

So Here's The Thing Episode 133

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. Hey friends, welcome back to the show today, I am so excited because we have the one and only Jen Olmstead with us. She is the lead designer and co founder of tonic site shop. That's a template shop offering the world's greatest website and marketing templates for the modern entrepreneur. And actually, for all my speakers out there, they just released some amazing templates specifically for speakers. So you guys need to go check her out because I know a lot of you guys listening are educators and speakers. And trust me when I say you need what they've got, and they're amazing. Jen is a former journalist, total type nerd and lifelong fan of a good story. She specializes in creating and building innovative online spaces that people love to explore. She eats gluten, so you don't have to love language is witty banter. And she's always up for craft cocktail. You guys Jen is like my favorite human being of all time. And if you're not subscribed to her newsletter at the tonic newsletter you need to be we'll put it in the show notes. It's like my favorite thing to read. And I don't really read a lot of people's newsletters. I'm putting that out there. Like I'm keeping it real. It's so good. Anyway, Jen, I'm so excited. You're here. Thank you for being here with us.

Jen Olmstead

Um, could you get me a recording of that, that I can play when people land on our website? Because I feel like that's all that I want people to know about me and us. And I would also like to amend the fact that I say that I like witty banter, because I feel like it does set up this certain expectation that I'm gonna like, bring a lot of data to the show. And I'm really really thinking that so like, moderately witty banter. That is my specialty. That's my niche. Thanks for hiring. You, you live

Laylee Emadi

up to all the witty banter, like prefaces in the world, you'd like to think you're hilarious every time we can't can't even oversell you.

Jen Olmstead

Mutual entirely.

Laylee Emadi

Okay, well, I'm so excited. We've been trying to make this interview happen for like, I feel like years and just back and forth. And I'm so glad we finally got to do it.

Jen Olmstead

I know, I'm really glad that this is happening. Because I feel like there were there's a reality where it could have been another six months of just being like, Hey, I love you. We should do something together until forever. And I know that the thing that like after the age of 25 happens where you're like,

hey, I love you so much. Can we get together sometime six months from now? How about a Thursday? And I'm glad that is not what's happening here. So kudos jobs for actually making something happen.

Laylee Emadi

You really don't really know. I'm really proud of us. We really we really nailed it. We did it. Yeah. Well, I would love for you to share a little bit about your journey, as somebody who's just so beautifully established themselves, not only in your niche, but in like the creative industry as a whole. And I feel like I met you wave. I mean, I guess it was like, maybe, I don't know, like seven, eight years ago at like a show it conference. Yeah. And then every year since that at multiple places. So it's just been really cool to see that. So share a little bit of your journey with us. And then we're gonna dive into the topic of content creation, which is going to be really fun to talk about with you.

Jen Olmstead

Yeah, I am happy to talk about that. And I do think we met when there were like actual dinosaurs roaming the earth. And I think you were like doing a rap number at karaoke. And I was like, I don't know who that person is. But I love her and we should be friends forever. So if you haven't heard lately, rap, you should hear that. And you have to go to a conference in order to make that happen. And I will be sidelines just cheering her on. So But around that time, actually, 10 years ago, in 2013, we started tonic. And it's because we kind of asked the question that I believe most successful businesses ask at the beginning of their, you know, origination story, and that is just like, what if this didn't have to be this way. And I know that you had the same experience, starting your business, starting a conference and being in charge of like, who got to speak and we did the same thing. We saw this epidemic of incredible talented, charismatic, incredible creatives and entrepreneurs who have these killer businesses. And then when we ask them, hey, where do I go online to find you, they would just like, hide under the desk. And yet, please don't go to my website. It's so terrible. Please don't go to my website. And I don't know if you remember back then in 2013, but your two options were like, just hand over your firstborn child and \$25,000 for a custom website, or nothing. Basically just hate your life and pay your website like make sure that no one ever went there because there was no such thing. As a beautiful website template. There really wasn't a thing. Squarespace didn't exist at that time. At least not in the form. It does now show it was just starting out. And so Jeff and I, my business partner, my co founder, we met and we had this beautiful online photonic love story. And we were like, this sucks like if I have to meet one more person I love who said Don't go to my website. I hate it. There's nothing I hate more. What if we could do something about this? What if it didn't have to be this way. So we put together kind of the two things we love most. And that was like a craft cocktail, some short form of online hospitality and websites. And we launched our first collection of 12. Cocktail inspired what we called completely customizable websites at the time, because we thought website template was a bad and dirty word. And the shock of our lives happens when it was just like, instantly successful, when people just lined up to buy them when we first released them. And we knew very little, we knew nothing about marketing, our email list, which we did start one, which is hilarious and adorable. Looking back, our email list was just like an Excel file of people's names that we would just manually bring over into Gmail and email personally, I do think we VCC. And that's just like, by the grace of God, because I, we did nothing else, right. But people bought them. And we had this moment of like, there's something here, there's like, there's a real need here, people will always need a beautiful way to show up online. And when we can Eclipse someone with the confidence to say like, Hey, here's my stake in the ground, this is my online home, go look, go buy from me, it gives them so much power over their business. And so we quickly grew addicted to like, what if what if we can empower entrepreneurs to show up online with the confidence in this is who I am, this is how you can work for me and Dammit, I'm worth it. That's what we

want to do for the rest of our lives. So that's 10 years ago, and we still love that feeling. And still, there's not a day that goes by that I go, wow, this person just transformed their entire business because of the website. So that's a very cool thing to be a part of.

Laylee Emadi

That's amazing. I love hearing your story. And even having like heard it before, it's just always really fun to hear it again, because I feel like you guys were kind of the exception to the rule, right? Like you on a first launch just blew up. And I feel like that can it can sound really great and fun and exciting. But I'm sure it created a whole host of like, you know, growth and pain points and all the things that come with success. But I love that from 10 years ago to now, like the heart of it is kind of the same, even though so much probably has changed.

Jen Olmstead

Absolutely. And I think the thing about products and marketing is that when you have a great product marketing gets easy. And when you don't have a great product marketing, it is very difficult. And so we were fortunate because we knew nothing about marketing. In fact, up until about three years ago, I would have said I hated marketing and was terrible at marketing that I'm working to like unlearn my definition of what that means. Because what it actually meant was, I don't like bro marketing, and I don't want to do it. And it turns out, that's not what you have to do to be successful in marketing. But at that time, we knew nothing. We weren't doing things right. All we knew was like we people needed what we were making. And so when you make that decision to start with, like you actually figure out what people needed, then the rest of your job gets so much easier. Now, has our job been easy ever since?

Absolutely not. Because any sort of business you ever going to have is going to be extremely difficult. And we've had some really hard lessons to learn along the way. But I think the beginning like getting the product, right. And that has that is and has always been our biggest focus if like if we know without a shadow of a doubt we're making a better product than anyone else. Or at least we're working to do that. Then all of everything else gets easier.

Laylee Emadi

Yeah, absolutely. I think that's that's the best point. And I think that's kind of the big struggle for a lot of people. It's finding like what is that one thing that is going to set me apart be fit what I want to give people and see be the thing that people need. So I love that you guys found it. And I'm thankful that you guys are around and killing it. I love I love that you mentioned the marketing piece of it. So we can kind of like, start talking about this because I've noticed I mean, I have always I've followed you guys forever. And I've taken in your content, and I've always loved it. But I always wondered like, what is it about this that I love? And recently, I think just because we've been talking about having this conversation, I really have noticed that it's just something that is it's it's not replicating anything else anyone else is doing. And when you when you mentioned to me the concept of creating content that you actually like, I loved that so much. And I would love to know like, what does that actually mean to you?

Yeah, well, it honestly came out of the exact thing that I was just referencing earlier, which is just like, Man, I hate marketing. I don't want to do it. And so for many years at tonik, we just wouldn't mark it. Basically what we would do is like we would work on our product, we'd come back and be like, here's the product you can buy it if you would like and then we would disappear into our cave again until it was time to launch the next product. And what we realize is that actually made our jobs so much harder

because then when you like come out of your cave to sell once a year, you haven't built up relationship with your people. And you haven't shown up for them all year. And so then you have to work really hard to show up for them just once, you know, or twice a year during a launch. And people can tell like they sniff that out. And so even though the company was still growing and thriving, what I realized is that I just dreaded this whole area of our business that felt extremely necessary. And so what happened is we for one of the things that we had done is we've started an email list. And you know, what I knew is that like, you had to have an email list or the goes to like a disappointed Jenna Kutcher would haunt you for all of your days. And so we had an email list, we built it up, we'd like done a quiz. So we had people on our email list. And every single time I sat down to write a Dan email, I was like, I don't want to do it. And what I have learned as someone who is self diagnosed with ADHD this year, is that my brain is wired for interest, not importance. And so I am naturally gravitating towards what I'm interested in at any moment, not necessarily what's important. And so when I sat down to write like, five tips to write to make your website better, I wasn't interested in that. That wasn't what was exciting to me. And so I didn't do it, I didn't want to do it. And I believe that, like you do what you want to do. So I knew that I kind of had to transform content and content creation into something I actually enjoyed for me to be able to do it on a on a routine basis. And so the crazy part is that I have a degree in journalism, I love to write, I've always loved to write, I had like a Xanga in college and in high school that like thrived. I was like the queen of E props. Which is like a weird flex, but I'm just gonna go with it. I also just dated myself. So yeah, now you didn't know exactly how old I am. But I love to write and but then why was I sitting down and like hating the idea of writing every week like this is something I'm good at, this is something I can do. So I realized that there was this leve I to which I needed to actually enjoy what I was creating, I did not have like a content problem, I had an interest problem. And so as soon as we transformed marketing in our business from something that like I had to do, to something that I got to do, and I got to transfer like whatever I was interested in whatever I wanted to enjoy, that was the content that we started creating. And I definitely believe I was talking to this great marketer earlier this year. And he said, You need to stop interrupting what people are interested in and just be what they're interested in. And that to me was like such a groundbreaking moment of like, oh, yeah, that totally makes sense. We need to stop yelling at people to like, get them to pay attention to us, and start creating content that like makes them pay attention. So for me that looked like, hey, what do I want to write about? What am I interested in? If our audience is interested in hearing from me as a person, I have to make content that actually resonates with them. And if it's going to resonate with them, it needs to be it needs to actually resonate with me first. So that to me was just this instant unlock of like, if I if someone else, if I'm going to ask someone else to read it, I need to want to read it myself. And I think this happens all the time. We're like creating Instagram content for some person out there. It no one in particular. And we're not thinking like, why should Why would someone read this? Like, is it actually worth reading? Is it enjoyable? What makes it worth their time? Is it worth my time, we're not asking those questions, we just feel like we have to produce content. And it shows in the content that we end up producing.

Laylee Emadi

Oh my gosh, so many good points there. I feel like I'm going to need everybody to just hit pause, like rewind this and re listen to that one segment. But that was really, really helpful. And I feel like, one thing that really interests me is the concept of wanting to come from come at it from a point of interest. For me as a coach. And as a coach for educators. What I feel like my students struggle with the most is they feel stuck, because they hear things like I don't know what people want to hear from me. And that's that's definitely like, you know, putting your consumer like in the driver's seat of like, well, what do they want? For me, it's not about just what I want. For I don't know how much I'm supposed to share, or I

don't feel comfortable taking up space, or I feel like it's self important of me to just share like X, Y and Z, like, How do you tackle those thoughts? Or? Or how would you help somebody? If you don't have those thoughts? How would you help somebody through it? Who does have those?

Yeah, well, I think I think that there's an interesting balance, right? Because when I say like I want to write what's interesting to me, the reality is I can't just write about me, because people are not interested in me. And that's the reality is that like, no one cares what you think, you know, like, they don't just inherently care what you think people are self interested in the best way possible. So even if I'm writing a story about the crazy moment I had at the grocery store, if it's just about my crazy moment at the grocery store, no one's gonna care unless it's like maybe my mom, you know, that's the reality. So in every piece of content that we're creating, there has to be a level of what is in this for my reader. How is it going to impact them, make them laugh, benefit them in some way? Um, teach them something new transform a situation they might be having, what is in that for them. And so I always incorporate what I call like the swerve, and that I got from my friend Mike. And so he always talks about the swerve you have in your story, which is like, this is my story. And this is how it relates to you , right? Or here is what we can learn, or here are the takeaways, or this is the experience. And so there are kind of two things that I try to do when it comes to content is say, like, what are some struggles that my audience might be having? What are the things that they're like might be facing or they're confused about or they're struggling with? And if you don't know, you can ask them. And so this is something that we do consistently on our email list or on Instagram, we say like, Hey, what are you struggling with? When it comes to content? It doesn't need to be I don't think you should ever put it on your reader to be like, hey, what do you want to hear about for me? Because that's a very difficult question for them to answer. And frankly, it's not their job to tell you what you should write about. But you can say like, would you rather hear about x or x? Or R? Do you have any questions about this for me, and with that kind of research, you can definitely pin down like, these are the kinds of things that my people are struggling with. And so I think when you show up and your content to serve and answer those questions, that all of a sudden, regardless of your point of view, whatever you create, that's going to inform your actual content and make it turn into something that's valuable to them. So take a story from the grocery store. Okay, what is my audience struggling with? How can I relate this to their struggle? Here's something I'm dealing with, like if you're talking lately about like, Man, I kind of hate content right now. I don't know what to how to show up. Chances are your audience has that in common with you, that's probably not an isolated problem. So if you're having it, how can you solve that problem for yourself, and then solve it for your audience, too. So an example would be like one of our first email newsletters that was like super successful, I was procrastinating on writing email newsletter, I was super bored and was very much like distracted by anything else that I could possibly be doing, which is classic, Jen. And I noticed that our email signature for tonic was super ugly, and was like, dang it like, I should fix this right now. Nothing else is important. I should not write my email. I'm just gonna like figure out how to make a pretty email signature. So I figured it out. And I was like, That was That was awesome. That was so cool. It like an instantly made me feel better. It was like a little Anne Hathaway like makeover moment. And I was like, Hey, I bet other people want this too. So I wrote this, like very long story with a lot of like Nick Miller from New Girl references about how I was distracted and decided to make our email newsletter pretty, I gave people step by step instructions for making their own email signature, I tried to make it like funny and interesting and engaging. And our email inbox just blew up with so many people that like both enjoyed the story, but then also were like, my email signature has been crappy for years like this is so much better. And it was this like little moment of like, oh, when your content helps people in solves a problem that you have, they might have it too. And that to me was give you so much

guidance. So a lot of our content is informed by like the stuff that we're learning on a weekly basis of, hey, when we realized our priorities were out of whack as a business, chances are people are other people are probably struggling with that same thing, or we don't know how to write better email content. So we're going to learn we're going to teach other people at the same time as we're learning.

Laylee Emadi

Oh, my gosh, it's so helpful. I love that. And I want to kind of go back to about something that you mentioned, when you guys were struggling when you were saying, you know, I hate marketing, but it turns out, you just kind of hated that take on it. And then you would wonder, you know, things would go well, but you're kind of abandoning your audience. And I think that that's something that a lot of people wonder, like, Why is no one buying my offer, when I'm out here selling it, but then they kind of ghost or do like a hard pivot that has nothing to do with what they're selling, in the in between. So with that, with that point being said, and with that mentioned that you had already, you already kind of talked about what are like a few other things that you think are people are missing the mark on when it comes to content creation and marketing. And also I mean, I mean, I just think the fact that we're talking about content creation, and marketing is kind of the same thing in this regard is is also an important point. Because I feel like when I'm chatting with people about this, often I hear like, marketing is something separate to them than the concept of content creation. Right? And so like, I guess my question for you is, how can people improve on that? And how can it be a more natural process the way that you've kind of created for yourself?

Jen Olmstead

Yeah, for us content is marketing like that. Those it's the same thing, right? Marketing is content and cards, content is marketing. And I think like in our space, as entrepreneurs content is not optional anymore. Every brand is going to be perceived based on the content that it's, it's creating and putting out in the world. That's the truth, whether you're a huge brand like Nike, or whether whether you're a coach or whether you're a product based business like ours, your content is your marketing. So if you're like, No, I want to do marketing, but I don't want to create content like Welcome to the 2023 Because we're all content creators, whether you admit it or not now, what the choice that we get to have is, what kind of content do I want to create. And that, to me is an empowering thing. Because you don't have to create the same content that I create. Like, I love having a long, weird email newsletter. I like writing 5000 word Instagram posts, like, that doesn't have to be you. And that's fine. But what you do need to do is figure out like, How can I lean in to the kind of content that I can create. And that may even be like the kind of content I create that other people can't. And for us, like, there are a bajillion other template shops in the industry, that we're not unique in that way. They're fantastic template shops who make beautiful templates. But what we can do is we can create content we can write, we can we have humor, and so we've leaned in to these kinds of what we refer to as those only minus factors of like, what are the things that you are equipped to do or to talk about, or to create that other people can't do nearly as easily? Because all of a sudden, then there's this gap of Oh, yeah, that's that brand that makes them great. tiktoks. That's not us, by the way. Or that's that brand. Like I love their ads, or, you know, when I say like a company that has great ads, you're instantly gonna think of brands that you love of like, oh, Toshi is a great example of like, it's a day company and their ads crush it. And it's very unexpected, and they lean into like, we're the only company in this niche. That's like crushing it in this specific area. So I think the first step is just figuring out, where can I like, crush this area? What What am I designed to do best? And I think there are so many different types of content, you don't need to originate all of your content. If you feel like writing is not your gift, that's totally fine. Maybe you're someone who's more comfortable on video. Or maybe you're a curator and you have a weekly newsletter that's like content

you thought was interesting that week, or something that you read that you thought was helpful. So I think we trap ourselves into this mindset of like, oh, Jen, from Tonic writes email newsletters, or Layli is hilarious on Instagram, or she's so good at lifestyle content I'm going to do I'll do that. And really, what we need to do is like, what is it that like I am equipped to do and do well, and can do consistently and since it succeeded, because we were just taking notes on our team, one of our team members, Morgan, he's an incredible writer, but he's like a slower writer. So he doesn't want to write 5000 words every day. That was like crushing. Whereas for me, I'm like, yeah, no sweat. That's no problem. So you know, we just talked about this, like Ryan, our team, he might have like a video newsletter instead of a written newsletter, because that's something that's easy for him. So I think there's this sweet spot on the continuum of like, what can I do that only I can do? And then what feels easy for me or that comes more naturally to me so that I can actually do it on a continual sustainable basis.

Laylee Emadi

I love that. I feel like that's such a prevalent question for anybody in any regard of their business in general, like I remember how important it was. And I don't know, I probably still is to blog consistently. And I couldn't do it. I was just like, this is not, I just don't want to so I started a podcast and my podcast became my blog.

Jen Olmstead

Yes, exactly, exactly. And it's not like, oh, man, I just suck at blogging, like, I should just be better. And yes, there were things like that, where it's like, okay, I need to figure out a way to do this. This is not natural to me. But I know, it's important for me to have this thing like maybe you outsource it, maybe you like help have all help you with it, whatever it is, like there are ways of getting better at the things that you're not great at. But I think there's also a thing of like, what would I actually want to do and enjoy on a routine basis, and then eliminate the rest. I mean, for us, I would say 90% of our sales come from our email list. So every bit of ROI I pour into that email list, I don't have to worry about Instagram, I don't, because like Instagram, for me is like a place to show up and have fun. Because that's not where our sales are coming from. So I can say like, Sure, let's try that. Like, I'm going to do a Barbie video on Instagram that may not make us any money. But it was like fun. And like, sure, sure that's fine. And I don't have to show my face every two days selling something, because that's just not what I want to do with my life. But whatever you do, you know, my brother once told me to do less but better. And that's become like a maximum for our company of like, okay, let's do less. But what we are going to do, we're going to do extremely well. And I think that's a big problem for most entrepreneurs is we feel like we have to do everything. We're hearing all these experts say like Pinterest, SEO, you know, speaking engagements, you know, online webinars, do you not have an email funnel, and we feel this pressure of like, we have to do all of those things and do them at a high level when the reality is like pick one, pick one and like, put all of your attention there, and then move on to the next one. But you don't have to feel like you have to do all of the forms of content creation. Well, because you're just going to burn yourself out and be exhausted and also depressed.

Laylee Emadi

Yeah, I love that. I love the concept of doing less but better. That's amazing.

Jen Olmstead

Yeah, I know. It's been really informative except for now. It just gets used against me all the time because I'll be like hey guys, we try blah, blah, blah. And they'll just send me because we have it in the

footer of our website. So I just get like, sent like a picture of our footer of our website that says do better. And I'm like, dammit, those are my words are not being used against me like, I hate this.

Laylee Emadi

I kind of love that though.

Jen Olmstead

It's great. I know, I'm like, Good job guys. Do you remember,

Laylee Emadi

it's nice, it's got a nice little thing to have in your toolbox if your work for you. That's amazing.

Jen Olmstead

I do have one other like thing that I see that I want. I would love to talk about that's like, I think I think it's a problem. I think the biggest thing that we have noticed is people complaining about the results that they're not getting from the work they're not doing. So there's this level of like, why isn't my content performing? Like the Dan algorithm, you know, like, click, like, why aren't people seeing this, they shouldn't be seeing this, like, why aren't people responding to it, they should be responding to it. Without realizing like, you don't probably have an algorithm problem, you have a content problem, you're not putting in the effort that's required to really get the results that you want. And that's been the biggest lesson that we've learned along the lines of do less, but better is the more effort we put into each piece of content that we put out into the world, the better that it performs exponentially. And I read this great Fast Company article this week from the guys behind the acquired podcasts. And they said the same thing that they've experienced, like the more work they put into their podcast episodes, they have like, for our incredible like motion picture level podcasts, the more effort they put into it, the more results and ROI they get out of it. And so one thing we've focused on is like, how can we make each thing we do really, really, really good and worthwhile so that you look at it and go like, this is a quality piece of content. And it's because we put legwork in that other people may not be willing to do and because of that we're going to get bigger and better results. And so that's one thing that I would just encourage you, if you're listening to this, like, Hey, how can you make the content you're creating better, more valuable packet with more takeaways give examples of what people could learn from it. Give more in each piece of content that you're putting out there, and I guarantee you're going to see better and bigger results from it.

Laylee Emadi

No, I really appreciate you sharing that. I feel like it's also a great opportunity for our listeners to kind of do that self awareness check of Is it a them thing? Or is it a me thing? And you know, taking that I guess responsibility for your actions, which I think is it can be really easy to blame, Instagram, or Twitter or whatever, you know, platform you're using, it can just be really easy to place the blame out there. And sometimes maybe it is, but sometimes maybe it's not.

Jen Olmstead

I know. And that's the thing, like, yeah, that when we make Instagram templates before this reason, cuz I'm like, Hey, like, you shouldn't have to wonder, is it because my graphics aren't very good, right? Like, I want to eliminate that question mark whatsoever, because your content is probably fine. Maybe like you have tiny fonts and no one's reading them. Or it's not designed to like capture the algorithm because that is the thing you have to learn how to do. However, in most cases, it's probably not that.

And we catch ourselves all the time I was, I was writing this post recently about Oatly. Because Oatly, the oat milk brand and this incredible set of billboards, and they had billboards in Times Square billboards, like all over Europe, and they were hilarious. And so I started doing research about the billboards and like, who came up with the idea. And I found this amazing interview with their marketing director, Kevin Lynch. And so I was like, Man, I wish he'd answered these questions that I have in this article. He didn't get to those. And so all of a sudden, I was like, Well, I mean, I could just ask him, I guess I was halfway through writing my article on like, I should like, see if I, you know, I could find out more. Well, I joined Lincoln, which I swore I'd never do, and like befriended him on LinkedIn. And then I realized that people don't just like have their phone numbers or email addresses listed on LinkedIn, which I guess I would have known if I'd been on LinkedIn before that point. And so I found like an article he wrote five years ago that had his email address on it, I sent him a cold email that was like, dammit, Kevin, I just joined LinkedIn. I blame you for this. Like, I don't I wish we had met under these circumstances. But could you answer like these two questions? And he did. He wrote back like, that night had the funniest best answers. And he was like, Oh, I can't believe you did the legwork of like actually tracking down. And I was like, You know what, my content was 1000 times better, because I actually heard from him than just like writing my own point of view. But the reality is, that was not my first impulse to like, oh, I should do more like legwork. I was just trying to get the post written and get it out there. But instead like taking like two more days to actually do the legwork. Most people wouldn't do the content was that much better and perform that much better. So it was just one of those moments of like, wait a second, like what would make this better? How can I not just like get in this content turn, but try to make each thing that we do as valuable as we can

Laylee Emadi

change and that was good. That's I mean, honestly, like, I feel like just thinking outside the box and pushing yourself a little bit more is something that not a lot of people want to do, who are business owners or entrepreneurs or just get stuck in that cycle. And you just, it's like the last thing you want to do. But sometimes it's like the first thing that you should do.

Jen Olmstead

Full. And it's understandable, because we all have so much on our plates, right? There's so much we have to do. And very few of us have the luxury of being full time content creators. I mean, I don't like that's a very small portion of my job. So the temptation is like, let's just get this stuff out. Like we've just like, you know, b, b minus work, like, let's get it out. And there's totally a time for B minus work. We, I would say this all the time, we're not slaving away on every single piece of content that we create. You know, there are times when it's like, let's just post that joke. And we think it's funny, like, Let's go for it. However, if you want something to be like a really good pillar piece of content, that's when I think it's worth being like, Okay, wait a second, let's take a moment and say like, how can we make this more valuable? Is there any reason that someone would save this or send it to a friend? How can we refine the tone of voice one thing that we've learned is like, I want to write all my emails, like I'm writing to you lately, I think I've actually written an email like with you, in my mind being like, oh, like high lately, I actually sit down when I'm writing my email newsletters and write it to like a friend I know. And so I'm like, Hey, like Morgan, or, Hey, you know, whoever, because it changes the way that you write when you're thinking like, this is for a person who is busy, who's not just sitting around wishing I was producing content, I'm interrupting them. So if I'm going to interrupt them, I better make it something worth paying attention to, it better be worth their time, because they're giving me their time. And that's valuable. So instead of just feeling like we are owed people's attention and their time, we need to like make a bid for it, we need to actually ask for it and make it worthwhile. So people go like, this was really

worth my time. This was I'm glad I didn't do this other thing that I was supposed to be doing. I'm glad I did this instead.

Laylee Emadi

Yeah, I feel like reframing the thought process of, of content creation is kind of a big step that you just described, that I wouldn't necessarily have thought to do. So I really appreciate that perspective, as well of you're interrupting them. So how can you actually engage them in it? And I love that the question of, would anybody want to save this? Would anybody want to send this to a friend? Those are things that again, I feel like should be one of the first thoughts that you have, but it's totally not. So Oh, yeah.

Jen Olmstead

Like, how can we make this easier for someone and the biggest, like, the biggest thing that we've learned is like, add examples. You know, if I tell people like, hey, it's easy to mine your life for examples of first stories for you to put in your email newsletter, that helps no one, right? They're like, congratulations, Jen. I'm glad you're good at that. But if I can say like here, and this is something we do all the time, like, send me your stories, and I'll show you like, this is how you do the thing, this is something that feels easy for me, that's not for you, I can help you with that. So here are the ways you can do this thing. Here's how to make this easier, here's how to make your email signature prettier. Whatever it is, that feels easy or intuitive for you is not easy or intuitive for someone else. So that's a good place to start is how do you give them an example of how they can get where they want to go? How can you can you provide them a content? That's actually a solution?

Laylee Emadi

Yeah, I mean, I feel like you've covered so many things that people can, can and should be doing when they're creating content when they're thinking about what kinds of content to create. Is there anything else that you think people should be doing when they're actually when they get to the point of like sharing that content that they've created? Like, they've gone through all of your advice, and they've created something that they think is shareable? They think is is something that people would be happy to be interrupted with or interrupted by? What should people do when they share it? Like, is there anything specific that you do that's maybe different than you know, the average content creator?

Jen Olmstead

Yeah, there, there are a bunch of like little hacks that we've learned. One thing that we try to do is we try to like hype up any kind of content that we're going to release. So I might ask questions, if we're going to do something about Otley or we're going to do something about Stanley Cups, for example. And we did like a big like Stanley mug deep dive of like, what is it about Stanley mug that makes everyone into it? Well, the day before on Instagram, I was like, who has a Stanley mug? What do you think about Stanley mugs? Like, you know, why do we think that they're interesting? Do you love them or hate them? We got people thinking about the content that we're about to release. So it felt like continuing a conversation. It didn't just feel random. So that's one thing that we do another thing is like having series of content that it's like, Hey, this is something you should come back and look at this is something we do frequently time after time, like building that excitement, creating this FOMO of like, Oh, I'm going to talk about that in our email newsletter this week. So if you're not on the list, like you're not going to know about it. Those are some things like using the that excitement because people should be excited to see your next piece of content. Like if you do it well. They should be excited to see your face on Instagram or in their email inbox. And so that's the Like the kindest thing that we ever hear is like, I can't wait for Friday's like Fridays is now my favorite day because I know that I'm going to get

the tonic newsletter. That's the kind of anticipation you want people to associate with your brand of like, hey, there's quality there. And I know it's coming. So I know what to expect. So that's something that's huge. And then this is like a little beef that I have. But when you're releasing content, especially on Instagram, one thing that I see people do is we've all been taught that we should end with a call to action or a question, like, what do you think about this or you know, blah, blah, blah? My biggest pet peeve is when people ask a very difficult question. They're like, so tell me what you think the universe contains? Their CTA? And I'm like, no one wants to answer that, like, no one has any immediate thought on that. So my biggest advice when you're trying to get engagement on your post is ask an easy question. At something that takes no more than like two seconds. Like, did you enjoy this? Or like, you know, what did you think about the Barbie movie? Or like, have you seen this? Or does anyone have a book recommendation? If it would take someone more than 10 seconds to come up with an answer? Don't have that be your call to action? Don't ask them like what they want to hear from you. Ask them something that's easy for them or a yes or no question. Something simple. Don't put all the work on them. Your job is to do the work, not theirs.

Laylee Emadi

I love that as a little beef, but I think that's a thing. That's brilliant, giving people the opportunity to have a quick win. I agree with that so much people love to win. Yeah. And they don't like to work.

Jen Olmstead

They don't like to work. They like to win. They don't like to work. So winning. Yes. Work. No. Yeah. Yeah.

Laylee Emadi

That's amazing. Okay, these are so helpful. I feel like people are gonna have to listen this episode a couple of times, which is great. Last question, as we wrap up signature question here. So here's the thing is, what is your unpopular opinion? And here's, here's the thing about Jen and unpopular opinions as I just feel like, you don't shy away from sharing them on a regular basis. So I know, it's kind of probably hard for you to pick one. But if you could pick one or two, whatever, unpopular opinions, all around content creation, content marketing, what would it be?

Jen Olmstead

Um, oh my gosh, yeah, this is definitely a Sophie's Choice of like, which thing to pick, because I feel like, I feel like that's just constantly I'm known for just sharing all an abundance of opinions. And so if you're on our weekly newsletter list, you know that I start with every week with just like the hottest hot take where I'm like, buckle up, guys, like we're going. So I guess one of the things that I would say is, if you're not having fun, neither than anyone else. And I think that's one thing that brands forget that we get to do. So we're in entrepreneurship, because we beat our own drums where we enjoy, we didn't want to be told what to do. But it's amazing how quickly we get locked into a cage of our own creation of like, this is what my job is supposed to look like. This, what marketing looks like, this is what good marketing looks like. This is what content has to look like. And we forget to ask the question like, Wouldn't it be funny? Yes? Or wouldn't it be fun if or this might be a bad idea, but, and all of our biggest unlocks as a brand have come from those questions of like, hey, like just kind of funny. What do you think those moments are infectious. And I think when you can tell that someone's enjoying what they do, that is contagious, people can tell and they want to be a part of it, even if they don't know what it means. So I would just say if you're if you feel just like you're not enjoying anything that you're doing, when it comes to your job right now, that's within your control, you can turn things that you hate doing

and the things that you actually enjoy. And if you're not having fun, no one else is enjoying it either. So the more you can pour the kinds of things that you enjoy, that make you into your content into your marketing, the more fun you're going to have. And the more fun other people are going to have interacting with it.

Laylee Emadi

Oh, okay, I completely agree. That was amazing. I feel like you've given so much for people to think through and to kind of work through even I feel like we could make a worksheet out of this podcast or something. But just kind of giving people that guidance of where to start when they're feeling like social media and marketing and content creation has just become so copy and paste. And I think that is something that's so unique to what you do and what your team does at Tonic and what I've seen you guys create, and I'm so excited to get get this podcast episode out and have people be able to listen to it. So where can people find you? And we'll of course link everything in the show notes because you guys have to subscribe to their newsletter. But where can people connect with you?

Jen Olmstead

Of course, yeah, we would love to hang out with you. You're gonna find exactly what we just talked about on this podcast, a lot of unpopular opinions, occasionally unpopular opinions. And you'll know now when you see a post from us, that involves a lot of hard work, I hope so. You can find us at Tonic site shop.com. And you can also hop on our email list at Conexant.jeff.com/list. And just know that it's actually ni and RDM. So if you DM me and say hey, I listened to the podcast, just say hey, and we also have a little discount code for anyone that listened to the podcast so you can DM me for that. And really, this is just awesome. So thanks for having me.

Laylee Emadi

Thank you so much for being here and for sharing all of your incredible wisdom.

Jen Olmstead

Oh, anytime. Let's Let's do it again.

Laylee Emadi

Let's do it all the time everyday. Alright, see you all in the next episode. For show notes and resources mentioned on today's episode had 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.