

So, Here's the Thing Episode 148

Laylee: 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, Laila Imadi, 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 we have the Truest like sunshine of the world, Maddie Pichon.

She is joining us to talk all about several things. Actually, we're going to be talking about pivoting. We're going to be talking about different revenue streams or not. Hint, hint, like we're going to be getting into the real unpopular opinion slash. Like you guys know, we don't hold back here. Um, Maddie is a branding photographer and educator.

She is obsessed with teaching women entrepreneurs, how to build a profitable business that fits into their life and fills them with joy. And she does it. So well, um, you guys can probably already tell from that snippet that we are basically twins separated at birth. We have so much in common. Like I feel like every time we DM on Instagram, I'm just like, why are we the same person?

I love it. I love it so much. Um, she's also a mastermind host. She's a coach. She is the host of the take it personally podcast. She's a studio founder. She does all the things. So again, separated at birth. Love it so much. Um, Maddie, thank you for coming onto the show.

Maddie: Oh my gosh, I'm so excited to be here. I also can't believe I was thinking about this this morning that this is aside from like a brief phone conversation.

This is like the first time that we've really talked face to face, which is hilarious because we are twins.

Laylee: Wait, it actually isn't. I just noticed that I think because I watch your stories on Instagram, I feel like we talk a lot. Same. And that, honestly, that phone call doesn't count because it was like crisis, meltdown, breakdown.

Panic. Yeah. Um, yeah, so that doesn't count, but I, but. I love it. Isn't that funny? It's really funny. That's so crazy. I feel like we've known each other forever. I know. Like, even chatting before we hit record, it's like. I was just like, Hey girl, like,

Maddie: I know, I know. I love it so much. That's fine. Like, whenever people talk about how terrible the internet is, I'm like, Oh, I've made such good relationships.

They're like, I'm so thankful for it.

Laylee: Yeah. I call it the best in the worst. Like it is. Yeah, it really is. Okay. So Maddie is amazing and sent over like all these options of ways to take this conversation, but y'all know who are listening. We're just going to go with the flow and I'm actually going to start us off on this chat Wait, actually, rewind, backtrack, Maddie, tell us a little bit about you, like how you got to where you are.

Give us like the brief history so people can get to know you a little bit and then I will be me and, and switch lanes quickly.

Maddie: Amazing. That sounds great. So my name is Maddie Paschong. I'm a brand photographer and coach based in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. So in the Midwest, I have been a photographer for about 12 years now, and I've been doing brand photography.

For about five and I only do brand photography in the photography space. So I'm not doing families or weddings anymore. I also, as you mentioned, I have a photography studio, so that's another like piece of my business. It's called white space and we're actually in kind of an interesting transition right now.

We just closed our first space and we are building and moving into our new space in the next couple of weeks. So this is a nice view of my office. If I were to turn the camera around, it would be like a bunch of props that don't have a home right now. So that's fun. And then a couple of years ago, right, actually early 2020, I started coaching for the first time.

And that's taken a lot of different forms over the years, but eventually I landed on, uh, teaching and coaching photographers how to pivot into brand photography, because that was, that's an area that I know really well. And so I host a program three times a year called Rebrand, and it's for photographers who want to pivot into brand photography.

And it's. Probably one of my most favorite things that I do right now. It's so fun. It's so fulfilling. And, um, it's been really cool to really try and like perfect something and make it better every time. So that's, that's what takes up a lot of my time right now, business wise. And then I'm married. I'm a mom of three kids.

We have a probably elderly golden retriever at the at this time. I think that she qualifies as elderly. Yeah, I think that's that's about it. That covers me. Oh,

Laylee: man. I love it. Okay. I have so many things to talk about on that. But first, how old is your golden retriever?

Maddie: She just turned 12, I believe. Yeah. And so my best,

Laylee: my eldest, my eldest cat is also elderly and is turning 12 this year.

And I'm like, Oh, it's so crazy. And he is like the cat version of a golden retriever. He's an orange cat and acts like a dog. It's great. Anyway. Okay. So now talking about actual podcast stuff on topic, it's fine. My listeners know I'm crazy. Um, so. A few things that I want to just touch on before we dive into like this topic that I just, I love that you described that nobody else does.

I mean, I say nobody else does, but I feel like It's rare that I see this as an educator for educators and a coach for educators myself. The thing I've, I heard you do so right. Like so well, I w I want to talk about, because I think that a lot of my listeners maybe are either, either wanting to pivot or wanting to add in coaching or education.

And they're like, am I ready? Am I not? I love that you teach what you do currently. This is like hot topic. I mean, the whole, my whole life is unpopular opinions, but this is like hot topic, unpopular opinion. Like, well, what if you want to become, you're a photographer or you're an artist or you're a planner and you want to teach it, but then you want to retire from doing that thing.

Are you still relevant? And honestly, my blunt kind of hard ass answer is Like, probably not because all of the things we all know with, with our current world and society, things change every day. And so unless you're doing that thing, actively marketing it and selling it well, after a couple of years, you're at your knowledge, unless you're keeping up with the trends and studying them religiously, like.

Yeah. You're not going to have that knowledge to be able to help people do that thing. So I think it depends what it is you're teaching, but if you're teaching on becoming a successful brand photographer, you currently are one. And I love that you're doing both of those things at the same time. And then the other thing is I just did a quick mental math because a math is not my strong suit, but I can do this kind of math.

You said you've been shooting for 12 years. And you started adding and coaching in 2020. So that was what, like four years ago. Like, I love how established you were before you started doing it. And of course, everybody knows who listens to me, my job, like my livelihood depends on people wanting to become great educators, but there's something so solid in having a really strong foundation before you get going into education, because it just helps you.

It helps you thrive faster. Right. Thank you.

Maddie: 100%. And I think that that's one of the biggest mistakes that I see younger or newer photographers making creatives to, but I'm definitely more like in the photography world is wanting to add coaching before or education or whatever, before they're ready. And I even think that there was a bit of me doing that, and I was eight years in.

And even still, there, like, there is such a learning curve. And you also, like, you're, you're then talking to two different audiences, and you have to really be aware of, like, the seasonality around, like, the different pieces of your business. Like, there are so many things to consider. And it's a totally different skill set.

Like, me teaching someone. In a way that they can really understand and grasp and then like take what I'm teaching them and make it their own for their own business. Me having the skills to do that is so different than me having the skills to have a kick ass brand photography session, right? And I don't think, you know, some of that is like learn as you go or learn from people like you, certainly.

Um, but it's easier I think if you are established and if you've been doing this for a while and if you have a really data to back up why should someone learn from you? I think that that's another thing that we need to be a little bit more blunt with people who want to go into education about, like, why should someone want to learn from you?

You need to be able to answer that question, because if you can't, Nobody else can either.

Laylee: 100 percent I agree. I think that is like such a good point for people to really think over as they start to like go into education or even if they're already in it and they're like, okay, why isn't this? The question I get asked as a coach all the time for educators is, well, why isn't this selling faster?

Like, why isn't this going faster? I'm seeing all these other people go faster. And I'm like, okay, we need to slow our role. Like this is, we're playing the long game here. So yes. Amazing. Um, okay. So For the listeners, I was going through all the topics that Maddie is an expert at. And of course, What do I do?

I think back to a DM that I sent Maddie months and months ago, uh, in response to a story or a reel or something that you posted. And I was like, Maddie, can we talk about this? And of course she very graciously said yes, because I just feel like the point of this podcast when I first started, it was giving you guys the insight into conversations I'm having in DMs and in private.

And, and this was just such a great point. So Maddie posted a story or reel. And correct me if I'm wrong, it was something about if you, I think it was if you were to go back and try to hit a hundred K now, what revenue streams would you focus on? Because we're always being told, and I'm guilty of telling people this too.

This is again, my job is to tell people like you need to diversify your revenue streams. How do you do that? How do you add new revenue streams? And what did you say about it?

Maddie: I would pick one revenue stream and scale that first. And I think that this is one of the reasons why I have had success with adding quite a few revenue streams.

Now, I'm not saying that that is the way to grow your business. It's really interesting. Like now it's I can definitely tell that, you know, with, I have essentially three, like pretty established businesses. And you do kind of become a little bit held back in each of them because your attention can only be in one place.

Right. And so I see colleagues of mine who have coaching businesses where they're coaching is their full time job and they are able, they're not in the photography industry, but they're able to scale that so much faster. Whereas my attention is a little bit more specific. split up. I wouldn't do it differently.

I really enjoy my job and I like the different areas and I do agree that I think that there is value in diversifying your business, right? But I think that there's a time and a place for it and so many people try to diversify before they even have a solid foundation and that's going to cause a lot of issues.

Long term, I think of like my photography business as a teenager, right? Like it's, it is, um, it's established. We've kind of gone through those growing pains. Like it's not quite as new. My coaching business and my photography studio are like barely out of toddlerhood right now. And so if I had three toddler businesses, it would look very different.

But because the photography business is so well established and rutted, it does allow me a little bit more room to play with other things.

Laylee: I love that so much. Like, I feel like this is something people just don't talk about. And I remember when I first got into speaking on becoming an educator, I would always tell people like, Hey, disclaimer, this is not for everybody.

And maybe you want to become the very best watercolor artists and you want to reach the top of your game in that. And then you increase your prices and that maybe if as a photographer, you want to become the next, like Jose Villa or whoever, you know, and, and, Maybe you want to be able to diversify by doing coffee table books or whatever it is.

There's so many ways to stay within your niche, but I feel like people don't talk about like to reach certain thresholds that we think are super important, which that's its own conversation. It's like deciding what is it? Is six figures really necessary for you? Is seven figures really necessary for you as a whole nother conversation, but to reach those lengths?

Like what is the best way? So I love that you said that. So I guess this leads perfectly into the next kind of question or topic of pivoting, right? Like, like you said, we both do so many things and I wouldn't change that. However, it has been difficult because I have to sometimes, you know, prune away at like, okay, what do I cut out?

What do I cut out to make time for this? What do I cut out to make time for that? What do I cut out to make time for myself? You know? So, but how do you know, you know, what, what does it mean to pivot? And then how do you know when it's time to pivot? And how do you pivot like in a really smart and strategic way without leaving behind the thing that you are established in?

Maddie: Yeah, I think so much of it comes back to really learning to listen to your intuition and understand and, and giving that time, like it's probably not something where you're going to like wake up one day and know what the answer is, but letting yourself kind of play and, you know, Like listen to how you're feeling and how like what you're thinking about us about like a certain pivot It it is so important that with a pivot It's coming from the right place and what I see happen really often with people who want to get into education perhaps a little bit too soon and Maybe they would be fantastic educators, but they're just kind of jumping the gun a little bit.

That usually comes from a place of like really striving to hit something like a hundred K or like 10, 000 months or whatever that, you know, gets talked about in education. And maybe they hit like 60, a year. And they have this moment of being like, This is so hard. Like, there is no way that this is going to happen with one stream of revenue, so I have to add something else in.

When actually, again, what that's doing is diverting their attention before they're ready to do that. Um, I think it also can come from a place of, What they label as boredom, I would say it's not necessarily boredom, but being worried that they're going to get bored with their business as is like they need variety, right?

They need something different. And really that's just, I think that that's a diversion. And I think that that's fear. There aren't, you know, it takes a business owner who is very aware of themselves and their business and that sort of thing to take the time to really make something truly scalable and better every time and like really work on perfecting something.

And I think we shy away from that because of shiny object syndrome or because we're, again, we think we'll be bored or something like that. And so I think so often that's what's happening is that people are like striving for some marker and then when it takes them what they label as too long to get there, they want to add something in when really what you should be doing is pruning and taking stuff out and asking yourself, how can I make this one thing better and more scalable?

And then once it's to that place, consider adding something else in.

Laylee: Oh my gosh. I love that so much. And I love that you talked about shining object syndrome. Like I'd love to talk a little bit more about that and how people can avoid it. I feel like shiny object syndrome, or I call it like the what's next mentality, like what's next in quotes, because that's how I see it is.

I'm constantly, and I've been that way since I was a kid. I think it's that whole, like Enneagram three slash ADHD, where I'm like, cool. Did it achieved it? Nailed it. What's next. And that has been super detrimental to me, honestly, like being 100 percent transparent, overcoming that has been one of like the hurdles of my life, but it has changed my life when I was able to under one, recognize, like you said, self awareness of like, I'm doing what's next just to be able to do what's next.

But how would you advise somebody to overcome that? Because I'm probably took the, took the long way around.

Maddie: Oh my gosh. Yes, totally. I think it was. I mean, this is maybe not a helpful answer. I think as I've gotten older, I have found more pride in wanting to make something really good, you know? Like, I spent a lot of years just, like, bouncing around and calling it shiny object syndrome and calling it, it's my ADHD.

And don't get me wrong, like, that's, That's at play for sure. But as I've gotten older, I have found that like, no, I want something that I'm really proud of. I want something that's really thoughtful and strategic. And I want to spend time with this. Curriculum or with what it is that I'm teaching, like I want this to be the best in the industry, which is a really interesting shift because I never felt that way before.

I'm not type A, I'm not a perfectionist. And so those tendencies were not something I was familiar with, but I think that there was something about just getting older and being like more established in my business where I was like, no, that's what I want. I don't want to create something new every year. I want to make something the best that it can possibly be.

And so that's not really an answer because it was kind of more of an evolution, but I think Really spending time with that thought of like what does it look like to make this better? What does it look like to maybe work less on this particular stream of my business but like have the work be better?

What could that look like for my life? I think that that's an important like thing to think through.

Laylee: I, yeah, a hundred percent. This reminds me of a conversation I had on the podcast earlier with Jen Olmstead of Tonic Sight Shop. And she said that their, their whole business motto as of like a couple of years ago was do less, but better.

I think I watch me botch that quote. So you guys have to go listen to that episode, but I'm pretty sure it was like, do less, but better. And I, I love that concept. I feel like. And even like you said, it's not, you said it's not an answer, but I think it is an answer of just like allowing that evolution to happen and allowing the thoughts to kind of marinate and think through, like, is that something I'm doing?

Should I be aware of that? And also what I think a big part of this as somebody who agrees that the older I get, the more established I get, I feel that way is we're seeing so many people do it the other way. And we're seeing so many people sell the like launch and launch your launch and scale your course in three days.

And I'm sitting here thinking as a coach for educators like, Ew, why so you? Yeah, exactly. Why would you ever do that?

Maddie: Why what on this planet is like good? Because it was fast. You know what I mean? Like that, that's just not when, when we look at really successful, established businesses, that is not how they were created.

So it's so bizarre to me that that's something that we are like. Striving for and I get it. We're impatient. We all have the attention spans of gnats I understand that but like if this is a business that you want to be around years from now Fast is not the best way and I think that that some of that you had asked earlier Like what how do you know when it's time?

And I think that this, this conversation kind of comes back to that too, because that was a fairly long period of time for me, not necessarily fighting it, but just kind of being like, no, like, there's a lot of educators. I don't need to be one of them. And it kept coming up. Like I found myself doing it when I was getting my hair done and I found myself doing it till the other moms at preschool.

And I found, you know, I was coaching, I was teaching, I was doing all these things. Without getting paid for it. And I was fine with that because it was fun and I was good at it. And so then when people started to recognize that and meet coaches and colleagues and say, like, you know, not everybody thinks like this, like, have you thought about getting more into education or more into coaching?

It was something that I listened to and that didn't happen in two days of me waking up and being like, I want to make more money. So I want to be a coach now. Like that, that was an evolution to have really learning to listen to like where I was being pulled and that took time.

Laylee: I feel like I'm going crazy when I am on Instagram scrolling and I'm just seeing all of these like Quote unquote coach for coaches, which I make fun of that term.

And I am that like, I am a coach for coaches, but I just feel like I don't understand how they're out here peddling the idea that you should pre launch a course or a program and just figure it out as you go. And I'm like, how do you sleep at night? Taking somebody's money and figuring it out as you go.

Like, no, no, no. Friends, sit your ass down and figure it out first. And then let's do this the right ethical way. Anyway, soapbox. But yes, I love that. So let's say we know it's time to pivot, right? Like we're like, okay, I am self aware. I am established. My foundation is strong. I can now like do that. Okay.

What do I do now?

Maddie: Yeah, that's a really great question. Um, okay. So I, I don't think personally, this is something that I talk with a lot with my photographer clients who are pivoting into brand photography, right? It's always this question of like, do I need to make this like big announcement? Does this need to be a whole thing?

Like, do I need to have my website ready to go on my social, ready to go? And I flip a switch and it's all. Great. Maybe I, you certainly could. I, I would never, I don't, I don't have the, I just don't have the capacity for that kind of thing. I also have found, um, having the studio has, has shown me this people like behind the scenes, people like to come along for the ride.

And so I think you're missing out on some really cool content and connection points, if you kind of bring people along for what that transition looks like for you, um, and let them know, like. Hey, this is a new area that I'm exploring going in my business. And this is the time that I'm spending on it. And people come along with me and kind of see how it goes.

I, people really enjoy that. And I, again, I spent a lot of years being like, Oh no, they want the before and they want the after. And they don't want like the messy middle. And I suppose there's some truth in that, but people like, people are nosy. They like the behind the scenes. So I don't think it needs to be a big, Flip of a switch.

I think it can be what I typically recommend. Um, and this is more on the photography side, but I think it would work in education too, is to start out by

doing specific reach outs. So what I tell photographers who want to go into brand photography is like, reach out to some dream clients and ask them if they'd be interested in like a discounted low, you know, low price session as you build your portfolio.

And I think the same concept could apply to education. Um, and I have had clients and friends do that to kind of get their feet wet and stuff. Like, what could a curriculum look like? And I think that that, and I would love to hear your thoughts on this too, I think that that is a really ethical way to learn how to be a coach on the job and how to educate on the job without over committing to, like, selling this big thing that you You're not really following through on the promise.

Um, and don't get me wrong, I think there has to be some work that's done ahead of time, certainly, but that's a really great way to learn and prune as you go.

Laylee: Yeah, I, I completely agree with that because that's actually, I teach that in the academy, uh, in the Creative Educator Academy of always start with the one on one, do your reach outs, like literally exactly word for word what you said, I, I also agree with, and I agree with that, like you said, on any.

Not just on education. Like if you're listening to this, cause I have a lot of, I feel like I have a lot of listeners that maybe aren't necessarily educators yet, or they're just doing something in the creative field. Doesn't matter what it is, right? If you're going to pivot into something, start with the one on one like.

Every time. And I love that. And I love the concept of the reach out because that's actually really hard for a lot of people. Well, I was going to say, is that easy for you?

Maddie: Cause it's hard for me. It's easier for me now. I think, because I have kind of ripped the bandaid off, but I know that I. It has become a lot easier for me.

I definitely notice with clients that is something that makes them incredibly uncomfortable. And actually on a call the other day, they kept calling it like cold pitching. And I was like, you guys, we're done calling it cold pitching. Cause it shouldn't feel like cold pitching. It should feel warm. You should be talking to somebody that you have that established connection with.

But it is still pitching and also that doesn't have to be bad. Like if you're offering something that's really valuable and that this person could really benefit from, you can try and really embody that as you're doing that reach out, but yeah, it is uncomfortable. And I think that that is difficult for a lot of people because.

I think very often we're taught that like, if it feels, if it doesn't feel super good, then we shouldn't be doing it, but that's, I think, often where growth happens too, to be able to have that conversation and be like, okay, they said no, I didn't die. Moving on!

Laylee: I think I needed to hear that. I'm like, honestly, everybody, everybody knows.

I, the sales and the pitching, it's, it is my Everest and I work on it. I work on it daily. I recognize it daily. I say to myself every day, like when people pitch to me, I'm excited. And I like the invitation. Why can't I recognize that for other people? But I think it's a whole like cultural deep dive. It's like.

Generational, whatever. Anyway, totally. Well,

Maddie: and we don't want to be, you know, used car salesmen, right. Have like the worst rep when it comes to like selling and being a salesman or a saleswoman, and we don't want that feeling. Right. And so I think that people immediately equate equate sales with like. Car salesman, but it's not necessarily selling is essentially just like letting someone know what it is that you have and how you can help.

And then they get to make the decision. That's not on us to make the decision. We just provide all the information and then they make the decision. And I think when you can really accept that, like your job is not to push your job is not to, um, make them do anything they're not comfortable doing. Your job is just to present the facts and step back.

I think that it feels a little bit better.

Laylee: I agree. And I think, uh, one great example that was recent that helped me. And I just keep like, I actually screenshotted it. I put it in my little sunshine folder on my desktop. And it was like, I would have loved to have come to this. I wish I knew it was happening next time.

Will you please send me a direct email? And I was like, Oh, it's like, I was supposed to, I should have been emailing people I knew. And the worst part was

I knew this poor girl was interested in coming. And I was like, well, I'm not going to hassle her. She'll see it. If she wants to come, she'll see it. But she didn't see it.

Maddie: People don't. That happens all the time. And I think I had that happen enough where this has become easier for me too. I would like end promoting mini sessions or something and have people be like, oh my god, I had no idea this was happening. Meanwhile, I'm like, how did you not know? I feel like I'm so annoying with how much I'm talking about this.

But people don't know. They, they've got their own lives. They go to buy a ticket and then their kid cries. Like there are so many things that. Play and sometimes to have that like one to one reach out is really helpful to get them to make a decision. So yes, my little pep talk on

Laylee: pitching the most helpful pep talk that everybody needs.

Like maybe you didn't, maybe we didn't start this conversation for this, but we needed it. Did we want it? No. Did we need it? Yes. Um, I love it. Okay. So as we're wrapping up this episode, we talked about so many things. I like, don't even know our signature question of unpopular opinion. I'm like about what? I don't even know.

I'm like, I don't know. Read. Do you have a do you have a really like fun and fiery unpopular opinion you want to share about anything in the creative industry?

Maddie: Oh my gosh, honestly, I feel like what we what we started the episode with is kind of mine and I think we're maybe the same in this I, I think that there are so many creatives who would make fantastic educators and I'm sure that you see this firsthand, but it's not always.

the right for Everyone and it's also not always the right time. I hear that from a lot of people like they They don't want to like lose momentum or they don't like right now feels like the time to do it And if I don't do it right now, it's never gonna happen and I don't really subscribe to that I think you make your own momentum.

I think you can make it the right time and so Heading into any new business venture with that panicked feeling is never going to pan out in a great way. And so don't feel bad or less than if you just kind of need to lean back a little bit and listen to that intuition and listen to like where you feel like you're being pulled

because it doesn't have to be right now in order for it to be a really great thing eventually.

Laylee: I mean, just wow. Hell yes, that you create that momentum and you can do it anytime. I don't know how many times I have felt that panic and had to talk myself down. I know that every listener is probably like, Oh, she's talking to me. She's talking to all of us. You guys, we're all in this together.

Everyone's going to be like, how dare you attack me? Um, thank you for sharing that. And thank you for sharing everything. Um, where can people find you? Because I know everyone's going to want to stay connected. Oh my gosh, I would

Maddie: love that. I spend far too much time on Instagram, at MaddiePichon. That's kind of my handle everywhere at MaddiePichon, maddiepichon.

com. I have a podcast called Take It Personally, and we're just now switching to weekly episodes, which is exciting. And it's all about personal branding and, um, a pretty, like, big emphasis on brand photography. So if that's something that you want to That would be a fun podcast to check out. But otherwise, yeah, Instagram.

And I'm always in my DMS. That's where Laila and I are connecting on a daily basis.

Laylee: I know, honestly, Maddie is such a fun follow. So you guys need to go follow her. I like, I, I just, I loved you before we met. So it was great. Thank you so much for being here, Maddie. Thank you so much for having me. For show notes and resources mentioned on today's episode, head to 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.