

How to Manage Your Own Website

Chapter 7: When Your Site Breaks, Do This

by Greta Rose Zagarino

User-Friendly Resource Guides To Help Make Sense Of Your Website, Blog, Sharing Tools, Social Media Fan Pages, SEO & Analytics, Google Search Ranking, How to Create Authentic Content, and Troubleshooting.....
All Without Losing Your Mind.

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Bonus Playbook

I've created a few key worksheets to accompany some of the suggested exercises in this book.

To receive the Playbook, free book updates and bonus chapters, please click this link below.

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When Your Site Breaks, Do This

10 Immediate Steps to Take
When Your Website Does Not
Do What You Think It Should

When Your Site Breaks, Do This

Here's what you need to know about your website: There is always always a solution to every single problem.

It may take longer than you like, and it may require a different approach than you anticipated, but there IS a solution.

This is true 100% of the time. No exceptions.

This section will walk you through my approach to working through a problem. Take what you like, leave the rest. Just remember, never ever give up.

“Never, never, never give up. Never give in, never give in, never; no matter what. Even with matters great or small or large and petty. People should never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense.”

- Winston Churchill, October 29, 1941



Here are 10 immediate steps to take when your website does not do what you think it is supposed to:

1. **STOP**
2. **Ask The Right Question**
3. **Contact the Right Help Resource**
4. **Read the Manual**
5. **Follow Instructions**
6. **Don't Make It Up**
7. **Back Up & Save**
8. **Write Down The Solution**
9. **Take A Break & Laugh**
10. **Celebrate The Wins & The Losses**

STOP

Back in Chapter 1, we cover this in greater detail. There's nothing wrong with being lost, overwhelmed, confused. You are learning something new. Absorbing this content is going to take as long as it takes. You'll get there!

The only damage you can cause is if you don't ask for help when you need it, and make uninformed decisions. While most of the plugins, platforms and applications aim to be user-friendly, they are, after all, built with pretty complex code. Be a student. Stop to orient yourself. Don't do anything more until you know how to proceed (keep reading!). Be patient and kind to yourself, please.

Let's stop to figure out what the problem is, and then let's fix it.

Ask The Right Question

Because this is all new, you **might not even know what question to ask**. All you may know is, "my website isn't doing what it's supposed to do." This is OK! It's a great place to start.

Take a moment (first, just to calm down and resist the temptation to panic). Try to be a bit more specific.

Here are some diagnostic questions I might ask you, if I were talking to you on the phone. If you don't know the answer, skip it and move on to the next question:

1. What kind of computer or device are you using (a Mac, a PC, an iPhone, an Android, etc.)?

Note: If you are on a mobile device, let's get to a computer and see if the problem exists on the larger screen. If not, that is very helpful and tells you the problem is just on the mobile device.

2. What browser are you using (Firefox, Chrome, Internet Explorer, etc.)?

3. Are you using the latest most updated versions of everything? It's extremely helpful to know 3 things:

a. Computer's Operating System version (OS)

b. Browser version

c. Year of your computer purchase

If you don't know, that's ok. Skip it and move on.

4. Identify the name of the website platform or application you are working on (WordPress, Shopify, Squarespace, etc).

5. Are you working with a custom theme?

6. What is the name of the web page where the problem exists (a Page, a Post, a Portfolio Item - also called a Gallery or Project, Product, Checkout, Testimonial, Client, etc.)?

7. What SPECIFICALLY do you want to happen on this page, that is not happening?

8. Do you think the problem is a Design or Style problem ("When I click on the button, it's supposed to turn blue")? Or is it a Function problem ("When I click on the button, nothing happens. It's supposed to link to another page.")

Style refers to how something looks. Function refers to how something behaves or acts.

9. Fill in the blanks, where appropriate:

"I want the _____ to do _____"

"When I _____, it is supposed to do _____. Instead, it does _____."

"The page looks wrong. I want it to look like _____."

Now that you've identified the problem, **let's find a solution.**



Contact The Right Help Resource

First, you'll want to have your Logins & Passwords resource handy.

Internet is down: you need to call your phone company or internet provider. This is a free call.

Have internet, but my website is not showing up: you need to call your hosting company. This is a free call, and a good hosting company offers 24/7 customer service.

My email is not working: Anything related to email or domain registration is probably handled by your Domain Registrar. Call them first. They will let you know if your email is actually handled by your hosting company. Take note of this for future support.

NOTE: I strongly advise having ONE company handle your email, domains (urls), and web hosting. Make your life easier by only having to call one company for support. If you use multiple companies for these services, I advise taking the time now to consolidate everything. The transfer process is tedious, but worth it. You can contact your hosting company and have them walk you through instructions.

I think I've been hacked: I totally understand the urgency when you discover perhaps some evil force has infiltrated your beautiful website and caused havoc. I'm so sorry...

First, call your hosting company to verify if you have been hacked. They will see this on their end. If you haven't, they'll be able to explain what the issue is, and probably be able to help fix it.

If you have been hacked, roll up your sleeves, fix some coffee and settle in to fixing it. You'll be fine, but it's going to take some deep breaths and some acceptance here.

Start by having your hosting company explain your options, and don't do anything rash until you've had a chance to calmly weigh what is best for you.

I highly recommend utilizing a 3rd party security service that specializes in website security. I like (and use) Site Lock, but see my resources in Chapter 8.

And, when the emergency is over, implement some simple precautions to avoid this happening again: (1) keep your website updated; (2) have a backup of your files and content stored on a USB drive that you keep in a desk drawer (ask your hosting company how to do this); (3) change your WP-admin password every 6 months and don't use your pet's name; (4) keep your 3rd party security app (or service) updated and active so it can do monthly sweeps and block spammers.

My website is there, but the theme is broken: If you use a custom theme that you purchased, often the original files come

with access to a support forum and/or documentation with a contact email for questions. I have learned to love these, and if I'm patient, I can usually get the specific help I need from the developers or other users with the same question.

If you hired a web designer, you may find it easier to schedule a session and have them fix the issue. The cost of the session will be worth ease of mind and preserving your time. But, if you choose this, I recommend having them spend a few moments showing you how to avoid the problem in the future.

My website is there, theme is ok, but I just don't know how to do something: Hopefully this is not an emergency, so you can take some time here to find the best resource.

It will help to determine if your question is related to the general platform you are using (WordPress or Squarespace, etc.), or a specific feature of a custom theme you may have purchased. If you don't know, don't worry about it. Moving on...

You have a few options here, all good ones. You can look through the documentation that came with your theme. You can book a session with your website designer, if you used one, or you can type in your question in Google and see what answers arise. The last option is particularly good for general WordPress questions.

If you are using a platform that comes with support, like an eCommerce platform, or Managed WordPress, you can reach the 24/7 customer support for that platform (Shopify, Squarespace or Highwire, for example) via phone or iChat, and a friendly human can help.

NOTE: WordPress online forums are not very helpful, I'm afraid. I recommend finding a real human being to help you.

If none of these answer your question yet, **keep reading**.

Read the Manual

Every platform, application, plugin and tool you are using related to your website came with a manual (documentation). You'd be amazed at how many of your questions can be answered here.

Your theme support documentation can usually be found in your website's admin dashboard, under theme settings.

If you don't know where your documentation is, you can go back to the place you purchased the theme. Usually you can re-download the documentation or be directed to the theme support. You can also contact the theme retailer for help (like ThemeForest), and ask them to help you locate it or resend it. Once you've downloaded it, save this documentation in a safe place.



Follow the Instructions

This may seem obvious, but once you've taken the time to find the instructions, it's important that you follow them.

You'd be amazed at how many problems arise from missing or skipping a step in the instructions provided. I'd say it's funny, if it weren't so frustrating when it happens to you! I've seen plenty of folks pull their hair out at the simple act of forgetting a semi-colon.

Your website may be user-friendly, but there's a tremendous amount of code under the hood. It's important with code to be extremely precise (as in, down to the punctuation).

Now, if you find the instructions are written in language that is too overwhelming or confusing, I suggest calling your hosting company or website designer to help walk you through the instructions together. I promise, the learning curve on all of this is short and steep.

Don't Make It Up

You are not alone if you find yourself trying to just "figure it out". This is usually the first plan of attack when my clients get confused. They just start clicking away at buttons, hoping to discover the answer by chance.

Guess what? This doesn't work.

There is an elegant right solution, and you have invested enough time and money to do things the right way.

Recently, instead of learning how to install curtain rods into a difficult wall, I decided to simply crazy glue the fixture and tell my husband about it later. The curtain rod looked just fine to me, so I figured it didn't really matter.

Guess what? Yep. Didn't work. Just ended up being a funny story to bring up at parties.

With all the love in my heart, I implore you to take the time to learn how to do something the proper way, even if you do happen to figure something out by chance one time. Chances are, the consequences for your website will be a lot greater than a curtain falling down on your heads in the middle of the night.

Back Up & Save

There are three ways to back up and save your work.

First, call your hosting company and have the nice human being who answers the phone walk you through how to access your backups from your hosting account. If you don't have this



feature, request to have it added.

This way, if you really do “break your site”, you can easily revert to a previous version and restore it. Boom. Fixed.

Second, get in the habit when you are editing your website of saving your work every 5 minutes or so. Again, this will save various versions that you can restore. But more importantly, if something “breaks”, you can simply log out of your website and will only lose your most recent edits. WordPress also makes it easy to restore previous versions of your work, so you can hit the “rewind button” (figuratively speaking).

Third, place your valuable assets on a separate drive for safe keeping. As I was writing this book, for example, I had the lovely experience of having my computer crash. It happens.

I was able to retrieve some but not all of my data files, and my book wasn’t among the saved items. Thankfully, I had the latest version of this book on an external drive. No problem!

Saving your work can never be done too frequently!

Write Down The Solution

When I say “write down”, I don’t care if it’s on toilet paper, or recorded with the hippest technology gadget ever. The method is

totally up to you. The objective here is to record the solution so you can have it at your fingertips, should you need it again. I suggest keeping these notes with your important logins and passwords (see Chapter 1, Section 5).

Take A Break & Laugh

I need to remember this one a lot. I don't know about you, but when I'm not understanding something, or it's not as easy as I think it should be, I turn into a serious b#\$*Tch. Not fun for me, or anyone else within a 5-mile radius.

Heck, we are talking about your business, your livelihood, your passion, your time and money. When these are being "threatened" (I have this in quotes, because they aren't really, they just feel like it) it can really do a number on one's well-being.

You won't feel like it, but don't judge until you've tried this trusted and wise advice.

MAKE A FART JOKE. Tell a really stupid knock-knock joke. Watch a half-hour sit-com (Modern Family is my current favorite). Go for a sundae with extra cherries on top and enjoy the sugar high; go make funny faces with your dog; pull out your favorite songs from the '80's and jump up and down on your bed playing air guitar, grab something with wheels and go for a joy ride.

Make yourself LAUGH, and it will bring back some perspective. It will also make the solution significantly easier (and more pleasant) to find. I promise!

Celebrate The Wins & The Losses

When you manage your own website, there are going to be victories and there are going to be losses. You will make a mistake that will cost you some time and some money, and probably some composure.

Welcome to another day at the office.

But here's the thing: Losses are rarely losses, but rather steps towards your next achievement. And victories can be short and sweet, leading us towards the next challenge or difficulty.

Therefore, let's celebrate it ALL.

Every single day I think how lucky we all are to be a part of the "Age of the Entrepreneurs". You, my friend, are conquering the new frontier of online business. You are in the game, no longer a spectator.

Drink a toast, make yourself a special meal, give yourself an extra nod in the mirror, give thanks to whatever spiritual presence you acknowledge in the universe....

Remember that you have a choice, and you have chosen to manage your own website and take command of your online reputation. You can do this, through victories and challenges and mistakes and moments of brilliance.

Sure, shortly you're gonna figure out the solution to this current and immediate issue of yours. But, before it's over, take a moment to celebrate the journey.

This is my wish for you. Enjoy the ride.



So, what's next?

How to Manage Your Own Website

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GRETAROSE
AGENCY



Greta Rose Zagarino grew up in Berkeley, California. She received her degree from Hampshire College, a 5-college affiliate school with Amherst, Smith, Mt. Holyoke and University of Massachusetts.

Everything changed in 2001 when WordPress was created. Obsessed with graphic design, development and strategy, Greta launched her first WordPress website in 2003. A fire was lit.

She and her husband, Scott Zagarino, a successful sports marketing genius, found themselves on the front lines as communications entered the online frontier. It was as promising as the gold rush. Scott brought Greta along to create a new online fundraising model for non-profits (Lance Armstrong Foundation, Mike Milken's PCF, Special Operations Warrior Foundation).

Utilizing WordPress, social media, and SEO, they raised over \$8MM, receiving the prestigious Spearhead Medallion for Excellence in Service in 2011 and winning the Twitter Shorty Award for Best Non-Profit category.

Greta created the Greta Rose Agency in 2011 to help small businesses with their online reputations. She has become a reputable expert at defining an organization's identity and vision, and creating a complete, effective and valuable social platform to communicate with one's desired audience in a monumental and authentic way. Greta has generated stories featured on NBC

Nightly News, live feeds on Times Square, and national talk shows. She specializes in building online tools for companies around the globe to maximize their online reputations, control their content and understand how to integrate their website, social media and relevant search engines to achieve the best possible results.

She currently resides in Hood River, Oregon, with her genius husband and rescue pit bull, Rosie.

A note from the author.

I love my job. I get to transform ideas and concepts into virtual tools. I like to say, we *deliver your art of persuasion*. Ultimately, we build, support and implement your online reputation. We are the one-stop solution.

For the previous 15 years my job has been to make you talk about the company I was working for, to create a story compelling enough to capture your attention, and plant a seed that will last long enough for you to tell at least one other person.

What sets me apart from other agencies is my direct experience in business development and social marketing. The website just happens to be my story-telling medium.

You can check out the full resume and [see our work here](#).

I wrote this book because I saw a consistent look of fear when I'd complete a new website for a client, hand over the "keys" and send them on their way to manage their new site.

I could see they "weren't ready". I saw an immediate need to help them bridge the gap between receiving a new shiny site, and gaining the confidence to navigate their online business themselves with both intention and results.

I could also see they didn't want to know "a whole new thing", and that I had to carefully navigate the "techy stuff" to empower them, not overwhelm them, giving them just as much information they needed to stay on their feet and gain traction.

With this book, I've attempted to collect all the important components into one place. It is not meant to be cherished, it is meant to be USED. What is included are basic instructions so you can get what you need as quickly as possible.

May this book give you confidence, comfort and the information you need and want.

Cheers,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials 'JA' followed by a long horizontal flourish.