's exactly what my business is going to be called."

And I got really attached to it. I was like, that's the name. I even made a big announcement on social media. Sent out an email to my 9,000 plus person email list, saying, "Hey, I'm starting a second business. It's called The Bold Soul."

Then time went by and I ended up starting to work with my producers that I work with now. And that was January 2021 when we started working together. And they really encouraged me to consider a different name for the podcast. And I was very resistant to changing the name but I wasn't 100% against it. I'm a very coachable person. And I'm like, "Hey, these people are experts. I want the results that the other very popular podcasts that they work with have. So let me listen. And let me be open to it."

Because I wanted a name for my podcast that was clear, and evocative, and that could evolve with me over a period of time. And also, one that lit me up. And The Bold Soul, that is evocative, it lit me up. It could also evolve with me over time. But it wasn't clear. Who was this podcast for? What is a podcast called The Bold Soul about? Is it a meditation podcast? Is it about reincarnation? Is it about yoga?

And so really, when you heard The Bold Soul you felt something, but everybody kind of felt something different. It didn't immediately tell you

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what the podcast was about. So then I got into a loop. I don't think I've told y'all about my loops yet y'all.

So, I get into these loops where I become obsessed with solving a problem. The problem is never anything super serious. It's like, I need an area rug. I need a new area rug. And when I get this new area rug, all of my problems in life will be solved. So I've gotten in loops around area rugs. I've gotten in loops around the sofa. When I find the perfect leather sofa that says, "Oh, she's a writer, and she's an entrepreneur, but she also likes to relax. She's sexy, but she's also intellectual." That's all the things I wanted the sofa to say about me, then all the problems in my life will be solved.

So I get into these loops and I got into a doozy of a loop around naming this podcast. And I drove my beloved Tyler crazy with brainstorming names. And I ended up with some really promising ones. We came up with Overcoming Overachievement, The Oversharing Hour, and The Inspired Achiever. Those are three awesome names. I love those names. However, none of them felt quite right. None of them encapsulated my desire to talk about business and personal development. The levity, and quirkiness, and fun that I also wanted the brand to have.

And so after driving myself and Tyler bonkers. Tyler says it was two weeks, I think it was just a weekend. But the fact that I think it was two days and he thinks it was two weeks shows how much I was driving him bonkers. Because for me it was a really intense short burst of looping. And for him it was like, "Gouge my eyes out. Oh, my goodness, can my girlfriend please get obsessed with something else, please?"

So after whatever it was, I think it was two days, Tyler says it was two weeks, whatever it was. After I drove us both bonkers with my loop around the podcast name, I finally found my podcast name.

It was a Sunday evening. Tyler had gone home and I sat quietly on my bed just kind of casually meditating. I don't know if I even knew I was meditating. I was being very quiet and being just open. All of my receiving

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chakras, just kidding, I don't really know about chakras. But let's go ahead and go with it. All my receiving chakras were open. And I just felt like one of my spirit guides or one of my ancestors just handed the name to me, just whispered it in my ear and said, "Scale Your Joy. That's your name."

And I just felt this sense of peace and certainty. And I was like, "I think this is my podcast name, Scale Your Joy." The name resonated with me immediately. So I first googled to make sure it was available. And then I said it out loud a few times, felt how it felt to say out loud. How does it sound to my ears? And then I claimed it as my own.

So I shared it with my producers. And they were like, "We like this name. This is good. There's some podcasts with related names. And then there's a podcast episode that someone else has created that has that name. But there's no podcast called that. We can work with this." And so we were off to the races, and we had a podcast name.

So today we're going to talk about your naming journey. If you've ever found yourself searching for the perfect name for your podcast, your book, your business, your blog, whatever, your brand, this episode is perfect for you. I want you to listen to it multiple times to make sure you really absorb all the juicy teaching goodness. Or if you have a friend that you know is starting a business, or wants to start a blog, or wants to figure out a cool brand to start creating products, have them listen to this episode because it's going to be super helpful, inspiring, and encouraging.

I've packaged up all my naming genius into an easy-to-use framework. And I'm delivering it as a set of principles. And you can use them as kind of like a checklist for any name that you're considering for your project, book, business, blog, or brand.

Some things to know is that I want you to use these tips to help you vet if a potential title is strong and if it will serve your brand in the short term and the long term. And I want you to know that there are always exceptions to the rules.

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So I don't want you to read these and think that like, "If I come up with a title that I absolutely love and it doesn't fit into Kaneisha's Perfect Title Principles then it's not a good title." No, you are the ultimate authority on the right title for your project. But use these to make your life a lot easier. Use Kaneisha's Perfect Title Principles as a filter through which you can run potential titles through to see which title picks up and adheres to as many of these principles as possible.

Also, just know that I may add more principles to this as they occur to me. Think of Kaneisha's Perfect Title Principles as a framework in progress. Just like I'm a work in progress and we are all beautiful imperfect works in progress.

All right, let's get to it y'all, Kaneisha's Perfect Title Principles. Speaking of works in progress, principle number one is titles are not static. It's okay to start with one title and then change your mind.

There is a very popular podcast that I really enjoy listening to called Unf*ck Your Brain by Kara Loewentheil. It has over 3600 ratings on Apple Podcasts. And her podcast is produced by the same person who produces this podcast. So I'm very inspired by Kara's success because I'm like, "Kara went to Harvard and now she works with the same producer and has this amazing podcast. I went to Harvard, and I'm working with this producer, and hopefully I can have a podcast as popular and as high quality as Kara's."

But you know what? Kara's amazingly popular podcast, Unf*ck Your Brain, it started out as The Lawyer Stress Solution. Right? That's a really different name. And she did not blow up her whole life and delete her podcasts, and hide in shame when she decided she wanted to change the title. She used the exact same RSS feed. Meaning if you look at her earliest, earliest podcast episodes, they are titled The Lawyer Stress Solution. And that's what she's referring to the podcast as, and she just was like, "Hey, everybody, it's a different name now."

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You know, I had found her once it was Unf*ck Your Brain. But guess what, people's brains didn't explode when she decided to change the name of her podcast. So don't let finding the perfect title keep you from starting at all. Titles are not static.

Principle number two, your title should light you up. You should be excited to say it because you are going to be saying it a lot. You'll be saying it every time you mention your book, every time you mention your blog, every time you introduce your podcast, every time you promote it. You'll be saying that name a lot. So you should be excited to say it, you should be excited to share the title. And you should be ready to proudly stand by the name for at least a year. Right?

So I just told you you can change the title in principle one because titles are not static. But you do want to pick a title that you feel proud of, and that you could stand in for at least a year.

Principle number three, titles should attract your ideal audience and repel the audience that you don't want. For Scale Your Joy my ideal listener identifies as a high achiever, a high potential person, and someone who is curious or passionate about entrepreneurship and personal development. So words like scale really appeal to their entrepreneurial strategic side. And words like joy appeal to their personal development, spiritual, and emotional side.

At Harvard Business School I took an outrageously popular marketing class. At the time it was called consumer marketing. And then I think it might be called different now. And it is taught by Youngme Moon, who is a Harvard Business School professor, one of my favorite professors I had at Harvard. And she is one of the most popular professors at Harvard Business School.

And in that class, we learned about the idea of hostile marketing, which is one of my favorite concepts that we learned about in that class. And the idea behind hostile marketing is that you can really attract your ideal

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customers, by making your product repulsive to the non-ideal people who might water down your brand for your ideal target person.

So she said to us one day, she said... This is me and my classmates while we're sitting in class. These are my Harvard Business School classmates. We're all kind of in our mid to late 20s. And she says, "Okay, so do y'all remember when MTV used to be good?" And we were like, "Yes, it was so good and then it's like such crap now." And she said to us, "Well, guess what? MTV is still good to their intended audience. It's just that you have aged out of their target market. And you have been hostilely marketed to so you get away from MTV, and the right people that they want, the teens, the tweens, maybe the oldest they really even want is about 20, 21, or so, 22."

And that stuck with me, right? It's been 12 years later and that concept stuck with me because it was so interesting. And she kind of tricked us, right? She tricked us into identifying ourselves as not the ideal market for MTV. And I just think that is just such a cool way to show us the idea of hostile marketing.

And so you can work on coming up with a title that really brings in your ideal person and pushes away and repels the non-target user, right? So a person who's a hustle hard, work till you are exhausted and collapse type person is going to be repelled by the title Scale Your Joy. They're going to be like, "What does that even mean? Joy doesn't matter, dollar signs matter. #24/7." You know, whatever crazy things they say. They are not going to be attracted by the idea of scaling their joy. They're like, "I want to scale, you know, I want to make a dent in the universe. I want to be the next Uber or Facebook." And that's not who this podcast is for.

This podcast is for somebody who's like, "I want to live a beautiful life, a joyful life, an abundant life. I want to build wealth, but not at the expense of my wellbeing and not at the expense of the wellbeing of the earth." So that's who this podcast is for, and the name attracts people who believe in that and repels people who don't.

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Principle number four is alliteration is almost always amazing. So alliteration is when you use the same sound repeatedly in a title. The way I used in this principle. Alliteration is almost always amazing, that's alliteration. But too much alliteration is annoying, such as in this principle, right? That's too much. Alliteration is almost always amazing, that's too much for one title.

But an example of alliteration working well is the title of my book. So I wrote a book, I self-published it and I raised \$11,000 from my friends, and family, and fans, and followers to publish it through Kickstarter. And the book is called Be Your Own Boyfriend. And that B is repeated twice, Be Your Own Boyfriend. But that B sound is not in every word, that's going to be too annoying that b, b, b, b, b, right?

So you don't want your podcast to have a title that sounds like alliteration is almost always amazing. I overused alliteration in that principle to demonstrate what is alliteration and also what is too much alliteration.

Another great example of alliteration in a title is my admissions consulting company that I started when I was at Harvard Business School and Harvard Kennedy School and that I still run. It's called The Art of Applying. So we have alliteration with the word art and alliteration with the word applying. Also, our signature program for helping people get into their dream grad school also uses alliteration, it's called Application Accelerator. Very easy to remember, has a nice ring to it.

Alliteration also works with similar sounding words that don't start with the same letter but still have the same sound to them. So my company has a limited time offering called Application Intervention. That vowel beginning and the tion end gives us some alliteration. Application Intervention, so it has some rhythm to it and some alliteration. Okay, so that's principle number four, alliteration is almost always amazing.

Principle number five, wordplay can save the day. One of my favorite wordplay titles is the book and podcast Seize The Yay by Sara Holloway,

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who is now Sarah Davidson. She's the founder of Matcha Maiden Green Tea, and also the host and creator of the Seize the Yay podcast.

So you can't tell by her last name, but I want to mention for diversity and representation sake, that Sarah's heritage is 100% South Korean. She was adopted by Australian parents and she grew up in Australia. And I really would love to bring Sarah on the podcast to discuss her entrepreneurial journey, to talk about her book *Seize The Yay*, because I just feel like it's a perfect fit for *Scale Your Joy*.

And anyway, today because I couldn't remember her name, I can only remember *Seize The Yay*. I googled *Seize The Yay* and I saw that her book of the same name comes out on March 16th, which is just a week after this episode comes out. So I would love to be able to connect with Sarah bring her on the podcast and interview her for all of you.

But anyways, Sarah and her Matcha Maiden Green Tea brand, they use a lot of wordplay throughout their website copy, throughout their marketing and it's very effective, right? The title itself, *Seize The Yay*, of her book uses wordplay, but they also incorporate the word yay into a lot of her podcasts and on her website. So wordplay can save the day is principle number five.

Principle number six is try a three-word call to action as your title. All right, we already talked about *Unf*ck Your Brain*, right? What are you going to get? Well, if I listen to this podcast, I'm going to learn how to Unf*ck my brain. I didn't know my brain was fucked up. Now I'm curious, let me listen.

Another podcast, *Lose 100 Pounds*. Whoa! If you could help me lose 100 pounds, you could probably help me lose 15. Awesome. As well as my podcast title, *Scale Your Joy*. All three of those are powerful three-word calls to action for a title. I love this formula for the title of a podcast, for the title of a book. I think it works really well.

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Another example is my book that I already mentioned before, Be Your Own Boyfriend. It's a four-word call to action, it's very memorable. It's like what does that mean? It piques curiosity, it's easy to spell.

Principle six and the three-word call to action is about a title that gives a promise to your audience of what they're going to get if they consume your content. So it's going to be easy to remember, easy to spell, and very outcome oriented.

Also, I love the idea of speaking directly to the listener or to the reader. Unf*ck Your Brain, it's not called The Unf*cked Brain, it's Unf*ck Your Brain. Lose 100 Pounds, Scale Your Joy. It could have been called The Weight Loss Show, right? But instead, it was Lose 100 Pounds, very specific.

Principle number seven is adapt the title of something you already love. Great titles can be inspired by other great titles. When I was starting my admissions consulting business, The Art of Applying, it needed a name. And I didn't wrack my brain for a name. I didn't drive myself crazy. I actually just took the title of something I already loved and adapted that title to be the title of my business.

When I was in grad school, I was a frequent and avid reader of the blog, The Art of Non-Conformity by Chris Guillebeau. And so it was an absolute no-brainer to me to just simply name my business The Art of Applying. It's a little bit of a long name for a business. It's a little bit of a mouthful, but I fell in love with my business name from the beginning, and I've been in love with it the entire 11 years I've had my business.

And so when I was thinking of podcast names, I really liked Kara's podcast title, Unf*ck Your Brain. So then I came up with Unstuck Your Life and I was really excited about it. And when I told the title to people, they really loved it. It was a three-word call to action, check. It lit me up, check. It attracted my ideal listener, check. It repelled the person I didn't want to listen, check.

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But unfortunately, it was already a title of a very recently launched podcast. So I decided to let that go so that I wouldn't cause confusion by launching a second podcast with the same title. It's not against the rules to do that, but I didn't want to cause that much confusion. I really wanted a title I could claim as my own.

Principle number eight, create a fandom with your title. In my late 20s and when I was in grad school, I started and ran a really popular dating and relationships advice blog called Crazy Girl Nation. It was a blog featuring stories from my life, as well as advice that I learned from dating and relationship books that I was devouring at the time.

A lot of those books I would never, ever recommend now that I've learned more about attachment theory. Because I feel like a lot of dating and relationship books are aimed at anxiously attached people and how to use games, and rules, and strategies in order to trick avoidant people into dating you long enough to where they get attached. And you play down your anxiety and your needs to get them to commit to you. No thank you. So I don't even recommend a lot of those books I used to devour and share their strategies from.

And the target audience for Crazy Girl Nation was highly anxious women who I lovingly referred to as Crazy Girls. And so me and my friends actually still use the phrase crazy girl nation whenever we're sharing stories with each other of embarrassing things we've done, said, or even just thought. And me and some of my gay guy friends, they even use it to like, "Oh, I did this crazy girl nation thing today."

So that's a great name, right? A name that it really repels, right? It will repel women who are like, "Oh, I'm too proper. I'm not crazy, whatever." And of course, now that name, I don't even know if the name Crazy Girl Nation would work in this era, right? It's not really a done thing anymore for progressive people to refer to women as girls. Unless it's just like one on one like, "Ooh girl." You know, that's totally fine. But it doesn't seem like it's

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really... I know I don't like being called a girl outside of that very specific instance of like, "Ooh girl." And also calling women crazy is definitely problematic, right?

So I don't even know if the name Crazy Girl Nation would have lasted beyond that very special time in my life, in my mid to late 20s. But at that time, oh, that was the perfect name, an amazing name.

All right, principle number nine is one of the most important principles of all, it's a little counterintuitive. Principle nine is there is no perfect title. The perfect title is the one you choose. The one you move forward with and the one you just commit to build your brand upon. Since you already learned that titles can change there's no need to sit around waiting for the perfect title. The key is to get started. Put your voice out there, whether that's a blog, a book, a podcast, your business, and let the perfect title find its way to you as you create.

So as a recap keep this in mind, whether it's a punchy title that makes your ideal listener see stars, an adaptation of an already beloved brand, an alliterative title that tantalize is your target audience, a pun that makes your brand fun, a three-word call to action that fits well on a business card, or a tribe-building label that brings all the boys to the yard. You can use Kaneisha's Perfect Title Principles to find and decide on the perfect title for you and your next project.

So now it's time for your joy work. I want you to journal, doodle, and noodle on these questions. What is a project, podcast, book, business, blog, or brand I want to launch within the next 12 months? And who is the ideal audience I want to attract? Who are the people I want to repel from my brand? What are some titles that would attract my ideal audience, and repel the people I don't want in my tribe?

Do the titles I'm thinking of, do they use at least three of Kaneisha's Perfect Title Principles? If not, how might I adjust each title to fit at least three of Kaneisha's Perfect Title Principles, and what might some alternative titles

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be? If I just cannot think of a title for my project, let's just pick your favorite perfect title principle. Which one is my favorite one? Just focus on one. How can I think of some titles or build a brand on just my favorite of Kaneisha's Perfect Title Principles? So that's your joy work for this week.

This was Scale Your Joy with Kaneisha Grayson, episode five. Have a wonderful week. And I cannot wait to share more stories, strategies, frameworks, advice, and encouragement with you next week.

To celebrate the launch of the show I'm giving away a Scale Your Joy audiobook ebook bundle. These are five hand-picked books that I have read and I love. They're about life, joy, and entrepreneurship, and five lucky listeners will be chosen to win.

The way you enter is you subscribe, rate and review Scale Your Joy on Apple Podcasts. It doesn't have to be a five-star review, although I sure hope you're loving the show. I want your honest feedback so I can create an amazing show that provides tons of value visit scaleyourjoy.com/welcome to learn more about the contest and how to enter.

I'll be announcing the winners on the show in Episode 11.