

So Here's the Thing Episode 120 Transcript

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, I am so excited to be back behind the mic and to have a brand new episode for you guys, after a few weeks off between the holidays, and the first ever creative educator conference, which was incredible. By the way, I cannot wait to do a full recap, or maybe even multiple episodes, recapping the good, the bad and the ugly, I want to be really transparent with you guys about that journey and about the outcome. Because I know so many of you, as creative entrepreneurs, as creative educators, as people who are interested in potentially hosting or attending a live event, transparency is important in all of that. And I really want to make sure that I'm sharing to the best of my ability. So those episodes are coming soon. But today, we are going to be talking about something a little bit more difficult, but super, super important to any small business owner.

And that is running a business through times of hardship. Now I'm going to get kind of personal in this episode, if that's not your jam. That's cool. I won't take offense. But I have been through some things personally, that have really impacted the way that my business is run in this past few, I guess few weeks, few months. And honestly, once you've been in business for a while, you're going to run into times of hardship on a personal level. And I think it's important to think about like, what would I do if I were in that situation. So we're going to dive a little bit into my personal experience, but also about kind of what you can think through in order to I guess, for lack of a better term, or for lack of a better phrase, kind of looking at it from the perspective of gaining preparedness for the future for yourself and for your business, for your family and for your team if you have one.

So we're going to dive into that right now. Now, I've been wanting to share a little episode on this for a while. In fact, I did an Instagram live about this during one of my live trainings a while ago. And it was about something a little bit different, but still about personal hardships. So this episode was slated to be recorded later this year. But because it's such a fresh experience for me right now, I really wanted to share while it was still something that was currently on my mind, currently on my heart and that way, hopefully give you guys a glimpse into what it's like to be one foot in and one foot out of times of hardship while still running your business because I was not able to hit the brakes. And we'll be talking about that. In this episode. As I mentioned, you when you do anything for a long period of time, for long enough, you're gonna find out what happens when life deals you a tough hand and I've been a business owner for almost a decade now.

I'll celebrate like my 10 year business anniversary this year. And of course, I have had my ups and downs. But I haven't really truly been in the position that I was put in this December until this December. And you know, it is one of those things where, after a while, you're gonna find out how you deal with things. But you're also going to watch how your peers are going through it, what they do. And

you're going to wonder if what you're doing is the right thing to do if what you're if the way that you're handling things is the best way possible, and so on and so forth.

But before I really dive into like my experience, I want to give one of those signature disclaimers that I always give, I don't know everything. And what I do know is just my experience. So if this is going to make you feel bad about the way that you do things, or if you have been through some extreme hardships, and this is going to bring things up for you, I would urge you not to listen to this particular episode. Protect your peace, protect your mental health. And speaking of mental health, I also want to make it clear that I'm not a mental health professional.

So if you are struggling, if you're going through hardship, that warrants going out and getting professional help, I want to encourage you to please seek that help and support out with a professional. So all those disclaimers put out there, this episode is for you. If you're wondering to yourself, yeah, like how would I handle things if I were put into a time of hardship while still having to run my business? This might be a good lesson for you. It might be a good way to think about like I said that gaining a way to prepare yourself for the future. Alright, let's dive into what happened this past December, in my personal life and in my professional life.

So as you guys know, I was deep in the planning for the creative educator conference. Now I am not one to kind of put late goals on what things are the biggest in my business or what things are like major accomplishments versus minor accomplishments. I try not to do that. But I have never hosted a full scale conference before. I've done many retreats. Many workshops in person events are my jam, I love them. But I had no idea what all went into hosting a full scale conference by myself. I have helped other entrepreneurs plan conferences, I've been on conference teams, I've been one of the many in these planning arenas. But I've never been the end all be all when it comes to planning a large scale event. So I say that to kind of set the stage for what was going on in my professional life at that time. In fact, I had stopped taking client work for a few months leading up so all of my eggs were going into this basket, I wanted to make this the best that it could be.

And I was very committed to doing so. So by December, we had pretty much sold out tickets to this event, which was incredible, and such a win. And something that I truly, if I'm being honest, was not really something I anticipated. I was excited when we hit 50%. I was thrilled when we hit 75%. And then when we basically sold out, I was elated and excited and nervous and felt so many emotions I can't even express and then the holidays roll around. And we all know the holidays are stressful as it is there's a lot that goes on in people's lives during that time. But we experienced as a family, we experienced one of our closest and biggest losses of our family, we had a family member passed away on Christmas morning. And that was one of the hardest things that I've ever been through. And I can't even say that I'm done going through it. I mean, my family is still very much in the grief, it's it's only been a month, a little bit over a month, it's been about five weeks at this point.

And, you know, grief comes in waves. And it's very weird. And something I've never experienced this close to myself before we have, of course, you know, lost people here and there who were important to us, but nobody this close to my immediate family. And then two weeks later, we were hit with another loss. And it's one of those things where as a business owner, you struggle to know how can I handle this and still stay afloat, what needs to be done and what can be put aside. And it was one of the hardest decision making times of my life. I mean, in terms of business personally, I hopped on a plane the next day, and I was able to go be with my family. But while I was with my family, I was on my laptop

here. And they're dealing with ordering swag and working with speakers and working with vendors and sponsors. Because truth be told, my team was quite limited.

A lot of the work was on my shoulders. And I chose for it to be that way. I have a philosophy in my business that I want to be able to know the ins and outs of everything I do at least the first time that I do it before a hire out. It's just a personal thing that I found to be very helpful in my business. So I have a limited team. But I had to really think about how can I navigate this and still stay afloat while still honoring the needs that myself and my family had of me. So let's talk about that. Let's talk about the permission to hit pause exceptions that come with that. And things that we may feel are exceptions that aren't. So first, I really want to preface this by saying you are the boss, we own our businesses, because we want the freedom, we want the capability to be able to prioritize the things that are most important to us. And for me, family is most important to me. So I understood that and I knew that I was the boss. And I knew that I got to decide what I do next. So remember, you get to decide if you're looking for permission, you now have it, you are the boss and you get to decide. But you also should know in advance. And this is something that I didn't really know in advance may wish I had, you need to know what you need to do in order for your business to survive. And beyond that, it's

your call on how you want to move forward. For me in this weird situation that I was in with my first ever conference just around the corner and really no option but to continue to move forward. I had to do a lot of stuff that I wish that I didn't have to have done in that time. But I did it anyway, because I knew that that's what my business needed in order to survive. Beyond that, it was my call and I stepped back. So some things that I did that I would definitely do again 100 times over. And if you don't have this in place now I want you to start thinking about how to get these things in place. So while my team was limited, and I have actually scaled my team back over the past couple of years, I wasn't able to fully give over like full control of my business, the way that I could have maybe three years ago, when my team was larger and more streamlined. And I wasn't trying a lot of new things, everything was kind of automated, and, and for lack of a better word, easy to kind of hand over to somebody else. But what I did have was a community of peers, and a small team to be able to kind of reach out and say, Hey, you guys, this is what's going on, I really need people to step in, and to take things off of my plate. And that's kind of the hardest thing that like, for me to do,

I really struggle to ask for help. But in that situation, I had to so having a close knit group of peers of business besties of community to be able to say like, Hey, this is what I need, can you help me is so important. No exceptions of the things that I passed over or, you know, hit pause on, of course, are fulfilling contracts, fulfilling obligations, work that was important enough for me to feel needed to be prioritized. It is so up to you to take a look at and reflect on the work that you do and say like, is this going to negatively impact somebody's life, if it waits a week, is this able to be something that I push to a few weeks later, a prime example of this is the podcast itself, this show, my amazing Podcast Producer immediately reached out to me when she heard of the loss that we had experienced.

And she said to me, Laylee, you take your time, decide when you want to come back, and we will make it work. Now I am contractually obligated to my producer, she's probably listening to this and editing it right now laughing to herself, because she could have held me to a contract, but she didn't. So she allowed me the time to take a break. And to come back when I felt like it was ready. That to me is a testament of what I was saying earlier about how important community is and how important it is to develop relationships beyond contracts in your business. One thing that I wanted to share with you that I wish I could go back in time and do is really to have taken time to think after the changes that my

business has been through. How would I handle a time of crisis. I had this down pat, when I was strictly doing photography and coaching. And I was very, like I said a few years ago, my business was much more streamlined than it currently is today. You guys know I'm a fan of being honest and upfront about where businesses and changes in business takes you.

And for me, right now, I'm recalibrating a lot of those automations because my business has changed so much in the past four years. So back in the day, when I was doing photography as my primary income source, I had a really great crisis plan in place, I had a business handbook, I even had something that I called like, in case of death binder like literal, emergency things piled up and ready to go so that if at any point, I was unable to run my business, I could hand off this information to somebody else, or somebody could find this information, and close out everything that needed to be closed out and finish anything that needed to be finished. And in fact, I talked about this on the podcast. Gosh, I think at this point, it was like three years ago was one of the first episodes I put out. And I had Natalie Jane on the show. And she talked about running your business or maintaining your business and times of trauma or crisis. And it was a really great conversation at the time. But a lot of those things that we talked about, really slipped through the cracks for me, and I didn't reevaluate them as my business change. So if I could encourage you to do something as your business changes, which it probably will be and probably is, at some point going to change.

Don't forget to reevaluate all of these, like in case of emergency things that you had in place when your business was in a different season. I know that when Natalie and I talked, she shared a lot about outsourcing, preparing your business to run out its own workflows and, and all of those things. And so I do wish that I was able to revisit that, as my business had entered into this season. But I didn't. And that was a mistake that I made. So I wanted to share that mistake with you in hopes that it will encourage you to kind of move forward and set some of those things up for yourself, which, you know, here's hoping none of us will ever have to use them. But it would have been really great to have that on hand. In this time of my own personal family's crisis. It is really important to me to share the mistakes that I made and the things I wish I would have done differently but to share a couple of things that I did that were actually so much more helpful than I thought they would have been in that time. I hope this sparks something in you to kind of keep in the back of your mind. But one thing I did was If I was very honest and upfront about what was going on in my family now this is really, honestly something that's difficult for me personally, I'm a very much like, this is my professional business, I'm not going to be an oversharer. And I still kind of wasn't. But what I did was, I sent an out of office email that said, I experienced a loss in my family. And that way, anybody who emailed me knew that there was going to be a bit of a delay. And that included like the person to contact if it was an emergency situation. And the second thing that I did was something I really went back and forth about.

And the way that I did, it was really intentional. And that was sharing on social media about what was going on. Now, when I say sharing about what was going on, I really didn't go into depth, I'm not the type of person that shares my family's information on the internet. And to each his own, I am definitely not judging anybody who is more personal, on the gram. And on the things I find myself extremely personal, but also private in some ways. And this is a way that I would typically be private, I'm not the person who's ever going to put an Insta story up that says, hey, you like expect a delayed response from me, I'm sick, like, I'm not going to do that on the internet on social media, I will reach out to my clients as needed, because I believe that there should be a distinction between personal and professional life on the internet. Maybe it's because I'm old, I don't know. But that's kind of like my philosophy on it. And so because of that, I went back and forth a lot about what I wanted to share on

social media. And so I was I was intentionally a little bit vague, I said, you know, we experienced the loss in the family, I just want to let anybody who is reaching out, especially because I had the conference coming up, and it was so stressful knowing that attendees could be trying to get a hold of me, but I'm at a funeral or attendees could be trying to figure out information.

But I'm, you know, at my family's home, and it's not an appropriate setting for me to be on my phone or on my laptop the whole time. So I did that. And then I did something extremely important. And that is I turned off responses, DMS to my Insta Stories, and I muted all my notifications, and I got off the internet I got off of social media. And of course, that's something that sounds like a no brainer. But I wouldn't have necessarily thought of that. But I really I didn't do it. Because I wanted so many responses, I truly wanted my clients, my customers, the attendees of the conference to understand that I was going to be out of pocket. And it was unexpected for me to be that way. Because I had promised people my full attention at this time, and I could no longer give it. So that was something I don't regret doing. But something that took a lot of thought for me. So I hope that this sparks some thought for you as well. Lastly, something that I really want to share about this topic in general is that you don't have to have gone through like a traumatic loss or something that is deeply personal to you, in order to feel like your personal life is going through a time of hardship. Prior to this, the reason that I did an Instagram live on this exact topic, nothing had happened to my immediate family at that time. But there was a lot of unrest going on in the country that I'm from in the country that I was born in.

And there was so much going on and so much on my newsfeed and so much information that I felt was so much more important than my business that I struggled to balance, my personal feelings, my personal thoughts and emotions, and the personal brand and business that I have built. And so I do want to point out that these are all things that like, we should be thinking about no matter what circumstance that hardship surrounds. So I do want to point that out, because I feel like you may be listening to this thinking like, Oh, these things only apply four times of true crisis. But I truly think that some of these things can be applied. And some of these thought processes should be approached, in general as a business owner, especially if you're a personal brand, who is expected to show up for their audience for their students, clients and customers in a personal way. Now, the last thing I want to leave you guys with as we wrap up this kind of tough topic, and you can call this an unpopular opinion if you want because that is kind of the theme of this show. But I think it's so much more than a hot take, I really want to talk about the permission to share in the way that you feel is appropriate for you. Now, like I mentioned, I am not an overshare in general. In my business, I really tried to keep some things just for me. But the pressure that we may feel from viewing the way that other people handle things can sometimes skew our perception of what's right or what's expected.

And so I really want to just reiterate to you that you have a business and you are a business owner and you are an entrepreneur for a reason and more likely than not most of us the reason for that is the freedom to make our own choices. and to make the decisions that we feel are best for us and for our businesses. So I just want to encourage you to lean into your intuition and do what you feel is best for you and disregard the rest, disregard best practices that you hear from other people, and disregard what we view when we're looking through social media and seeing the way that other people are handling things. And just know yourself and know what is the best fit for you.

Of course, as I always say, exception to every rule, the exception there is, as long as it doesn't come at a detriment to the people that you work with. You need to lean into what works for you. And I hope that this episode really helps kind of get your mind moving, get your thoughts going on, what would I do in

times of crisis? And how can I best prepare to have my business survive? The personal hardships that will likely hopefully not, but that will likely arise at some point in the tenure of my business? Like how can I get ahead of that, so that my business, and my mental health and my personal life and my family can come out of the other side, and continue to thrive without feeling like we are being bogged down and like we are stuck. And like we're just going to let go of all of the hard work that we put in to build our businesses to what they are today. I hope this episode helps.

And I appreciate you guys sticking out with me as I approach a more personal topic than I usually do. But you know, I always like to be honest with you guys, and take you through the real life behind the scenes of my business. So hope this was helpful and I cannot wait to continue on with new episodes with you every other week, every other Monday and I will see you guys on the next episode. For show notes and resources mentioned on today's episode head to so here's the thing podcast.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 in iTunes or see your rating on Spotify. Thanks so much for listening, and I'll catch you on the next episode.