

So, Here's The Thing Episode 134

Welcome to so here's the thing, the podcast for small business owners, entrepreneurs and creative educators who are ready to take their business to the next level, through candid conversations, tactical approaches and a few unpopular opinions. We're lifting the veil on what it takes to build both a life and a business that you love. I'm your host, Laylee Emadi,

a coach for creatives and founder of the creative educator Academy, where I help entrepreneurs step into the role of industry leaders and educators. I'm so glad that you're here. Now let's jump into today's episode. Hello, friends, we are back with a new episode. Today I'm doing something I haven't done in a hot minute. And that is a solo episode, I kind of can't believe how much time it's been between the last solo episode. And now. But I'm so excited about this one, because it's something I get asked about a lot. You know, I work with a lot of speakers as a coach for speakers in the creative industry. And at Creative events and conferences.

This is something that I think is super important. So we have talked about pitching in the past on this podcast. And we will continue to talk about pitching as time goes on. Because they know that it's so important to have that information for you guys to hit the ground running and get in front of more audiences and get your name out there as a speaker. But what I really want to talk about here is something that I really only talk about in my paid offers. And that is, what the heck do you do once you actually book a speaking engagement? Like what are important things that you should be thinking about when you're actually moving forward as a speaker at whatever event that you've been booked to speak at. So we're going to talk about just five tips that I have for you, once you've been accepted to speak. And we're going to talk a little bit about the prep a lot about what to do when you're actually there. And actually speaking, but just know of course, as always, you know me, I have to give a disclaimer, this is not an exhaustive list like this is not an A to Z kind of guide, it is just five things that you should be aware of.

And that I would be thinking about as you start getting more and more yeses. And you start getting more and more acceptances to take the stage and whatever format that is. These are things that I do as a speaker that I've been really cognizant of, that I've learned throughout the years that I've added and realized maybe I should be doing more of. And also, to be truthful. These are things that I've noticed when I have hosted speakers as an event host both virtual in person, small formats, large scale conference format, these are things that that I wish every single one of my speakers would do. And a lot of them do, which is great. So let's go ahead and dive in.

I'm going to start with the first tip, which is actually what I would consider to be the most important tip, not going to make you guys wait till the end of the episode to hear what I think is the most important one, we're just gonna we're just gonna dive into it. This has kind of been my tagline for speaking in general and how I like to communicate what is important when you're not only pitching, but accepted. And that is treated like a professional job, treat it like a job that you have interviewed for, and that you are now showing up to do. I know that sounds kind of simple, but trust me when I say a lot of people in the creative industry, they miss this because we have this amazing, cool thing that we do in our

industry, which is we're very personable, we have personal brands, a lot of us, we feel very comfortable with one another.

We have a lot of camaraderie and a lot of friendships, which is really cool. And a great benefit to us as speakers. However, it can be a detriment if you still take it a little bit too far and forget the professionalism behind the job that you have worked so hard to get the yes for. So showing up and remembering that you've got to have like a little bit of that professionalism hat on not just the personal friendly brand that you've worked really hard to kind of represent yourself as really down to earth and friendly. Like that's all great, you should still be down to earth and friendly, like those should be the real, the real things behind how you show up. But just don't forget that you're here to do a job. And so a lot of that means watching what you say being cautious with your words, being aware of how you're representing yourself.

And we'll dive into that with a couple of these other tips coming up. The second tip that I would suggest doing is and this I mean, some of this stuff is like really, really tactical, tangible, like nitty gritty kind of stuff, but being aware of deadlines. Again, this sounds like it's a no brainer. I work with a lot of speakers, you guys and let me tell you, when you own your own business and you're in charge of your own deadlines, it can be really hard to kind of shift gears and adhere to somebody else's deadlines. But it is so important if you ever want to become a recurring speaker or a recurring guest for whoever you're working with. Or even if you just want to protect your reputation and make sure that you're putting your best foot forward, that you adhere to the deadlines that are given to you by the event host or by that team.

So there are going to be deadlines for your slide deck for contracts and agreements. So if like me, you have somebody that you need to run those by, like I have legal, I run it by my, you know, attorney. So I need to make sure that I have enough time to do that, have them look at it, send back anything I want to negotiate in the contract, and still adhere to those deadlines. I'm not waiting until the day before to read the contract and sign it. I'm not waiting until the day before or the day of or two weeks later, to send my first version of my slide deck. And if you can't adhere to the deadlines, this is like a bonus tip, but communicate like leave that open line of communication. And make sure that you're showing up in the inbox and saying, Hey, I am aware of this deadline, can I get another week if you can't hit it or whatever it may be, but just making sure that you are aware of what is expected of you and when and then really being able to meet those expectations.

And exceed them whenever possible. You want to make it so easy for the host to love and adore and, and just just be obsessed with you so that they asked you back and so that they sing your praises to other event hosts. So it's super important to make sure that you're being really, really aware of deadlines and meeting them and exceeding them when you can. The third tip I have here is showing up with just kind of like a servant's heart. So making sure that you are showing up ready to serve not only the host, but the audience. And so this is kind of a two fold tip here. One is leading up, you know, using verbiage like, Hey, if you need anything else for me, like just let me know, I'm always happy to pitch in where I can. I mean, I'm not telling you to like, take advantage of your own time, I'm not telling you to be so overly generous that it's a detriment to you and your business.

But I am telling you that people appreciate being told that I mean, I know for myself as an event host when people offer, I very rarely take them up on extra work. But it's just nice to know that somebody cares enough about the position that they have been given and that they've been selected for, to offer

to work with me. And to support me in any way that I want. Even just knowing that that like support is there, it's a support on its own. The second part of this tip of you know, showing up with just like a heart to serve is the audience itself. So when you are at the conference at the event, again, whether this can even be done virtually this does not have to be just done in person, I see a huge misstep happen when speakers show up. And I don't want to use like too harsh of language here and say that they ignore attendees. It's not even that they ignore them.

But it's definitely you can see a priority in a speaker if the priority is to connect with other speakers or to further their own connections, which you should be doing, by the way, but there's a way to do it, whether that's a priority, or whether the priority is to be there for the attendees. And to really be able to kind of give as much as you can, as the educator, as the speaker as the expert that's there, to be able to serve that audience really, really well. Versus only being concerned with elevating your own connections and what you want to be there for yourself. So again, I think it's important to make those connections with other speakers, I think it's important to make that connection with the host. But I do think that it almost ties back to the first the first tip of being professional, but remembering what am I here for I'm here for the attendees, I am not here for myself, I mean, I'm here to represent myself. And the hope is that it leads to amazing things for you and your business.

But the true hope for any real speaker is that it would impact and help the audience, the attendees, and to really prioritizing that above everything else, I think is a really, really great way to just show up and organically Be the best version of yourself in person ways to do this virtually as well. If there's a chat, being able to be really involved in the chat, if there's a community group, whether it be on Facebook, or in a private community, making sure that you're taking even just an extra 10 minutes again, you guys I'm not encouraging you to be so overly generous that it's a it's you know, a time suck. Like I know that time is the one thing that we really need to treasure and that is finite and that we need to be cautious about. But there's a difference between doing nothing doing too much and then just doing a little bit extra so that it really feels like a great addition and that you are really fully invested in this speaking opportunity beyond just taking the stage and beyond what it does for you.

So that's just one tip on how you could apply tip number three into like a virtual setting but in person you know, it's even easier to just make sure that you are talking into as many different people as you can, that you're showing up or willing to give advice and hear, hear about people's stories and engage them in conversation, making sure that you're making your rounds. And you're not like, too stuck in one group especially, it's really hard in the creative industry, because we have all of our friends that we see at these conferences, and we don't see them for a long time. And so it's so easy to like, just stay with your best friends that you haven't seen in so long your best industry friends that you want to catch up with, but just try to be cognizant of where you're spending your time so that it is apparent to the people who are not only hosting, but the people who have paid to be there that you care about them. You know, I think that's just like, so important for speakers to do.

On that same token, I just want to point out that, as I mentioned before, like it is important to make these connections for yourself. But I think that a missed opportunity in this same conversation is that the more that you show up, and the more connections you make with the attendees and the audience members there, the more opportunity there actually is for you, it is a true win win win scenario, like it's a win for the host, because they've got an invested speaker. And they have attendees who are being loved and served and seen and taken care of. It's a win for the speaker, because they're making so many more connections, and they're showing audience members like, Hey, you probably want to stick

around with me, right? Like you want to see what I can do for you. Once we leave this space of the conference like those deeper connections you're making are going to convert into even more success and even more amazing impact that you're able to then continue on with these people. And then the third one is for the attendee who again, is being taken care of and feels like they are getting their investments worth and not just monetary investment, right, like the time that they're taking away from their families and their businesses, to hop on a plane, get to a hotel, get to a conference spend two or three days there. It's a lot that they're putting in. And so you want to be able to really show them that like, it's a lot that you're putting in as an attendee, but I'm here to match that, as a speaker, as an educator, as a leader of this event. So that's something that I hope that every single one of my speakers does, and that I really tried to do as a speaker as well.

Okay, the fourth tip that I have for any speaker who's showing up to an event, especially, I mean, actually, it doesn't matter if it's the first time or the fifth time you're speaking at this event. But this is kind of one of those double, I feel like all my tips are just do Oh, tips, honestly. But this is kind of like things you can do to prep and then things you need to do while you're there. So while you're prepping, I think it's really important to do a little bit of digging, I mean, I always say this before a pitch for sure, you've probably heard me say this before, do your due diligence, do your research, find out who you're pitching to find out what the audience needs are, and then tailor your talk and tailor whatever it is that you're bringing to the table to those people. So being able to really once you get the Yes, dive even deeper, if you can check into those communities that you know, like Facebook groups, wherever that people are hanging out beforehand, and do just like even like a little quick research dive of like where they're at? Where do you think that they need help? Where do they think they need help. And then being able to kind of match that energy that need from the stage and off the stage, like we talked about in tip number three of really showing up and being you know, authentically you and really making sure that you're connecting with people and finding out how you can help them. But being able to do that almost preemptively before you show up.

So doing that research in advance and then showing up having done the research, having tweaked your talk, having changed around things to suit the needs of the audience that you're serving, is going to be just just going to make it so much easier, especially if you end up like if you're talking if you're a speaker, and you have a section for q&a, I mean, depending on the conference, or the setting or the workshop, sometimes you do q&a, sometimes you don't. And so in the times that you have the opportunity to do like an open floor dialogue, or maybe you are a speaker on a panel, or somebody who's doing a fireside chat, these are things where you have to like think off the top of your head. So being able to prepare as much as you can on the front end by researching who is going to be there like the type of entrepreneur person, maker creator, whatever is going to be there then you're able to prepare as best as you can for an off the cuff kind of conversation if it was to happen. And then again, that will also serve that last tip I gave about about showing up and being ready to help of course you guys you know a quick disclaimer you don't have to know an answer to everything I've talked about this during course creation time I've talked about this.

Anytime I talk about the academy and educators in general. It is just super super out of this world conceded to think that anybody knows everything about everything. So don't ever feel bad if you don't know how to help somebody or you don't have an answer like but don't let that fear hold you back. From conversing with people from connecting with people and seeing where they're maybe having like, a problem where they're stuck, but being able to be a connector and say, you know,

I don't know the answer to that, like, I don't know how to really help you, maybe this type of marketing is not my strong suit, but you know, whose strong suit it is, is my friend over here, Suzie Q, who's a fellow speaker, or a fellow, like fellow entrepreneur, peer, whatever, and connect the two. And so just being able to do that research ahead of time is gonna help set you up for an easier way to be present. And to do that third tip. And last but not least, so these are again, I mean, I could talk about this for hours and hours and hours. And I, I will, as I am, I'm coming out with a course for speakers pretty soon. So I'll have a lot more content out there for you guys, who are wanting to really dive in. But just for the sake of have a solo episode, which you guys know, I try to keep it short and sweet. The fifth tip that I have for you guys is the same probably like repeated tip that I give to all of my creative educator Academy students in that is asking for feedback, or being aware of the feedback and being cognizant of it as you're getting it. So if you can ask for feedback from the conference host, once it's over the event host the summit host, whatever, whoever wherever you're taking the stage.

But just reaching out, giving a quick thank you for sharing your stage with me, thank you for the opportunity to serve your audience. I'd love if you had any feedback to share with me, I'd love to hear how I can continue to improve as a speaker as a leader as an educator. So following up with the host in that way. But also bonus tip here is to not ignore the feedback that's coming in through different avenues that you're getting from attendees. So this happens in a few ways, right? Like one, the most obvious is social posts, like social media, so Instagram, if they're tagging you, if they're quoting you, if they're doing video snippets of you, it likely means they enjoyed your talk, and that those are things that they're taking away, and then being able to interact with those people just like not just like hitting the heart, not just a double tap, but saying, you know, like, I'm so glad that this was a takeaway for you. Like, I'd love to hear more, um, you don't have to do that with everybody. But if you're looking for feedback, they're opening a door there to make that connection. And so I do think that it could be a missed opportunity to not get the feedback that they're so willing, and, and current and able to give you the other way. And this doesn't need to be a conversation about feedback. But when you're there in person in particular, this one may be a little bit harder on virtual, but again, those chat boxes, those community groups are really helpful. But in person, when somebody comes up to you after a talk, I have seen, I'm just gonna say it like I want I want to say no shade, but kind of shade, like I have seen where speakers get approached afterwards.

And they just look like they have no desire to have a conversation with the people who are lining up to talk to them, or take photo with them or just express something that resonated with them. And on the flip side, I've seen like chefs kiss incredible speakers who are so engaged in these conversations, because they know that every word that comes out of an audience members mouth at the end of their talk, when they're lining up and taking the time to want to connect with you one on one, every word that comes out of their mouth is gold, like you need to be absorbing the words that they're saying. So that one, you can remember them if they're positive, so that you can remember, anytime times get tough, because speaking is tough, pitching and getting rejected is tough. Nothing about this process is easy, nothing about it is easy, but it's rewarding. It's 100% worth it. It's impactful, it's incredible. So remembering their words, when times get tough, so important. That's one thing. The second thing is remembering their words, so that you can then go forward. And when you're working on the same talk or altering it for a different event, you can remember like, Oh, this is something that really stuck with this person, I remember that they waited to talk to me about it. So I'm not going to pull that from the talk. It obviously resonated. And at the same time, you're self evaluating.

Now this is getting a little bit deeper, but I would feel really remiss if I didn't even mention it. But you're kind of self evaluating and self auditing your talk, if nobody talks about something in particular that you've put in there and that you were kind of feeling iffy about maybe the next time you Keynote or the next time you do a workshop, you take that part out and see if it's missed, you know what I mean? So like, there are so many opportunities to get like informal evaluations without having to ask for them. But I see so many speakers dropped the ball on like taking those things in. So I hope this is helpful for you guys. I just talked faster than I think I've ever talked before. I'm so passionate about helping speakers, Excel helping hosts really find the best speakers out there. I'm lucky enough to be surrounded by this day in and day out. And so I just want for everybody who's listening to know that like, there is so much beauty in what you do. And as difficult as it can be, sometimes the impact is truly there. And if I can help you better your skills in that, that's what I would love to do.

So I hope this was helpful. If you're looking for more help on pitching, we do have resources in the shop for you. There's a pitch guide in there for you guys. It's brand new. And of course, of course, if you are an up and coming Speaker, I want to see what the creative educator conference like I want to see you in the audience there. We are one of the only conferences that I know of where the people in the audience could be on the stage. We are all in this together. We are all speakers, educators, leaders, and we're all showing up to work on that together hand in hand side by side. And so I want to see you guys there if you are ready to grow your speaking business, your education business here in Dallas, Texas, January 15, through the 17th 2024 head to creativeeducatorconference.com Check it out or you know where to go in the show notes. And again, I hope this is helpful 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](https://sohere's.thethingpodcast.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.