

MEMBER MEETUP & WORKSHOP SUMMARY – Led by Amber Vilhauer

By Isabela Myre

Event Date – Aug 10, 2024

Featured Speakers

Amber Vilhauer, author of *Infinite Impact*

Hal Elrod, author of *The Miracle Morning*

This event was held by and for the Lifestyle Investor Mastermind, and hosted by Amber Vilhauer, speaking on her area of expertise: Books & Business. Midway through, she also did an interview-style presentation with Hal Elrod, multimillion-copy bestselling author of *The Miracle Morning*.

I went to this meetup to learn everything I could from Amber on business and book launches, and ended up with a wealth of information on even more than I could have thought. I'm writing this article to share my experience and what I learned with anyone interested in reading it.

Morning Session

The Member Meetup & Workshop was held in the headquarters of a small business called Harbor Capital, on the edge of the Hyde Park area of Austin, TX.

It was fairly unassuming on the outside; just a single-story square of sandy brick surrounded by similar buildings on an ordinary street. The inside, however, was full of funky decorations and comfortable furniture, and while there were the inevitable desks and large monitors scattered about, it felt less like the office of a private equity firm and more like that of a small indie graphics company.

Profile – Amber Vilhauer | First thing upon walking in the door, I was greeted with a big hug from the event’s host, Amber Vilhauer. I had never met her in person before—in fact, the only previous communication we’d shared consisted of two emails and a video call, on which she had been speaking to a Zoom room full of other people. But that’s just the kind of person she is: her mission in life is to make others feel seen, heard, and valued, and you can immediately tell that she tackles this mission head-on every moment of every day.

After meeting and greeting the people in the hallway—including such notables as Dane Espergard, author of *The Dream Machine*, and Justin Donald, author of *The Lifestyle Investor*—we wandered through into the main room, where several other attendees were already gathered. We were on the cusp of lateness (courtesy of a debacle with the hotel printer), so most everyone who was going to be there already was—about 25 in all. We talked for a few minutes with some other guests until Dane, who was acting as a co-host, pulled everyone together to give a short introduction before Amber took the stage.

She began by talking about the general consciousness and attitude of the world coming out of COVID and approaching this year and the next. Most people right now feel lost, tired, and are beginning to lose hope in the world. With the rampant spread of misinformation and the rise of AI, it’s hard to know if you can trust the information that’s being displayed to you; let alone if it was made by a real person, or manufactured by an AI bot that’s only job is to spit out iterations of the same material countless times a second. Coupled with international

political upheaval, it's no wonder this has spawned an environment of constant consumer distrust and hopelessness. That's why, Amber pointed out, the world needs authors and entrepreneurs who will be open and honest with the people they serve, and who will stand by their values in the face of tsunamis of misinformation and doubt.

Profile – Amber Vilhauer | It's worth taking a look at Amber's operation as a whole. Firstly, she's the owner of NGNG Enterprises, which stands for 'No Guts No Glory,' a marketing agency that helps entrepreneurs and businesses with strategy, training, and services. She also has a Books & Business brand that helps authors find community and launch their books successfully. This event focused on Amber's new book, *Infinite Impact*. In it, she helps the reader get in Alignment with themselves and their Foundational Four: Vision, Why, Values, and Avatar, but in a very different way than any other business book. Amber digs much deeper, encouraging you to unearth the unconscious beliefs that have held you back, to one extent or another, since childhood. And with that, get sharp clarity on your Vision and Why, which enable you to make decisions on your life with clear goals and motivations in mind. Most of all, she wants to help people make a positive, tangible impact on the world and those around them—this is the lens with which she approaches business and life.

Next, Amber zoomed in and asked us to consider what we need to operate at our highest and best. She said she'd noticed a pattern in her own behavior; when she was struggling with motivation or energy, it turned out that she was usually absorbing media that was making her feel that way: whether it be sad music or true crime shows. Things that she often enjoyed, but for whatever reason were bringing her down at that time. And when she stopped taking in those media, she felt better.

Takeaway – Productivity | When struggling with energy levels or motivation, think about what media you're absorbing at the time. Things like listening to too much sad music can have an adverse effect on how you're feeling, so cutting such media can help you operate at the level you need.

Amber continued to her concept of Avatar. To anyone not terribly familiar with business principles on avatar (as I was), most sources will tell you that your avatar is basically your target audience: people that are 35-65 years old, have 2.5 kids, etcetera. Amber's version is very different. To her, your Avatar is a very specific person you create according to your intuition, and who you know so well that you can picture their thoughts and feelings at any time, even down to their name. Most of all, you know their deepest unmet need (which will just so happen to mirror yours).

Therefore, when you sit down to create content—whether it be a book or a social media post—you can think of your Avatar and know exactly how to write your message so that it lands for them. This has worked very well for Amber; she said that she's had clients come up to her countless times and say, “Amber! How did you know what I was thinking? That's exactly how I felt.”

Amber then led us through an exercise for finding our own Avatars, allowing our intuition to guide us. (I had done this exercise with her previously on a Zoom call, and it worked very well for me. It really made my Avatar click in my mind, and with that, the other three pillars fell into place.)

Takeaway – Avatar | Knowing your Avatar well, down to their name and deepest unmet need, is key for writing and recording messages that land for and serve your audience. It will build a sense of authenticity and connection that will be heavily sought after in our current times.

The next section of the event was a characteristic of The Lifestyle Investor Mastermind; the Ask/Give. Everyone was given two notecards, one that said ‘Ask,’ one ‘Give,’ and told to write down their answer to each. Then, everyone had to share these with the group. Mostly this took the form of people offering help from their areas of expertise—healthcare, investing, etc.—and asking for advice in an area they were still developing.

Afternoon Session

Profile – Justin Donald | And then, as a surprise, Justin Donald addressed the room. He wasn’t a presenter at this event, but, as the leader of The Lifestyle Investor Mastermind, he wanted to talk about how much he loved having these meetups, and how much fun he had connecting cool people together for their mutual benefit. He said that while most people thought his success was due to him being a great investor, that wasn’t true; he was just a ‘good’ investor—what he was best at was connecting with people and forming relationships, then leveraging that to everyone’s benefit.

Next on Amber’s agenda was general information on the publishing industry, how it works, and timelines to expect for different types of publishing. What I found most interesting were Amber’s thoughts on which type of publishing to go with and why.

Takeaway – Publishing | Amber recommended hybrid publishing for most people in the room. As a happy-medium between self-publishing and traditional, it produces a book that’s more professional, due to help from the hybrid company, but with far shorter processing and launch times, due to increased flexibility. You also have more control over everything about

your book, including title, cover, and full rights to the work. When considering working with a hybrid company:

- Cost sweet spot is around \$15k-\$20k – best quality & value for your money. Costs can range from \$5k-60k
- Certain upper-level hybrid companies (and traditional publishers) won't let you make books in full color
- Might want to design the cover yourself/using a different service (such as 99Designs). The cover is what sells your book!
- Most likely, the hybrid company will outsource the actual publishing to Ingram Content Group, which handles print on demand and setting up with retailers (Amazon, Barnes & Noble, etc.)

Interview with Hal Elrod

Next was one of my favorite parts of the event: Amber's interview with bestselling author Hal Elrod.

Profile – Hal Elrod | Hal is difficult to encapsulate; his high-energy antics and obvious enthusiasm were immediately engaging and likeable, and his delight seemed to bleed into the room around him. It came as a surprise to me that Hal's passion had always been for inspirational speaking—and he was very good at it. I found him instantly relatable for his bouncy energy and palpable zeal for his work. He was clearly very knowledgeable about writing, people, and life, and shared some interesting insights into all three.

Amber began by asking Hal to talk about his book, *The Miracle Morning*. I found everything he had to say super interesting.

Takeaway – Writing | My favorite insights were Hal’s top three tips on writing/engaging readers.

- #1 – Engage readers emotionally. Whether through humor or inspiration, bringing the reader on an emotional journey—especially one they’ll want to share with others—is very helpful for keeping them engaged and wanting to spread the word about your book. Going along with that, think about what your reader will be thinking/feeling/objecting to at any point (*psst, Avatar!*) and address it in the next sentence. Hal also recommends ending chapters on a cliffhanger to keep the reader going through the book.
- #2 – Handle reader’s objections ahead of time. Again, I saw a lot of parallels to Amber’s Avatar concept in this. Obviously, the main objection that people make to doing the Miracle Morning routine is that “they’re not a morning person.” But if he first shares stories of great challenges that he overcame (with the help of the routine) and talks them through the journey that it takes to build a habit, (first 10 days are unbearable, second 10 days are uncomfortable, last 10 days are unstoppable) then they go in much more prepared to accept getting up an hour earlier.
- #3 – Lead the reader to a meaningful change in their behavior. It’s good to have your reader engaged while reading the book, but once they finish it, they’ll likely just move on to the next one without a second thought. However, if you (through repeated convincing and tangible action steps) persuade them to actually change something about their behavior, they’re much more likely to keep recommending your book, and you will have achieved real impact on someone’s life in the process!

Hal also talked about how influential the ‘SAVERS’ (Silence, Affirmation, Visualization, Exercise, Reading, Scribing) acronym was for *The Miracle Morning*’s success. The book was originally self-published and had little in the way of advertising to back it up, so most of its popularity was due to word-of-mouth recommendation. Part of its memorability was due to the ‘SAVERS’ acronym, which was actually referenced more often on social media than the title of the book itself. The acronym made the morning routine easy to remember and go through without referencing the book.

Takeaway – Acronyms | Consolidating concepts into acronyms makes them more memorable, and simple for readers to recommend. Same goes for alliterative phrases—like ‘unbearable, uncomfortable, unstoppable’ in reference to building habits.

Another of Hal’s valuable thoughts was on how to incorporate vulnerability into your work. At the event—and in his book—he talked about his battle with cancer and how it shaped his life, but he examines such stories for a reason; to connect with the reader and show them what can be overcome. What he doesn’t do is share tough or traumatic stories about himself for vulnerability’s sake. Amber readily agreed, saying that while she had shared a vulnerable story about her childhood in her own book, she did it in service to the reader’s understanding of the important concepts she was trying to convey. In short; don’t be vulnerable for vulnerability’s sake. Be vulnerable in service to your Avatar.

Observation – Life | I noticed a thread that connected a lot of Amber and Hal’s messages. Both took winding paths through life, as we all do, but they didn’t worry too much about where they were ultimately going to end up; they simply took the steps they saw in front of them, over and over, until they arrived where they are today. Life is a process, so taking it one step at a time is all you can hope to plan on, and that’s a good thing. Life will

inevitably happen to any grand plans we try to make, so just focus on making progress toward your goals every day, and you will succeed.

With that, Amber closed off the interview and thanked Hal sincerely for his time and thoughts. Then she brought us all back to the start, considering the consciousness of the world going into the next year. She reminded us that people are still feeling tired, lost, and most of all, afraid. Those who take action now to lead us through will end up at the forefront of the ‘new normal,’ and have the best chance of impacting humanity for the better.

Top 3 Things

My top takeaways from this event.

1. Hal’s three tips on writing, especially about engaging the reader emotionally and inducing an actual change in their behavior. I, of course, immediately started thinking about how this could be applied to fiction/fantasy, and how interesting that could be.
2. Amber’s Avatar concept and its implications. Besides the fascinating benefits of knowing how to really engage and make messages for your audience, I also thought of how this could apply to fiction, and character-building specifically. I can see the same exercise being used to create genuine and 3-dimensional characters, whose motivations you understand more intuitively than anything from a character sheet.
3. If a concept already exists or has been done before, don’t assume that you can’t put your own spin on it and have a big impact on the world. Everything in *The Miracle Morning* existed before Hal wrote it—meditation, journaling, affirmations—but because of how he re-thought these things and put them together in a cohesive structure and idea, people responded to it in a much bigger way than before.

Action Step

And now, (in keeping with Hal's third tip!) I encourage you to write down one or two of the things that most resonated with you in this article, and put them up as sticky notes on your wall where you will reminded of them often. Consider things that you can actively do every day to improve your life and the lives of those around you. Also—read *Infinite Impact!*

This article was written and edited entirely by me, a human. No AI was used.

About Me

I'm Isabela Myre. I'm nineteen, and working hard to become a fiction author. In the meantime, I'm exploring other writing opportunities until that dream comes true. I love travel and creating anything I can imagine.



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