

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 Ahmadi, a coach for creatives and founder of the creative educator conference, where we're on a mission to help entrepreneurs step into the role of industry leaders and educators. I'm so glad that you're here. Today's episode is brought to you by the educators lounge, the membership for creative educators, looking to become industry leaders.

If you want to join us, get your first 10 days free at LailaAhmadi.com with the code podcast. Now let's jump into today's episode. Hey friends, welcome to today's Snack Size episode. I'm going to be talking about the most recent experience that I invested in myself as an attendee, and that was the in person retreat hosted by Katie Smith of Drop Cap Design.

Um, I believe it's called Without Borders Retreat and Katie is a designer and as well as an educator. And I actually got kind of like, Pulled into this as a plus one, um, my designer, Sarah Erickson of Sarah and design found this retreat, invited me to come along. It was hosted in Costa Rica in November of 2024.

And I was like, you know what? I love investing in things where I don't know the host. I think it's really interesting and cool. If you've been around here for a minute, you know that every year I try to attend at least one thing by somebody whose community I'm new to. And I, well, I've already done that this year.

And I did a recap episode with the couple of girls that I took along with me, Dawn and Akua. Um, and it did not pan out that time. Like it was a terrible investment. I was like, you know what? Let me try again because that's The first one was a swing and a miss. Let me try this retreat. See if I like it better.

Um, I love my retreat next level. And I think that the setting of having a more intimate group is always really fun. So it was like, yeah, let's go ahead. Let's invest. Let's go. So I wanted to do a couple of takeaways with you guys and just share some of the things that I really noticed there that I think would be helpful to you when you're trying to decide on either A, investing period, or B, if something is the right fit for you.

First and foremost, I would say, I think that there is a lot of wisdom in making sure that you are reading sales pages thoroughly, that you're reaching out to

hosts and getting an idea of if it's a good fit for you. But like I said, the first event that I attended this year where I was new to the community, Was such a swing and a miss.

And you know, I actually did my due diligence there. I did a lot of research in advance. I actually reached out to that host of the conference that I attended. I let her know what I was looking for. I introduced myself so that she could get an idea of if it was a good fit. And I know that. For myself as a host, when people do that, I really take the time to like, dig in and see if the creative educator conference is a good fit for them.

If the next little retreat is a good fit for them. And if it's not, I tell them. I was not a good fit for the conference I attended and I was not told that. So I will say that's my caveat to like, there is wisdom in that, but sometimes you can do everything right. And it's still not work out in this situation.

I did not do as I say, I did as I do and I just jumped in and I was like, you know what, Sarah? I trust you. This, this girl, Katie seems great. Let's go. Let's go to Costa Rica. And you guys, it was lovely. I mean, honestly, now there were ups and downs. If you follow me on Instagram, you know, I got stuck in Costa Rica for a couple of extra days because of a tropical storm.

It was definitely out of my comfort zone. It was a lot more nature surroundings, a lot of, um, kind of reflecting a lot more restorative based, a lot less like, not necessarily like let's dig into business, but more like, let's dig into kind of like, our feelings and explore different, um, like different aspects of yourself and a lot more like life coaching based and really like a focus on realigning your lifestyle in order to impact your business.

And so, you know, I think that's While it was not at all the expectations that I had, it was actually wonderful and I really enjoyed my time. And so the takeaway I want to share with you here is that no matter where you show up, because I've now shared one that was a total fail and one that was actually lovely and I really enjoyed even though it was completely not my expectation.

The takeaway that I want to share here is that wherever you show up, wherever you show up, show up with an open mind, show up ready to take things away. Because I think when you do that, there is very little that can happen from the standpoint of like hosting that can really impact your experience in a negative way.

Now I will say, of course, if all of the content is garbage and the complete, like the complete experience is bad. Yeah, that's one thing. But to have expectations that are unmet or Different than what you go in thinking it's going to be. I feel like the best thing that you can do for yourself, the best thing that you can do for the investment that you've made.

And I'm not even just talking about the money investment. I'm talking about time. Cause you guys all know that I treasure my time well above any kind of monetary investment I make. The best thing you can do to protect that investment is to show up ready to grow, ready to learn, ready to find something.

Really positive to take away from that experience. And I was ready to do that. And although I walked in and I was like, wow, this is so outside my comfort zone. I mean, for goodness sake, you guys, I surfed like I literally went surfing. And if you know me at all, you know, I'm usually the one that opts out of things that I'm like scared of, or I feel like I'm going to fall on my face.

And I went and I fell and it was great. And I also surfed. It was amazing. So I'm just saying, if you can show up, Ready to put your best foot forward the chances of you being disappointed are so much lower It is all about what you put in as cheesy as it is what you put in is what you get out of it And it's all about the mindset that you go in there with Was this completely outside my normal?

Operating system. Yes, a hundred percent, but I really do feel like I walked away with a great experience with something unique, with something that pushed me and challenged me and opened my eyes to things I hadn't thought about before. And that made it worth it. So I want to encourage you today, put that positive mindset forward, especially as we round out the end of this year, as we go into next year, a lot more opportunities are going to show up and, um, you might be hesitant to jump in, you might be hesitant to take a leap and to actually put yourself out there, but I mean, if I can do it, if I can serve, if I can go, Stay in a like bungalow in the untouched nature of Costa Rica, as beautiful as it is the accommodations being out of my, out of my comfort zone and all of the activities being out of my comfort zone.

If I can do it, you guys can do it too. I hope that you found this encouraging and I hope you enjoy these snack size episodes and I'll catch you on the full episode next week.

For show notes and resources mentioned on today's episode, head to. So here's the thing [podcast. com](https://www.thethingpodcast.com). This episode is brought to you by the educators lounge where rising educators become industry leaders. Come join us. If you're looking

for community resources and opportunities that will take your educational offerings to the next level.

Thanks so much for listening and I'll catch you on the next episode.