

So, Here's the Thing 118 Transcript

Laylee Emadi

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, friends, welcome back to so here's the thing, today, we are being joined by the lovely Joy Michelle, she's been on the podcast a few times, and you guys are gonna have to forgive my raspy voice, but we're gonna let Joy do the majority of the talking. I'm feeling a little under the weather here. But we're going to be talking about end of the year best practices. And the way that Joi takes us through kind of what she does, how you can get started doing what you do in order to review your year, so that you can start to think about next year's goals. Now, this might sound familiar because I did an episode similar to this last year, I believe it was episode 95 talking about a year end audit and how I audit the end of my own year. But I thought it would be great to bring somebody in who I know is just a genius at all the things and she could talk us through what she does, because I think all of us do things very differently in our businesses day in and day out. And it's really helpful to hear what everyone else is doing. So, joy, I'll go ahead and kick it over to you. Maybe talk us through like why you started doing what you do in terms of the end of the year process? And then kind of take us through what that looks like for you.

Joy Michelle

Yeah, well, thank you so much for having me back lately. This is such an honor to be here. Yeah, I'm excited to dig into how I approach the end of the year, I like to do something called My CEO planning weekend. And this did not start from the beginning. So I'm going into my 10th year in business actually. And I don't know really what I did in the first couple of years, I probably just set some goals, some really like arbitrary goals. And as I was developing more mentoring, coaching relationships, I saw that the people that I looked up to treat at the end of the year very differently. And so I love to just like ask everybody questions about what are you doing in your business? What are you looking at? How are you setting your goals? Should I be looking at numbers in this way, or this way?

That kind of thing. And so I've gleaned a lot over the years from business owners that I look up to, and I have a few resources I'm going to share with you today in this episode that have just really helped me. So this is definitely not all original to me. But I feel like I've just picked up bits and pieces of things that work for me. But I think that this time of year is such a time of year of thinking about the year coming up thinking about setting goals. And there's just a big emphasis on goals. And I want to kind of say that like this is a bit of a like false focus for a lot of entrepreneurs. If you're running a business, you are more than just a goal setter, you are an entrepreneur, you're wearing all of the hats, you need to be thinking about more than just the goals ahead. And oftentimes, the goals are like the last thing that I set in my CEO planning weekend, because so much of what you need to do before the goals will inform the goals. And if you really think about what those goals are, therefore, it's to bring you closer to what you want and bring you closer to like the success or the bar that you're trying to reach.

And I think a lot of times, if we're just pulling out a sheet of paper and writing down the first 10 things that come to mind. They're not going to be the most aligned with our vision with our life with our capacity, even as business owners and so I like to start Can I just dive right in? Yeah, absolutely. Okay. So a couple years ago, I took a page out of shea Cochran book, she founded social squares. And she said that she gets an Airbnb for the weekend, and does an entire like two days intensive in her business. And I loved this and I decided to try it. And so I rented an Airbnb. So I've done this a few different ways. I've had seasons of my life where I couldn't take a weekend away. I was breastfeeding or, you know, new new mom.

And so I've done this in chunks. I don't think there's any magic in getting a beautiful Airbnb, but it doesn't hurt. I can tell you that. It's super fun to just get out of your everyday home office and I work from home. And it's nice to just have that pattern interruption and so my first point here is to set aside some serious time whether that is some designated blocks of time over the few days leading up to the year or in the new year. Or look yourself a night at a hotel or an Airbnb and really respect that time as a CEO know that you're gonna reserve that time, there are so many less distractions, when you're not in your own house, like I will tell you like, I can feel my unfolded laundry just around me. And it's really nice to just say like, this is the one thing I'm here for, and my mind isn't going to be as tempted to go down a million bunny trails. So setting aside that time, I think is like really important. And then before you even go, I think one way to really make sure that as you go into the end of the year, and you're bringing all of this to a close before you think about next year, you need to do a little bit of like gathering of materials, because there's a lot that you want to have in front of you available to you, that might take a little while to gather. So a couple things that I like to have when I'm looking at the year is the numbers like profit and loss, I want to know all the numbers for the business, this might be something you have to request from your bookkeeper or your accountant.

So that's why it's really great to like, know what materials you're going to need in front of you. Before you're actually there. Then I like to have the goals that I set for the year that I'm reviewing any survey data. So I run a survey on my audience at least once a year. And so I like to have that printed out in front of me. And then just like any metrics on marketing, or my email list, things that I was tracking, you know, if email was a big emphasis for you this year, take a peek at your email, even take some screenshots of like, what were your deliverability rates? What was your open rate? What was your click through rate, and just get some markers throughout the year? So that when you're sitting there trying to decide like, Why did I do this here, did it did it move the needle, what's working, what's not, you actually have some data to like ground things with in your review process. So print as much of this as possible, because the less time I can spend trying to be on the computer or on my phone, the better I get really distracted, it's easy for me to get just a text message or a boxer or something and I take a quick break. And it totally sucks you out of like the flow that you're in.

So get as much of it in printed form as you can. And like I said, you might have to request some of this from your team. If you have an ads manager, you might want to request some of those final numbers for the ads that you ran this year, or your SEO person or anybody that has worked in your business or that you've done work with together this past year, great person to reach out to and just say like, Hey, do you have anything like a one sheet of what we've done together so that I can sit down and really be informed in my planning. So a little bit of prep work is super, super helpful. And then I like make an agenda for what I'm actually going to do during this end of your time, which is so meta, like we're planning to plan. But stick with me here like, it is so helpful, because I tend to get sucked into like one thing or start obsessing over maybe something that didn't work out or a goal that I didn't quite reach.

And then I don't actually get through all the necessary steps of wrapping up the year. And so what I like to do is have an actual timeline of what the day might look like actually know, what are we diving into first, at what time at that day are we going to stop and move on to the next thing. So there's kind of three phases to this, whether it's a day or weekend or just a block, you're going to start with the review, reviewing your numbers, reviewing last year's goals, reviewing what happened and really trying to look at this just as the facts, try to put aside any kind of like how you felt about the year and just look at how it all went.

And then I think the next part is to celebrate. And I think that as entrepreneurs, we skip this step, we just go, Okay, I looked at the numbers. Here's where I fell short. Here's my next plan, we skip straight to the strategy. But it's so important to sit in that like space of celebration for a minute, especially as we work for ourselves especially as you know ambitious creatives, because nobody's going to celebrate you the way that you would if you weren't at a major organization or company, you don't have your end of your party, you don't have the 90 day review where they say, Yeah, you did this, here's what you can improve.

You have to be that for yourself. And I think it's really, really important to look at some of the almost immeasurable successes, any kind of feedback that you got throughout the year, any DMS of people saying like your content resonated with me and this changed my business or I booked clients because of how you helped me if you're a coach or an educator that matters and I think sitting in that for a minute is so important before we move into looking ahead and that's when your vision casting when your goal setting and when you actually start calendaring which is really fun. I personally find that font I know lately, I know you find like the calendaring part of things fun. I think I've looked at a couple of your trainings on content and calendars and all of that and I just love that. But that is strangely the end part. And I think that those other steps can be kind of skipped or rushed through and they really need to inform that goal setting piece. Does that make sense? Yeah. Oh

Laylee Emadi

my gosh, you gave so much stuff for people to start thinking on. I love it. I hope you guys were writing thing down all the notes. But I think one of the big things that I I love that you mentioned was creating a plan for the review plan. Like, I do think that there is a really big piece on it. That's like you have to brainstorm what you want to walk away with, in order to know what you're going into. Because our businesses or they may be small, but they're not small. Like, there's a lot going on in there.

Joy Michelle

There are there's so much going on. Exactly, you have to review so many facets of the business, you have to review the customer care, the HR portion of like, team and is everybody happy? Are we changing compensation, you have to think about marketing, you have to think about growth and vision as you're putting on that visionary cap. So I think making sure to leave space for those things, helps you to kind of do all the things and do them well. But also, I think like having a schedule and knowing like, Okay, we're gonna order lunch at this time, and we're gonna make sure that like, we're gonna walk and we treat ourselves like a human and we don't just like machine through this whole process is really important too. Because I think the key here is to make it fun, there's going to be aspects of this that are not your favorite numbers are not my favorite. I like numbers when they're informing some decisions. But a lot of times the it's not the most fun for me to sit and just think like, Okay, let's look, spreadsheets of p&l. But I know that it's important.

So I've grown more comfortable with it. But I will attach rewards to different parts of the day that I do not want to get through. And I want to make sure that I don't get stuck, I know myself enough that I'm gonna get stuck on certain activities or be tempted to skip them. So you got to attach a reward and kind of make it fun. Yeah, I love that. I

Laylee Emadi

think aside from just kind of gamifying the whole thing, which is really fun. I love that you said that you carve out designated time and if possible, like it doesn't need space. We did one or two episodes on what my friend Sarah and I call workstations or like, you know, working retreats. And I think that this could be a really good opportunity to do that. Do you think this is a better process to do? By yourself? Or can you do it with like a, you know, a biz bestie? Or like, would you advise, like, nope, keep your head down, do it on your own.

Joy Michelle

So this is such a good question. And I had written down that one way to make it fun is to have like a co working time with someone else. But you need to know yourself and that friend enough to know if that's actually going to help you or if it's going to distract you. Because any work bestie that I would invite into this, I would really want to just hang out with. And so I think what you could do is even get like two hotel rooms, and be completely separate, but do like meals together or like start the day together two breaks together, like go on walks and like break it up. And that can be really, really fun. But I think for the most part, and for most business owners, this is something you have to do by yourself.

Laylee Emadi

Yeah, I love the suggestion of the hotel rooms. Also, I'm just like in a very anti Airbnb moment in my life. So yes, yes, get to hotel rooms are better than Yeah, and

Joy Michelle

a lot of times hotels, the cool thing is they're like you can have a restaurant right there at the hotel. And it's really nice to be able to break the day up. Like if you can start in your room and then change, you know, do a few hours, switch activities, and then go to a really beautiful coffee shop or a really nice library or something like that. I think switching your location frequently can be really helpful as well.

Laylee Emadi

Yeah, I love that. So when you're working through like reviewing all your numbers, which I love that you mentioned, like even if numbers aren't your favorite, they are important. I know when I passed over my books to my like, virtual CFO, I was like, I don't ever want to look at these again. But you have to Yes. So when you're looking at reviewing all things, what kinds of questions are you like, using to guide yourself through? Or what are you trying to discover here? Like, are you trying to discover what do I need to let go of what do I need to add more of? Or are you mostly just seeing like, what worked and what didn't work?

Joy Michelle

Yeah, so okay, I have a guide on this. And I'll give you the link. It's the biz planning guide. And it kind of walks you through the different pieces of this both numbers and asking specific questions. Like, what were the streams of revenue? What were the different offers? What money did I make by quarter because some of our businesses are a little bit more seasonal. So really tuning into that as a whole. So getting a pulse on this as a whole, but I think it's a combination of like head versus heart because it's

just like you were saying, I'm also asking, Okay, this thing brought in this much money. How did I feel about that? How much time did I spend on that? What were the activities that I did to generate leads towards that thing, because essentially here, this is an 8020 analysis, a lot of the times the 80% of our revenue is coming from something that we only spent 20% of our time or resources building towards and so I'm looking for all these like, almost like undiscovered gems in my business or the certain kind of client that just it didn't feel like work and then I'm thinking Okay, how can I do more of that next year? So really checking in with myself on like, how much time was I spending in my business?

Do I want to go into this next year with very similar hours? Or is my heart actually to like lower capacity while not sacrificing revenue. So you're looking at your numbers through the lens of what is actually going to be scalable, or what felt much more life giving to me. So it's, and then that guy that kind of is asking you, it's like a check in with you of like, how you're feeling about the year, what kind of hours you were spending in your business alongside of the money and the offers and the revenue and your profitability. So looking at those things at the same time, and I'm like you I don't I don't have a lot of desire to hang out in the profit and loss. But I love looking at it in comparison with my capacity and alignment with my life, being able to still be a present mom and work part time hours. So so so important to me. And so that's something that I'm definitely looking at, and asking and making sure that I don't bring something into the next year. That's not serving me this year.

Laylee Emadi

Yeah, absolutely. So I love all these tips so far. Okay, so you set aside their time you've created your plan, you're starting to review what's next.

Joy Michelle

So once I get into the year ahead, that's when I'm really going to be going through some goal setting resources. So there's one goal setting resource that I love from Michael Hyatt really cool because it really connects like your life vision and like your legacy and the things that you want it to be known for and remembered for, to those goals themselves. And it's really, really helpful for actually breaking down the goal into lots of different ways. So I'm not even gonna get into like his whole method, but he has a free worksheet that I love to go through. Once I've set myself up to the point where I'm ready to like really be thinking about those goals. That's super helpful. So that's when I'm really going to put pen to paper on goals really start breaking down those goals into things like what am I actually going to do to get towards that goal. And I'm also going to look at calendars. So I love to have quarterly calendars printed out. And I like to work with post it notes and start thinking about like the mean the whole year, but also quarters at a time.

So I've sometimes I've printed out calendars, I have these calendars by Ashley profit that I really like that I just get printed like Office Depot for like \$2. And that way, I feel like I can be messy and it's not permanent, it's not a big deal. And I'll print out a few of those because I like to have one calendar just for content. And I like to have one calendar that's more like this is the whole year this is booked clients, this is time I'm not working. This is when I think I'm going to launch. These are important dates like holidays, and you know, that kind of thing. So I would like to be able to see the full year but also a little bit closer in terms of content. So that's when I'm really going to start moving things around on post its and say, Okay, I think we need to have a launch in q1, okay, let's make sure that content is connected to that launch and that kind of thing. So that's when things start to get a little more granular. And like putting pen to

Laylee Emadi

paper. Yeah, I love that. I think I mean, as we're talking, I was looking around my office, and I was like, I have my quarterly planner behind me and all of my post it notes in front of me. So I totally that resonates with me a lot. And I love as you know, I love I'm a big advocate of looking at your year, all at once. And just making sure you don't overload yourself because I have been personally victimized by myself in that sense. So I love that a lot when you were talking about Michael Hyatt resource, and we'll link everything you guys in the show notes for you. Are you a full focus planner user? I'm just curious.

Joy Michelle

I'm not know i Everything I do now is digital.

Laylee Emadi

Oh, wow. Yeah, I

Joy Michelle

don't use a physical planner anymore. And I used to use them like religiously every year. And that was a big part of my goal setting. But I'm fully on notion everything. If it doesn't exist in notion, it's not real. I do a lot of physical note taking. But then I transfer whatever matters most into notion and then I get rid of all the paper.

Laylee Emadi

That's awesome. That's so cool. Do you have any resources on that?

Joy Michelle

I'm just curious on notion. Yeah, yeah, I have a couple YouTube videos on how I use it for content planning. Specifically, I'm going to be making a video like the database that I have for my podcast content, because I've actually shared with a couple of other podcasters and they replicated it. So I think it's decent, but I will definitely be doing more of that kind of content in in 2023 as well. So yeah, love notion like That's

Laylee Emadi

amazing. We'll link that up for people too because I think it could be so helpful

Joy Michelle

and even around like the topic of goals themselves. I love Michael Hyatt breaks this down a lot more on his, in his books on his blog and his free resources. He has a really valuable download store of freebies. Really, really cool. But a lot of the things that I've learned from him that have helped me most are just like setting less goals, making sure that you are anchoring some of the outcomes in things that you can completely control. So instead of having like, get 100,000 YouTube subscribers on My goal list, it might be upload weekly YouTube content, because that's something like I can actually say at the end of the year, this is completely within my control. And it's changed the way that I'm thinking about the activities in my business versus just saying, okay, you know, get into, like, make this much money, or even, like, get this many reviews, like, you know, get 100 podcast reviews, it's like, okay, well, you could say that, but then he's gonna force you to actually break that down into like, what activities does this actually look like? How many times did you pitch yourself?

How many times did you make the ask? And then at the end of the year, you can at least say, I made 12, concerted efforts to get those podcasts reviews, here's the outcome. Maybe it reached, maybe it didn't. But as far as it was, in my control, I was able to actually say like, check, check, check, check, check, because it can be frustrating to have goals that are partially completely outside of your control. I can't force someone to give me a five star review, right?

Laylee Emadi

I mean, you could just give me a five star review. No, that's, that's really, really helpful. And I love that you shared like things that you took away from it as well, as people are moving forward. You've given so much for people to think about, and I know that you're doing a series on your show that dives a little bit deeper into that. Do you want to give people a preview?

Joy Michelle

Yes. Okay, so I broke this up into two episodes, I am the host of the call to both podcast. And in the first episode, we talk a lot about the setting up of the day. And then in the SEC, second episode, it's actually the day and like tips, best practices for that Planning Day. And then there's some steps for after, like, what do you actually do with all of these goals? And how do you make sure that these are communicated to your team and things that I think sometimes people forget about, especially if we have a very small team of just contractors, it can be easy to think like, I'm in this completely by myself, I think one thing that's so important is to selectively share your goals, I don't think everybody gets to be privy to the inner workings of the visions of your business. And in fact, it can be detrimental, not everybody's in a place where they're ready to hear how big you're dreaming. A lot of times, there's just a mirroring, where it brings out all the goals they didn't go after. And their doubts are really self doubts. And so we have to be kind of protective and careful in that phase of, you're on this high, you've done this great planning work and inner work, even figuring out where you want to go. And then you got to find some, some trusted people to share that with that are going to hold you accountable. Because I think peer to peer accountability is it's just been so helpful for me.

Laylee Emadi

You know, I agree with that. That's, I can't wait to listen in on it. And I think that if anybody is curious about like, the inner workings of other people's, you know, year end practices and goal setting practices, it's always a good idea to like, listen, in, even if you feel like you have a good grasp, I mean, I've been doing this, we've been doing this about the same time, which is great. But sometimes when you've been in something for so long, you're like, Oh, I've got my processes down. I would encourage everybody to not think that way as much as they can and try to like, get really good ideas from other people. So I'm excited to listen in. We're gonna wrap up the episode with, of course, my signature question, what is your unpopular opinion? And you can share unpopular opinion on goal setting or your end practices? Or both? Either one is fine.

Joy Michelle

And I don't know, what's my unpopular opinion. I'm like, I really don't think there's a whole lot of magic in just setting goals. I think there's the magic is in how often you look at them. Because it's remarkable how you can set a goal and actually forget, I mean, how many times have you wrote, put something down, like made a note in your phone, like I have the Notes app, and I'll find something. And it is like a note from a new human that I have never read before. And I know I wrote it. And so I think it can be the same way. I think we sometimes get fed disbelief like writing it down. It's this much more likely to happen. That may be true, but really, it's how often did you actually see it throughout the year? That is

way more impactful than I wrote down. I'm going to live on the water in a million dollar house like one time on January 1, and there's no magic in January 1 either. So I don't know if those are unpopular, but those are my opinions.

Laylee Emadi

I love them. I think that they are unpopular, but like me, because I agree.

Joy Michelle

Yes, but we are rebels together.

Laylee Emadi

So good. Thank you so much joy for sharing all of your wisdom with us. Well, you already said people can find you on call to both and hopefully when will your episodes be

Joy Michelle

out? They are coming out in December. So this week next week. Yeah, it's all about goal setting, goal planning all of that reflecting on the year and then thinking about next year so I also have a couple of resources linked for like a vlog where you can follow me around for Have the planning weekend from previous years. So I'm sure there's so much more that I've forgotten to list that you get to see in like the nitty gritty of what exactly I'm doing during this weekend. So if you're a visual person, there is a vlog in the episode as well.

Laylee Emadi

I love that go fall down that rabbit hole you guys, and thank you joy for being on the show. And we'll I'm sure we'll have you back next year at some point.

Joy Michelle

Thank you so much for having me lately.

Laylee Emadi

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