

So, Here's the Thing Episode 122

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 the show after the last recap episode of the creative educator conference where Haylee of Gaffin creative, came in, took the mic and interviewed me I received so much amazing feedback from you, listeners, that you really enjoyed the episode but that you had some more questions. And I thought Haylee did such an incredible job of crafting great questions that she thought people would want answers to that she herself was interested in hearing about. And I'm so glad that you guys agreed and that you enjoyed the episode. But the questions that you guys sent in, were so incredible, they were really challenging. Some of them went really deep. And some of them really pushed me outside of my comfort zone of thinking about some of the things you wanted to hear. So in order to honor you, my amazing listeners, I wanted to do a quick Part Two recap of the creative educator conference, using all questions that you guys sent in, whether it was hitting reply on my email newsletter, or responding in the DMS over on Instagram. And I want to make sure you know how much I love hearing from you guys. And so with that being said, I'm going to do kind of an Ask Me Anything, creative educator conference recap episode for you.

So I'm going to answer as many questions as I can, that I received, I don't think I'm going to have time to answer all of them. Because you guys know, I like to keep these solo episodes, short and sweet. And I really did want to give a good amount of time to some of these questions that I thought were really, like I said, challenging and that go a little deeper. So let's go ahead and dive in. Alright, the first question comes from Grace je over on Instagram, and she asked what ? Oh, my goodness, I love this question. Because it really is. I mean, it's kind of challenging to answer this publicly. But I'm gonna go ahead and do it anyway. So obviously, I'm going to be completely real with you guys. The first thing that held me back from hosting this conference was 101,000%. impostor syndrome. I talk about this a lot on this podcast, I talked about it a lot on Instagram, I talked about it a lot during coaching, basically, any speaking platform I've ever had, I've mentioned impostor syndrome. And I talk about it, because it's not something that I think any of us ever overcome fully.

I mean, I do think that maybe there are some rare people out there who have never experienced impostor syndrome, or who maybe don't recognize it, or who are cool enough to like, push through it in a better way than I've been able to. But honestly, it really almost did hold me back from launching and hosting this conference, that little voice in my head that you may be familiar with, maybe you hear it in your head, kind of whispering to you like who are you to be doing this big thing, like, what makes you qualified to host X, Y, and Z or to launch this thing, or to chase this huge dream? That little voice definitely resides in my head, here in there. And it really did in the planning process of this conference launch. And I am really lucky because I have an incredible community of peers that I've built of, you know, industry, friends who I could turn to and say, like, Hey, I'm feeling this kind of way about this situation. And what do you think, and it was really lucky for me that a lot of the people in my community

have either been previous students of mine, who have been people who have invested in working with me in some way, shape, or form. And so they were able to come back and like present facts and say, you know, that's not true. These are the lives that you've impacted.

This is how and this is how you're going to impact more lives. If you follow through, and you actually put this together, and you actually put this on, and there's no one better qualified than you. And listen, I'm saying all these things, they sound like really great things to say. They sound like beautiful compliments, and maybe they sound like someone who was really sure of herself. But I'm not gonna lie when you're hearing these things. And you're battling impostor syndrome, it can be really hard to receive those words of affirmation. And so I want to put that out there as well. But that was definitely the number one thing that almost held me back from hosting the conference. The second thing that almost held me back was definitely the risk of honestly the monetary risk. It was the highest risk thing I've ever done in my career as an entrepreneur, pretty much to everything else I've done up until this point has had a little bit of a, pretty much everything I've done to this point as an entrepreneur has had a lower barrier of entry has had lower overhead costs and a lot less risk. So for example, if I launch a coaching program, and I only procure like one or two clients, well, I'm not losing anything, right?

I'm only gaining those one or two clients, or, in the past, as a photographer, yes, I invested in gear and an equipment and an education. And then from there, I was hoping to book clients and book photography clients. And, you know, as I would continue to do so, during really high seasons, it was great during low seasons, it could be a struggle, but there was not that huge risk of like, invested money that I could potentially lose altogether, in the same way that hosting a conference was with conferences, there were so many upfront costs that I was at risk of losing that it was a little bit intimidating. Maybe little is not even the right word to use, it was a lot intimidating. And so that did that did potentially, kind of hold me back from the initial like, okay, let's dive in 100%, because I was so worried that it would be, you know, lost revenue. But ultimately, the reason that I decided to do it anyway, when I was combating that train of thought was I just thought, Okay, this is going to be a risk that I take financially, and I'm at the point in my business financially, where I can afford that risk. If I were to invest this much money in this event, and it doesn't sell and I lose this money, I will be okay, it will not be the end of the world, it will be a sunk cost that I will have to make up for later. And ultimately, that's what I did. And it did pan out. And I'm so glad that I followed through. And then I said no to imposter syndrome, and that I said, screw it to the risks.

And I went ahead and I jumped all in. And it definitely paid off in more than, you know, in way more ways than one. So that was a great question, Grace. Thank you. All right, this next question comes straight from my inbox from Kylie G. And she asked if there was anything that I did in my business to build up experience that helped me put this big thing together. And that is such a great question. I talked about this a little bit in the first recap, but honestly, I've been hosting in person events, in some form for years. And the thing is, some of them definitely did equip me for the conference. And some of them, I thought would have equipped me a little bit more. So let me explain that. So in the past, I've hosted small workshops, to larger professional level workshops to in person retreats. And I'd say of those, the retreats were really the thing that helped kind of prep the most out of the creative entrepreneurial space events that I've hosted. However, for workshops and things like that, I definitely thought it would equip me better. But it really didn't.

Because when I think back to the workshops I hosted as a wedding photographer, back in my previous previous life of being in the wedding industry, I was able to leverage so many partnerships and do a lot

of trades for services, in order to make those workshops, a risk free reality. I talked about risk in the first question. And I was really able to get around that, especially at the time that I was working in that industry, it might be a little bit more difficult to do that these days, just with the higher demand and the state of the economy and all of those things. But back in the day, when I was doing wedding workshops, I was really able to leverage my community and trades and things like that and create that risk free environment. Now, the thing that actually equipped me probably the best for creating this event, and I hope that you guys are like thinking about this while I talk about it because it's it's such a big question that I'm about to pose. But the thing that equipped me the most was actually my career previous to my entrepreneurial career. So I had a skill set that I had grown and not thought about as an entrepreneur in my previous career as a high school teacher, and a drill team dance team director. Now let me clarify. As a dance team director in Texas, we call it drill team. Here you are in charge of a crazy amount of money, the amount of fundraising, the amount of money that comes in and out the budgeting, you host events, you host fundraisers, you host these huge shows and concerts and things like that. And so you are really in charge of creating incredible events for your community and for your school. And I never would have thought that like that skill set would translate to my job as an entrepreneur, but as a conference

Post, I really think the best thing that equipped me for being able to run a budget, create an incredible experience and be able to like, do all of it without going into the red going into debt, and making sure that everybody's needs are met and having like, extra thoughtfulness for every single attendee, the way that I would have at the time for every single student I worked with, like that was really the experience that I pulled on to create this entrepreneurial conference.

Now, I thought that was really interesting, because I think very often we kind of undervalue our experience that we've built in different industries, if we have had previous jobs. So I know a lot of people who go from like a day job, a desk job, to some sort of entrepreneurial pursuit. And so I'd like to pose the question to you and this is what I was saying, I hope that you'll think about is, what skill set did you develop in your previous career that could potentially help you thrive and set you apart and really make you uniquely equipped to create something really special in your industry now? So that's just a quick soapbox moment on on that question, but I did love that question.

Thank you so much, Kylie. All right. And the next question I'm going to answer here also comes from the inbox, and it is from Kristin R. And Kristen asks, Do you have any regrets, from your time at the conference? And this was at first I read this question. And I was like, Absolutely not. I don't believe in regrets. And I definitely don't believe in regretting something that was such an incredible experience in my life. But I sat with it for a little bit. And I really wanted to reflect on it because I wanted to honor Kristin and her question and really give it a good amount of thought. And while I still maintain that, I don't regret anything, there are definitely things that moving forward, I would change maybe that I did, or I would pay special attention to and so I'll chat about those few things. First off, it was really difficult for me to juggle wearing all the hats on the actual like week of the event.

And I did my best to kind of bring people in on my staff on my team that could help alleviate those things. But at the end of the day, I mean, it really a lot of it does fall on the shoulders of the host, because it's this is my baby, this is my event, this is the thing that I know, backward and forward, I've chosen every single detail that's going into it. So of course, I'm going to be the person who's going to want to show up fully and make sure that everything is getting done. But the hard balance here is doing that role, like playing that role, but also being a really, really present host. And I did my very best to be

both of those things. I was you know, I was in the lobby for late night chats until midnight, I was showing up during lunches and floating around to each group. I was, you know, I was really trying to be as present as possible. But I think there are some things that I could do for the next round that would maybe alleviate some of the stressors to be able to show up just as presently as I did this time, but maybe with a little bit less stress. So I think that's something that I like I said, I don't really regret anything I did. But I definitely grew and learned from that experience to be able to better equip myself to move forward with a little bit less stress for the next round.

Okay, so the next question comes from Jenna Elle. And she asked this over on Instagram. So thank you, Jenna. Jenna asked if ticket sales were stressful and difficult, and how did I manage marketing and ticket sales? Now, this is a great question. Because anybody who has launched anything knows that it can be so unpredictable how people are going to actually respond to your offer, especially if it's something that's brand new, and that you've never done before. So I went in, I mean, I've done countless launches in my business. And so I did go in with the expectation of no expectations. Like I tried so hard to tell myself that, hey, no matter how many people come to this thing, we're doing it like, I don't care if 10 people sign up, I don't care if we sell out.

I don't care if it's in between, we're doing this thing that we've committed to mostly because I had already paid things that were non refundable. And I was like we're doing this no matter what. But also because I really wanted the experience and I wanted to do it. So I say all of that before I really dive into this answer of how ticket sales went and I will give you guys like the T on this and like the real details. But anytime you launch something this is just kind of like general encouragement. Anytime you launch something, you've really got to go in with like, I've done the best I can I know what I've put into this, I stand behind my product. I've done everything that I could possibly do. And now it's kind of out of my hands beyond the marketing that I've planned out and that again, I know I'm putting my best foot forward with so all that to say ticket sales, ticket say

meals were very interesting for this event. It was kind of a roller coaster, I actually think I talked about this, I did talk about this from the stage at the conference, because of course, it was the creative educator conference. So everybody in attendance was an educator. And they also wanted to know about like launching and what that looks like, and what the real, the real feelings behind it are. And so I really do have to say it was a complete roller coaster. The day that I launched, people signed up and that in itself like that, straightaway, as soon as tickets were released, people started buying, I think there's my husband took a video clip of me, I'm literally like, a hot mess, no makeup, I'm like, in bed with my comforter, like pulled around me my laptop open. And I'm like sobbing. I literally am crying these happy tears because people are signing up. And I can't believe that I just launched this thing I've never done before. And I feel like I have no idea what I'm doing.

Do any of us ever feel like we know what we're doing? Not really. But, you know, I was shocked that all these people were signing up, I say all these people's like a handful. And the first week, ticket sales seem to be going pretty consistently. And I sold like the first, I think 10 tickets within the first week, which to me was huge, I kind of thought this might be more of a marathon less of a sprint. And I let myself get so excited. And I let those expectations start to form. And that was a mistake for sure. Because after that, ticket sales started to slow and they started to drop off. And maybe I wasn't talking about it as much as they should have been. Maybe people just need more time to decide on such a big time investment, travel, investment, monetary investment. And so ticket sales started to slow and that roller coaster started to dip down. And then I did kind of a big push with the speaker lineup in that the

speakers were announced. And then as the speakers started to be announced, then ticket sales started to ramp up again. And then after a week after that, they started to slow. And I remember, I mean, I remember every single sale, I remember writing their names down, putting them on a post it but putting them on my spreadsheet, looking them up.

Like I know every single attendee, I know all about them, because I was so honored that they would come. And I was so invested in the group that was being cultivated, that honestly like the numbers started to kind of dissipate for me, and it really became about the names. So I know that that's like a little bit deeper of a dive on ticket sales and marketing and selling. But I truly believe that when I started looking at this as Wow, the people who are coming to this are so high level that people who are coming to this are so good for each other, that I kind of stopped caring about the number especially because I had already made the decision that I'm going through with hosting this event, whether we have 10 people or sold out at 50. I didn't care. And so I really think that helped. But back to the numbers. So we're dipping down, we're coming back up, we're dipping down again, we stayed dipped down for a while like there was it was like very still again, I probably wasn't marketing it as well as it could have been my first conference ever. I was still trying to figure out logistics behind the scenes, I was focusing on really making sure that it was going to be an incredible experience. And so I think the balance of marketing it and creating it was kind of hard for me.

And then Black Friday came around and I was like, You know what, I'm gonna do a quick Black Friday, like push, I'll do a big sale. I really I wasn't planning on doing a Black Friday sale for my shop this year. So it really worked out. I didn't have any competing offers. And so I did one quick Black Friday sale, and sales skyrocketed. I mean, we basically sold out. And I don't know if it's because I really took people behind the scenes as I planned it. I don't know if it's because the attendees that I had, were just such incredible, incredible people. And they were talking about it, they were excited about it. I was really trying to like lean into them and their experience even before the experience happened. Mike speaker lineup was incredible. And so I can't really honestly, it's hard for me to pinpoint the why. But I can see the win. And I can see that big spike being Black Friday. So that was really cool to see. And then of course, as I mentioned on the first recap, we basically sold out I think we did sell out and then a few people couldn't come who had purchased tickets, and so it wasn't a full full house, but it sure felt like it with speakers, sponsors and attendees. We had 70 people in attendance at the venue live and that was just like, incredible. And I'm so glad that I capped it at 50 for my first round of the conference. I think it was the right choice.

So I love that question, Jenna, you know, I'm happy to answer it because I do think that when we're watching that roller coaster of any launch, it can be so disheartening, it can be so stressful, and it can be so hard to watch the ebb and flow but I think it's so important to remember why you're doing this launch who you are doing this laundry for outside of yourself. So I hope that's an encouragement to all of you guys listening. Okay, I'm going to wrap up this episode with one last question. This question is from Katie L over on Instagram. Katie asks, How can I be involved in the next one? Okay, this is a great question. First and foremost, I would encourage you to attend if you want to be involved, show up as an attendee really, like, show up, ready to learn, ready to grow and community ready to pour into your community. It is, I mean, in my opinion, and thankfully, in the, I think in the opinions of everybody who attended, it's just an incredible community that has come together. And I'm so excited to host a lot of the same faces again. So that's number one, two, there's a speaker obligation out, it's open until the end of March, we do only have space for a handful of speakers, just in the same way. It's an intimate attendee cap. It's also a smaller speaker cap.

So there's a speaking application, as well as a volunteer application. But first and foremost, be ready to attend sign up when ticket sales go live. They're not open right at this very minute, we did have a pre sale, but we've closed doors, and we will reopen them, as soon as we have all of our details in order for you guys. So you can sign up to make sure that you're the first to know on the waitlist over at [Creative educator conference.com](http://Creativeeducatorconference.com). And make sure that you stay up to date on all those things. And that's also where you'll find the speaker application. So I hope to see you guys in January.

Thank you for sending in these incredible questions. If I didn't get around to your question, shoot me a DM and I'll send you a voice memo and I will give you a personalized answer. I promise because I just love, love, love to hear from you guys. So I hope this was helpful. I hope it's helpful to hear the journey that I went on planning my first big conference and you know the ups and downs with it. But I would encourage you if you've got a big goal, go for it, start chasing it down. And remember, there's no race like sometimes it takes a little bit longer for those puzzle pieces to come together. And that's okay to you've got this cheering you on and I'll see you on the next episode.

For show notes and resources mentioned on today's episode head to [so here's the thing podcast.com](http://sohere'sthethingpodcast.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.