

# 117 Getting the Most Out of In-Person Events for Your Business

Welcome to so here's the thing, the podcast for small business owners, entrepreneurs and creative educators who are ready to take their business to the next level, through candid conversations, tactical approaches and a few unpopular opinions. We're lifting the veil on what it takes to build both a life and a business that you love. I'm your host, Laylee Emadi, a coach for creatives and founder of the creative educator Academy, where I help entrepreneurs step into the role of industry leaders and educators. I'm so glad that you're here. Now let's jump into today's episode.

Hello, friend, welcome back to so here's the thing today, we're going to be talking about something that I absolutely love talking about. And I love getting to be a part of, and that is in person events and getting the most out of actually showing up in person to these events. So I spent the last month technically I spent many years but in particular, I've spent the last month at several in person events, both large and small, including two conferences, and the first of which was spark by show it. And that was a conference for all creative business owners. It was really fun. And then the first conference held by Thrive photo conference, and that was really beautiful.

It was in Santa Barbara at the beach, it was lovely. And I had the honor of speaking at both of these events. However, as I'm gearing up to host my first conference, the creative educator conference, I can't help but think through the things that I wish I knew about getting the most out of actually showing up in person as an attendee, and even as a speaker, even as an educator. And so that's what we're going to be talking about today. Now, we've talked about this here and there on the show. And in fact, we did an episode, as far back as I believe it was like the third episode ever on this podcast, which would have been over three years ago, that I recorded with my good friend Quianna Marie. And we talked about how we connected at a workshop that we had both attended, and the relationship that we built there and how at this point, now, it's lasted about seven years, if you can believe it, alongside a handful of others who we met there and connected with there.

So how do we do that, I'm going to share a little bit about that in just a bit as I break down a few of those things that you can and probably should be doing. But we're going to also talk about deciding to invest your time deciding to invest your resources into an in person event, and then a couple of other things that you can do to really make sure that you're getting the most out of it, because it is an investment. And our time is so valuable, more so in my opinion, than the money that you spend on tickets and planes and all the things. So we'll talk about all those things. Now before we dive into what you can do to walk away with the best experience and the best return on your investment because again, it isn't an investment. Let's talk about making the decision to invest your time in the first place. Now, obviously I speak at events.

I'm a speaker, I'm an educator, it's what I love to do. And obviously I'm, as I mentioned, I'm hosting a conference, I've spent maybe the last seven years hosting stuff. So from classes to workshops than retreats leading up to the conference. And so I'm biased, I'm putting it out there. I am biased in that I

love in person events more than anything in the world. And I've hosted a virtual conference as well. And I just truly believe even as somebody who hosts, you know, masterminds virtually, I always have an in person component because I just believe that there is nothing that can replace being in person being face to face with people.

So all that being said, I am biased, but I truly have to say, like being shy of just a decade in this industry, I've only ever regretted attending one in person event. Like I literally only have the minut amount of regret for that one in person event and just one and it was honestly it was my own fault because I didn't do my due diligence on the event I just jumped in. And it was a free event. Not that that matters, because like I said, my time is usually worth more than the cost of any ticket. But even then, like even with regretting sitting through less than mediocre education, it was actually really awful you guys, I walked away even with all that even with regret, I walked away with an even stronger bond with an industry peer and friend who went with me. So as cheesy as it sounds, that's frickin priceless, like that bond that we created through that through that event with not so great education. It was worth showing up. So I know it sounds cheesy.

We're fine. We're moving on. So quick tips on choosing the right event for you. And this is like all about how to kind of gauge if the investment is going to be worth it for you. Okay, first up, this sounds like common sense, but you would be surprised. I mean, we all have this. I'm going to call it a problem. We're not going to be swayed by Instagram celebrities. Now I know that it's easy to look at follower count and look at people was brand deals and look at people who are on an educator lineup and think, oh, this person has to be incredible because they have like 100,000 followers, or vice versa, oh, this speaker looks like maybe they don't have a lot to offer because they only have like a couple 1000 followers, guys, let's leave that behind. Okay, it is the end of 2022, almost 2023. And we're gonna move on past vanity metrics, we're gonna look at the quality of each speaker. But more importantly, in my opinion, it's less about the speaker. I mean, although that's important and more about the topic that the speakers are teaching on, or the topics that they're teaching on at this event, things that would actually help you, or are they just kind of fluff, you know, so taking a look at actually doing your research on what's offered at the event and by who.

The second quick tip is looking at if the event that is being hosted as targeting an area that you actually need, or maybe just want to grow in. So making sure that it's aligned with your growth. But so maybe it's an area that you feel a little stuck in or unsure about your next steps, is it specific to, you know, the area of growth that you want. So, here's an example that is also kind of a shameless plug. But like my conference, the creative educator conference, it was built to help creatives become more profitable, become more impactful within the education that they sell. So I have people coming who are maybe successful speakers, but who want to scale a course that might not be selling, or I have successful service providers who are creating their first educational offer, like a mastermind or a coaching program, or I have a coach or a mastermind host who wants to make their first digital product shop. And so all these people who are coming, they know that they could use support, and knowledge and community around creating or just growing these educational offers and making them more profitable. So that's an example of like taking a look at where it is that you are now and where it is that you want to go. And making sure that the event that you attend is really aligned with where you want to go. The third quick tip.

And the last one is don't be afraid to buy. And don't be cocky. We'll talk about that in a second as well. But I actually set a personal example, I set an annual budget for education. And so every year, I know

that the money has been set aside for continued education for continued personal and professional growth. And so the whole concept of oh, I don't know, if I have this in my budget, I do know because there's a line item for it. And it's specific to education. It's not just like extra money that's laying around, it has been allocated toward my growth. And I really do think that that's important because you don't want to let finances stand in your way. Now, again, I've said this, I think I've already said this twice in this episode. And I really believe it. I think that time is a more important commodity than money for entrepreneurs. And so that might be something that I play with more than the financial side of things. Because financially, I've set it aside, I know it's there. And so I would advise that you do the same every year, if you haven't done it yet, maybe start next year, that could be a good thing to visit with maybe your CFO or your CPA or bookkeeper, whoever you work with. Or if it's just yourself doing it. Maybe it's something you visit with yourself with.

Oh, and then the whole Don't be cocky thing I mentioned this a little bit. This is really important for those of us who maybe have been around a while and think that we know it all. So maybe we used to have that line item of education in our budget. And then we were like, You know what, I have got so much experience, I've been in this industry for a decade, I don't need this anymore. Spoiler alert, we don't know it all. And for those of us who think that we do, I'm going to guarantee that we're going to stop growing, it's pretty much guaranteed that those who think that they know it all and they stopped showing up for themselves. They stopped growing, it just is what it is. So we're not gonna let that happen. We're going to put aside any ego and we're going to put our resources towards self betterment. Okay, soapbox over those were just kind of like three tips on getting into an educational event that's right for you an in person event that's right for you. And now we're going to dive into three ways to get the most out of things.

Once you've made the investment once you've made the decision to show up for yourself. Okay, first step, we're going to brainstorm ahead of time so we've chosen our event. And now our event is coming up in the next month or two months or however long and we're gonna brainstorm ahead of time a general idea of what it is that you want to walk away with. So we're not going to show up expected to be handed that now a lot of us hopefully you're showing up to an event that you do show up and they do hand you a lot of content. they hand you a lot of motivation. they hand you a lot of quality education, but what they're not going to be able to hand you what no host or speaker will be able to give you is a goal because we all need different things to happen in order to feel like we got that return on our investment, right. So what does that look like to you, I can give an example of this the last event that I attended, like I paid to attend, I wasn't speaking, I went in with a goal. And I took a lot of time to craft this goal.

And it might not be what you think, because it actually wasn't as specific and like tangible tactical as I would normally do. But it worked for me in the moment. So for me, I set the goal that I wanted to gain clarity, and at least one or two next steps planned on a specific like leg or pillar of my business. And so I sought out sessions within that in person event and educators and peers, a new friends and old friends that I knew could help me with that through conversation through content consumption. But I knew that I needed to leave that time, with a little bit more clarity, and at least one or two steps to take to move forward on that specific part of my business. And it can be that open ended. But to me in that season, it was so valuable to show up with that goal. And so I would just encourage you to really think ahead, like what is going to make this feel like it was worth my time worth my money, what do I need to walk away with to make sure that I'm feeling like I've gained that return, the second thing that you can do to really get the most out of showing up is obviously doing your research.

So we've already talked about finding out who's going to be there, what they're going to be talking about what the topics are. So from there, I would love to encourage you to take it a step further. And a recent episode I did with Jordan Gill, on VIP days, she talks about how she very intentionally seeks out people that she wants to connect with. And I would encourage you to also seek out people who you want to learn from. And then the hardest part for some of us introverts is doing what you can to make those connections and those conversations happen.

And so I am not encouraging you here to like, run up and be like aggressive and, and demand conversations and connections to happen. But I am encouraging you to, when appropriate, like when this setting allows for it, which I'm hopeful that any in person event will have a lot of good opportunity to actually create these moments for you to go up and introduce yourself, for you to think about who you want to talk with, and then actually get a chance to talk with them. So being brave, and really just putting yourself out there. And that's actually like the third tip I have for you, you know, being brave putting yourself out there. And really allowing yourself to be genuine in your conversation and create these connections that can be long lasting. The first big conference that I ever attended, I spent all the downtime that I wasn't in sessions and I wasn't in keynote sessions, and I wasn't, you know, in breakout rooms, I was in my hotel room alone, like completely alone. Because I was like, Okay, I'm an introvert, I need my downtime. I paid for this hotel room, I'm gonna use it, I'm gonna get a nap and whatever. What a waste, you guys it was so wasteful.

The in between moments are when conversational gold happens. It's where these amazing friendships and relationships are forged, where you can connect really deeply with other people who are there for the same purpose or even different purpose than you. So allow yourself to be present, make yourself available. And honestly, aside from being present, and being available, be generous with your knowledge, be generous with your insight, so that others feel comfortable to reciprocate, and they will open themselves up and they will make themselves present and available and generous with you. I really think that although you know, being strategic and creating relationships is important. I think it's more important to be genuine and to be open and to be excited about these relationships. I mean, I'm coming at this from a point of like strategic relationship building, but I really obviously, I would hope that anybody who's showing up to these things is excited to do that. So we talked about the three kind of three ways to get the most out of showing up. But you know, me, I'm gonna give you a bonus way because as I'm talking, I'm like, wait, I have a really good one that I think is important. So I think the bonus would be when we're thinking about truly getting a return on our investment like above and beyond any time or monetary investment. It's to continue showing up in the lives of the people that you connect with.

So we talked about this a little bit with in the beginning when I was talking about becoming friends with Kiana and then the other people who were at that first workshop years and years ago. Well, the way that we stayed in each other's lives was we continue to show up in each other's lives. So I don't care if this kind of goes if you're an attendee or a speaker or a volunteer or a staff member, I don't care what role you play in it. In person event, in person is irreplaceable, because it's the best way to create relationships quickly and deeply. And what you do after the in person time is kind of the gift that keeps giving. So again, it doesn't matter how you're showing up as an attendee, as a speaker, whatever. Because this is where we're going to create that network. I always get asked, like, Hey, how did you create this network of like, encouraging incredible, talented, high level friends in the industry? Like, how

do you always have these people around you. And I know, my friends are way cooler than I am. And I know it. And that's okay. And I love it.

But they know that I will always show up for them. That's how I built that network. They know that I'm always continuing to show up. And I know again, like, let go of the strategic standpoint of relationship building, show up as a human with a big heart who's ready to help other people, and people will do the same for you. That is how you build a, you know, mutually beneficial relationship and really deep connections. Entrepreneurship is lonely, or it can be lonely, but it doesn't have to be and it hasn't been for me, it hasn't been lonely for me for years. For the most part, I mean, there's always like parts of it that are lonely. But for years, I have felt supported. Because once we connect, once I connect with somebody, I'm around for the long haul. And so none of those connections would have happened if I hadn't made the leap to show up in the first place like to these in person events, to these educational events, to these networking events. If I hadn't shown up, it wouldn't have happened in the first place. But if I hadn't continued to show up, then none of it would be as strong or as deep as it is now. From an educators perspective, like I said, it doesn't matter really, if you're an attendee or a speaker, you get a huge return as an educator, when you show up and you give so much openly during these conferences, and you continue to show up after these conferences, that actually you'll probably walk away, I walk away with new coaching clients, new core students, new mastermind members, every time I show up. And again, this is not like even from a place of strategy.

But it's just because I show up and I give a lot and I have a lot of fun doing it. And now let's talk about this, like people are going to get a chance to see firsthand what it's like to work with me or work with you. And of course, not everyone is going to be like, Oh my gosh, I just like love this woman, like I take my money like I have to become one of your clients. But the right people are going to resonate with the way that you teach. And they're going to get that firsthand experience of what it's like to work with you in a small snippet. And those right people will become your clients. So it's a win win, you get to kind of show up and give openly and generously and have fun with teaching. And it pays off for you. And obviously it pays off tenfold for the person that you're impacting, and what a beautiful thing that is. And so those continued relationships, then become profitable for both of you. So all that to say, it doesn't matter what role you play at an in person event, you can use these things to really get the most out of it from all angles.

So this made me even more excited to create this type of space in January at the creative educator conference. And I really hope that you'll join us if you're an educator, or if you're an aspiring educator, and you're just a really well established service provider who maybe wants to grow whatever it is, in the education space that you want to grow, there are still a few seats left, we cap it really small in order to have these like really deep and personal connections, peer to peer and peer to Speaker, if you want to join us head to creative educator conference.com To learn more, grab your ticket, but even if this conference, even if my conference doesn't align with where you want to grow, because like we said in the very beginning, you've got to choose something that aligns with not just where you are now, but where do you want to be? I really hope that after listening to this, you'll seek out that one in person event that's perfect for you, and that you'll show up bravely and that you'll show up with an open mind and with open arms in order to embrace new community. I think it's so important. As always, I'd love to hear from you tag me on Instagram. If this has helped you drop a review. If this has helped you reviews helped me get this into the hands of more people who need it. As always, thanks for listening. I'll catch you on the next episode. And I'll catch some of you guys in January at the creative educator conference.

For show notes and resources mentioned on today's episode head to [so here's the thing podcast.com](https://www.heres-thething.com). This show is brought to you by the creative educator Academy, where we teach creative entrepreneurs how to teach because I believe that industries thrive when experts can share their knowledge. Well, if you're enjoying the podcast, I'd love to read your review on iTunes or see your rating on Spotify. Thanks so much for listening, and I'll catch you on the next episode.