

So, Here's The Thing Episode 125

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.

Hey, friend, welcome back to the show. Today, we are going to be talking about a not so fun topic. But something that's really important and that all of us are going to come up against at some point in our businesses, and that is facing rejection in our business. Now today, we're specifically going to be talking about this through the lens of speakers and applying to speak at things, whether it be a virtual stage, and in person conference or event, a podcast, whatever you are applying to whatever you want to be a part of. And the reason that we're talking about this right now, is because as you guys know, I like to pull these podcast episodes from my personal life, from my personal experience, and my experience as a coach for educators and speakers.

And right now, my entire world is immersed in going through pitches, going through speaker applications for my conference, the creative educator conference. Now, I am very thankful that I put together an incredible panel of judges, for the applications that I've received, we received almost 100 applications for speakers. And a lot of these speakers are incredible. So this is not an easy task. And of course, as I'm getting ready to make offers and send out the quote, unquote, of I don't really like the word rejection, honestly, in this situation. But you know, the emails that say, not this year, I've been thinking a lot about how much we all put into these applications, and how important it is to have, obviously, like the well thought out and well crafted pitch.

But more importantly, it's kind of like having the strength and the ability to kind of not place your worth in these applications and in the result of them. And so I wanted to talk about that with you guys. Like, the reason I started this podcast over three years ago was to have these candid conversations to have these honest heart to hearts in the way that I would with my best, you know, my best business friends like the way that I would over coffee or in person at a conference. And you know, just spill the tea and just like be real about it. So I wanted to talk with you guys about this. Because as somebody who coaches speakers for a living, I see how hard these rejections can be. And as somebody who also is a professional speaker, and I go out, and I'm pitching and I'm applying, and I'm getting acceptances, and I'm getting offers, and I'm getting rejections, and I'm hearing the No.

And so I want to make sure that I'm talking with you guys about it. So let's dive into a couple of things that I wanted to touch on in this episode, one of which is just preparing for like your best pitch. And I'm not going to this is not going to be like a full How To pitching guide. I've talked about pitching on the podcast before, I do have pitch resources, you know, available to you guys. And if this is something that you find to be interesting, if you want more on it, please let me know, like, reach out to me in the DMS, shoot us an email.

And I will of course expand on this if that's something that you guys want help with. But we're going to talk about like just a few things that you can keep in mind as you're creating your pitch to speak to take the stage. But also and this is the main focus of this of this episode is how to cope with the aftermath of it like how to prepare yourself for whatever is coming out of that pitch. And also just like let's talk about the creative industry, creative conferences, and the importance of separating your self worth from the results of applying to do something big and scary.

We're going to talk about all these things. So let's go ahead and jump on in. First up before we talk about any of the big bulk of this podcast episode, I wanted to give you guys just a few quick tips on preparing if you are new to pitching, or maybe you've been pitching a while, but you're kind of unsure about why your pitches are getting overlooked. And you know, it's hard because when we are applying to do things like speak somewhere, typically we're up against a large quantity of people, which means that the host of that event is very unlikely to tell us person to person what we did wrong what why they didn't choose us maybe we didn't do anything wrong at all. Maybe it was surely a numbers game. I mean, that's happening right now in my own selection process.

So I know that so assuming we're not getting that individualized feedback, we're going to do like a check your own work think back to like school when your teacher would say okay, let's we're going to check your own worksheet here. So I want to give you guys a few gut check questions. And have you think through like did I do these things or Did I not? And how can I improve them in the future? And I want you to be brutally honest with yourself, because that's the whole point of like checking your own work is you want to make sure that you're actually being honest with yourself. So let's go first off, I'm going to ask you, did you put your best work behind this pitch? So sometimes when we get excited about doing something new or scary, maybe we haven't been applying to speak very long. And maybe this is something that you're taking that big risk or big jump? I don't know about you guys, but a lot of my students struggle with the excitement overtaking the thoroughness, and the thoughtfulness of the actual application. So did you jump the gun? Did you answer too quickly to where your thoughts are jumbled? They're not thorough, they're not thought out.

They're not intentional. Or were you professional, or were you hyper casual? That happens a lot in the creative industry. Maybe the host of the event is somebody who you know, someone who you consider a friend or an acquaintance. And so you are not going on a hyper, like professional level, you're going really casual, and you're talking in your application as though you're speaking with a friend. These are things I want to encourage you to stay away from. Of course, please note, as always, I think I always say this, in my episodes about things like this, I'm going off of my own experience. But for me when I'm sorting through many, many applications, and I'm not the only one sorting through them, I have as I mentioned, for example, for my conference, I have four other people who are going through these applications who may not know the person who's pitching.

So don't write as though you're writing to one friend, you want to write as though whoever is looking at this application or this pitch, can clearly see that you have thought out your topic, your pitch you've put the work in, and you've really taken advantage of the ability to communicate what it is that you're going to offer to that audience. I'll give you an example of things that I've seen coming through in podcast applications even. And by the way, you guys, my podcast applications don't just go directly to me, they go to one or two of my team members, and then they get to me. So again, like if we know each other, it could be cool to just chat about it in person. But you don't want to do that in an application or a pitch. For example, my conference, the applications are close to speak, by the way for this year. But in the

application, I put a question that says, here's where like, tell me about the topic you want to teach, take advantage of this time share every detail, you would like taking into consideration. Please give me like, I don't remember exactly the wording.

But it was essentially like, Give me all you got here. And I had people answering with like one sentence, two sentences, just a general topic title. And again, you guys, when you're going up against almost 100 people, or even 20 people or no people, you want to make sure that you are being thoughtful, thorough, you are honoring the time of the people who are going through these applications. And you are not assuming that they can read your mind because nobody can. So you want to make sure that you're really putting that best foot forward, you're being really, really thorough, you're treating it like a professional job application. And really treating it like it is a professional thing, because it is and I know that for some of us, it can be hard because we want to differentiate the fact that maybe we are experts who are speaking but we are not professional speakers by trade.

And so I know that these are things you don't always know off the bat. That's why I always suggest investing in coaching, investing in resources, investing in going to things and really seeing how they pan out. All of that being said, I just wanted to put that out there. Before we dive into. I did my very best, I still heard a no now what how can I face this rejection? How can I continue to push on. So let's talk about that. I know by experience how hard it can be to hear no, especially in the beginning of any any niche of your career that you're in, especially for those of us and for those of you who listen to this podcast, you're likely in the same boat of I have built up my business, I am now established in my business. And now I'm turning to becoming an educator, a speaker, a course creator, a go to expert in my field, and I am now establishing that authority in that space.

And I know that we want to be able to establish that authority super quickly because we've already worked our booties off to establish ourselves in our first businesses, right? That I've said this before, if you've been around here, you've heard me say this before. You've got to give yourself the same amount of time to become an expert educator, an expert speaker or a professional in that niche as you did the amount of time that you gave yourself to become the expert in your industry. So I want to encourage you guys this stuff is Gonna take time.

Hey friend, I know it can be super overwhelming and intimidating to start on the path of becoming an educator. But if that is something that you're passionate about, and that you're excited about, I have got a free gift for you. I've created an ebook that is going to help you learn about the big mistakes holding creatives back from becoming profitable, impactful educators, and how to avoid making those mistakes in your own journey. So if you want to grab that free ebook, head to layleeemadi.com/ebook, or just head to the show notes. So here's the thing podcast.com. And let me know what you think. I love hearing from you guys. And I'm cheering you on on your educator journey.

No, I've mentioned before that I do believe there are exceptions to every rule. I've heard people be asked by my students, even if I bring in like an expert and my student last I'm like, Hey, like, what's your best pitching advice, and maybe that expert will say actually don't pitch to speak, I get offers, that is an exception to the rule. Generally speaking, we're all in it together. We're all applying, we're all pitching. And we're all hearing yeses, and we're all hearing nose.

So just know that you're not alone in that, that you may be the exception to the rule. But the likelihood is that you're just one of us. And we're gonna have to do a lot of applying and a lot of putting ourselves out

there. Before we get the Yes, before we get the yes, that we really want sometimes. And that can be really hard. So we need you to really steel yourself to really like tell yourself like, hey, I can do this. I can be resilient, I can be tough, I can be strong, I can hear no. And I can bounce back. The best speakers. I know, in my career, at least in my tenure in this in this industry. The best speakers I've seen that I've had really good conversations with.

They're the ones that are pitching on a consistent basis, their pitching maybe like 10 times more nose than the yeses they receive, you've really got to put yourself out there and understand that like there is an art to consistent applying. Because the thing is, like I mentioned just in the way that it's a numbers game, let's say for example, creative educator conference, there's almost 100 applicants, there are only seven or eight speaker spots total. That's insane odds you guys like that is that's not great odds. So think about it in the same way. Okay, there are 100 conferences. And in those 100 conferences, there are how many speakers that are available, or like speaker spots that are available. So how many people are applying, like the numbers speak for themselves.

So that's part one of not taking it personally, is understanding that, like do the math, you've got to understand that you're not always going to be the one that's selected. The second thing I really want to encourage is that not every expert is a good fit for every industries event. So I have a lot of people apply who are extremely talented, extremely incredible, strong speakers, strong entrepreneurs, but their topic may not be in alignment with what my audience needs to learn, needs to hear and wants and has requested to learn about at my event. So that in itself immediately pulls them out of the running. And it's not their fault, they did nothing wrong. In fact, they may have one of the strongest pitches that was submitted to my application. But if I can't make it fit, I'm moving on to the pitch that does fit the topic. So it's again, this is another kind of way to look at things from a formulaic perspective of, okay, so they're looking at is the application strong? Is the applicant, a strong speaker?

Is the topic a good fit. And then what else you know what I'm saying? So like people have this checklist, and this, this kind of like puzzle that they're putting together as they're creating a lineup of speakers. And all the puzzle pieces have to come together. And knowing inside yourself that even though all the puzzle pieces have to come together, and even though the odds are maybe stacked against you, we're not going to let that stop you from moving forward. We're not going to let that stop you from trying because the more you try, guess what, y'all it's practice. And what is practice, man? I mean, I sound so cheesy right now, but practice really does make progress. It makes perfect like you've got to be able to get out of your head. So you embrace Hearing no, so much so that you take every single speaker application as a way to practice your skills.

As a person who is pitching and applying to take stages. This is super important. If you've like zoned out, maybe you're driving maybe you're like on you're walking pad while you're working. I want you to hear this. It is so important to practice this. It is a learned skill. Some of us are incredible writers some of us are incredible speed. beakers, some of us are incredibly talented, and we just woke up one day and the talent was there. But most of us, most of us, y'all, we got to work for that. So I want you to make sure that you're not pushing that work aside, and that you're embracing the fact that you have this opportunity to practice your skill.

Now, let's talk about not taking things personally, I don't have a magical thing I can say to you to kind of help you overcome taking things personally in this respect. I will say the more nose you hear, the less they sting. So again, putting yourself out there as much as possible. I have had many a rejection, you

guys like I have been speaking since before I became an entrepreneur. So the amount of things that I have applied for that I haven't heard no on. I mean, I truly don't even have a number for it. But I can say that every single one. And I'm going to be honest with you guys, every single one stings a little bit. But every single nose stings a little bit less than the one before it.

And after years and years of the know. And after years of reapplying to the things that maybe are happening annually or biannually, and I continued to reapply, some of those noes have slowly become yeses. And I would have never gotten on the stages that I have been if I had heard the first No, and been. So I want to watch my words here. But but I've got to be humble enough, right? I've got to understand that this is not a personal attack, that I am not too good to apply that I am not above, reapplying and reapplying again. And if I didn't have that outlook, if I didn't have that mindset and perspective, I would have never been on the best stages I've been on.

Because I may have heard that no first from the exact people that gave me the yes, 123 years later. So how are you approaching that? Are you approaching that as a way that it hurts so badly that I'm not going to reapply and I'm not going to attend as an attendee, that's another thing that I think is a huge mindset shift is, I think I talked about this a while ago on the podcast about how I've never applied to be a TEDx or TEDx women or whatever speaker, I've never applied to be on that stage. But that doesn't mean I'm not going to go and like, absorb, right. And that doesn't mean that if I, if I do apply one day, and I get rejected, I'm not going to stop going to those events, like I'm still going to go, I'm still going to show up, I'm still going to go and absorb that amazing environment and all of the incredible learning opportunities around me. And then I'll reapply year after year, whenever I decide that that is, like part of the journey I want to I want to be on.

So that advice, I guess to sum it up is to show up as much as possible, continue showing up and soak up what you can when you get there. It's so so important. I know that that can be a hard thing to battle internally, when you are applying and hearing the know you're like, Okay, well, that stung a little bit too hard, I'm not going to turn around and attend this event, it's going to be too painful. I want to challenge you let it go. Take a deep breath, through your nose out your mouth, go attend, soak up what you can learn from those speakers, see what they're doing that you love, and that you want to apply, see what you're doing that doesn't resonate with you and remind yourself like, hey, that's something I'm going to not do when I apply or when I speak or when I take the stage myself.

These are all amazing learning opportunities for us. Every time I speak at an event, I tried to attend as many sessions as I can to learn the things that I love and the things that I don't love so much from other speakers. And it's not from a critical standpoint, it's it's purely for self work. So I wanted to put that out there too, as just like an encouragement to shift your mindset from looking at rejection, as this is all about you, you have been rejected. And you have to deal with the pain of that.

And think of it more as okay, you weren't a fit for this for a myriad of reasons. It could have been one reason it could have been 10 reasons, you probably will never know, which is hard to hear you guys, I get it, it's really hard. But at the end of the day, are you going to stop? Or are you going to show up for yourself, improve yourself, do that extra work, and apply again, and show up again, and apply to as many things as humanly possible. And, you know, do the unpopular things show up for free show up in other people's communities? Like are you going to take virtual stages? Are you going to apply to podcasts? Are you going to build that practice, and then apply again to take the stage.

So I hope this was helpful for you guys. I know that a lot of what I share may not be everybody's cup of tea, but I want to encourage you that at the end of the day, my main goal for all of you who are listening and for me for all of us in this industry. is to make sure that we remember that our work is not our worth. And our acceptance or rejection does not make up if we are worthy or not of the thing that we applied for it. Rejection should not define you and it should not define the way that you see yourself.

So I want to encourage you, be humble, keep trying. Get as much information as you can get as much education as you can. But at the end of the day, please know that with practice and with learn skills, there is nothing that you cannot do. And I truly believe that or you know, I wouldn't say it, I keep it 100% real here. So go out there. Keep on don't give up and don't let rejection define your path or your journey. I am cheering you on 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 on iTunes or see your rating on Spotify. Thanks so much for listening, and I'll catch you on the next episode.