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Backslash M Y w. Hello, my long lost friend, Sara. Langworthy Oh, hi, Katie Linder. How are you? I am so good. I am so excited to be back recording for season seven. After basically a year's hiatus. I mean, like nothing happened this year. I don't know why we couldn't get our act together and podcasts. No, either.

Yes. And I will redirect people back if they haven't listened to our like bonus. So that was like here's 2020 for Katie and Sarah and how it went. It was just full. I mean, the year was full as it was for a lot of people. Um, but in this season, what we thought we would do is a little bit of like a, a business owner retrospective where we think back to, cause we've been now seven seasons.

It's been a couple of few years now that we've been doing the podcast and we were talking about how much we've changed in that period of time as business owners, you know, our mindsets, our products, our even our client base, like a lot of these things have kind of shifted. And so we've picked a bunch of topics and we want to dive in and think about what did we used to think about these things and what do we think about the now, what have we learned along the way?

And maybe this will be interesting for people who are just starting out or even for people who are a little bit further along, because when we first started recording this show, I feel like we were kind of baby business owners at that point. And now are we in our adolescents? I don't know. And I was like some days I feel like a toddler.

So, you know, I don't know. I don't know. I don't know where we are. Like it's kind of dog years where it expands faster than, you know, you learn more over time. But, um, so in this episode we thought we would talk about this concept of just getting started with the business. And what did we think when we were first getting started?

What do we think now when we're, now that we're in our businesses and. I'm curious, Sarah, if you can start just by, like, what was your concept of like being a business owner or like, were you even aware of this idea of entrepreneurship when you were first getting started with your business? Yeah. Uh, for me personally, like I grew up around this idea of working for yourself.

So my dad, um, was an independent consultant, a contractor for a number of years in the sort of computer science field. And so. He works from home my entire life, basically. Uh, so he, um, you know, did it variety of different contracts, jobs, uh, for different organizations, but a lot of them were long-term. So he would be, he'd have one client where he would be kind of in, on a project and be working for that client for several years.

So it felt kind of like a full-time job, but he always worked from home. And in fact, my, my mother still loves to tell a story of, uh, when I was. In kindergarten and the kindergarten teacher asked, what are your, what are your parents do? And I responded complete dead pan. My daddy makes money in the basement because his office was in the basement.

So, you know, we did not have a money laundering factory in the basement. Don't worry. And that sounds a little, uh, you know, exactly the teacher was like, so, you know, even, even from kindergarten on, I knew how to, how to make it work. But, uh, so I was always really familiar with this idea of being an entrepreneur and kind of being out on your own and.

Doing your own thing. Um, but from, uh, an interesting, you know, child perspective of it, which for me now as an adult, I think about it, like this is, it's a really great lifestyle in a lot of ways. Um, my dad was always around for things like my basketball games. In fact, he was my basketball coach for a number of years because he had the flexibility in his schedule to do that.

And. You know, he was around for all my concerts and all my, you know, all of the things that, that, um, you know, I, as a kid wanted him around for, he was there for now that did result in some late nights for him. I know he, uh, ended up working till, you know, one or two in the morning sometimes, but, um, but it really allowed him the flexibility to kind of determine his own schedule.

And so I grew up with that being the norm that you just sort of make your life, whatever you need your life to be in, in any given time. And. Um, so that's always been really normal for me and also been really appealing for me. Um, when I got into academia, uh, and was at the university of Minnesota for several years, doing a PhD program, especially like there's a certain amount of flexibility that you have as a, as a graduate student to kind of work when you need to and, and how you need to, um, and then moving into a role at the university that was a little bit more constrained in terms of.

You know, when I was supposed to be doing what, um, I kind of had this sense of like, Ooh, I don't love this. Like I want to just be the author of my own destiny. And so for me, like, because I have this model for a long time, The idea of jumping into an entrepreneurial opportunity and starting my own business was not that weird, I guess.

Um, and in some ways sort of once I stepped into it, I was like, Oh yeah, no, I I've been like training for this, my whole life. Like, this is, this is the life I do want to want to live. Um, it's something that I've, I've learned from my parents and learned from my dad, uh, that I do want to carry forward. And so.

Um, you know, there, there are certainly parts of it that I did not know. And don't, you know, didn't pick up as a trial that are hard and that are complicated. Um, but in general, the flexibility for me really outweighs a lot of the other concerns. And so, I don't know, like for me, it was just kinda normal and I was like, cool, I guess I'll do this now.

Um, I. So Katie, I'm curious for you, how did that, how did that come about? Did you have a lot of other experiences with people being entrepreneurs in your, in your life growing up or was it totally new for you? This is such an interesting part of your story. Is there that I did not know. So I'm just kind of like sitting here, like, huh.

Okay. This makes a lot of sense. Okay. Um, I feel like, uh, when I think about it, I feel like all of the adults around me growing up. We're working for other people. Um, and, uh, my dad who worked outside of our home for a different corporations, um, my whole childhood, you know, my mom was a stay at home mom for most of my childhood.

Um, and then a lot of the people I knew who were like, quote unquote professionals, um, and that like, my uncle was an accountant, you know, like people who had kind of jobs that were like relatively easily defined, um, Worked for other people and, or in orange County, she was that I didn't fully understand, like eventually my uncle became a partner in it affirm, but I was like, I don't know what that means.

You know, like, I, I just didn't really have a concept of that, you know, like growing up and a lot of people in my family actually worked for the state or worked for some kind of government role. Um, so. I, I mean, I remember like when I was in college having this real sense of like, I don't know what I want to do.

Like I, and I had had a really wide range of jobs, you know, from the time that I was like 15. Um, and I had worked multiple jobs, you know, in high school, in college, trying to kind of support my, my tuition and all of that. And so I had like filed stuff. I had, I mean, it was like run the gamut. I've worked at a sandwich shop, like I'd done like all these different things.

And, um, I had not really landed on anything that I really enjoyed or really was sure that I wanted to do. And then I was an English major in college, loved writing, but didn't really know what that was going to get me. Like I thought about journalism. I thought about law school. Like there were a lot of things that I kind of considered.

But I remember very clearly choosing to go to grad school because I didn't know what else I would do. Like if I, if I didn't go to grad school, I was like, I don't know what kinds of jobs I would apply for. Like, I just knew that that was not, that felt like a path that was very nebulous at that point. And so I ended up going to grad school for like six years.

And then when I was in grad school, I also had this feeling of like, I know I don't necessarily want to be a faculty member. So I was still like, what am I going to do? This all sounds so familiar to me, by the way, a lot of people have this, you know, like we go to grad school because it's like, we haven't figured ourselves out yet.

And like, and I also, I went to college a year. I went, I got through high school in three years, so I was also a year younger and I didn't know what I was doing. I met my partner when I was in college, you know, like, so I was still like feeling a lot of stuff out. I mean, trying to like. Figure out who I was.

So I think that for me, I never considered even like freelancing as like an option, you know, and a lot of people who come into writing think about that, you know, they think about freelance writing as some kind of possibility. And it was just never really on the table as something that I considered. I started, I think, to have ideas about that a little bit more as I was in grad school and kind of figuring things out, but.

It never even crossed my mind to start a business until way later when I was starting to do some speaking. And, but even then it was like, Oh, this is nice money on the side. Like I did not think about myself as a business owner. I did not think about formalizing that structure in any way. Um, yeah, so, I mean, I feel like this was a very foreign concept for me.

It was not something I grew up around. It was not something that I felt. Comfortable with. I mean, I remember early days of like, when I got the LLC and I was like, this feels so weird. Like, I felt like such an imposter. Like I was like, who am I that I even have this? I mean, I, I, it was just the whole thing just felt like, I felt like I was pretending to be a grownup.

Yep. That's what it felt like. It felt like this strange form of adulting that I was like totally acting out and not feeling like I owned in any way. Sure, sure. That makes total sense. And, and I ha I had some of those same feelings too, where it's like, yes, I own my own business. Yep. Totally, totally. Don't feel weird about it.

It's fine. So I definitely definitely had that, that moment as well. Um, Katie, it's so interesting hearing you talk about, uh, kind of what you. What, what models you grew up with, um, especially knowing kind of how you've transitioned to different roles in academia and sort of this idea of, of jobs that you kind of know what they are and that kind of within a larger system or within a larger group of people.

Um, it's just interesting, like reflecting on. How both of us, you know, grew up with different models of things and, and how that kind of affects how we moved in, especially in the academic world. Um, a little bit. So I don't know, the psychology part of my brain is like, Ooh, this is fascinating. It is well it's so like to hear you say that too.

It's like, it is funny because I feel like when I moved into faculty development, that's an area of academia. That's like, I'm sorry, what do you do exactly? Like it, it's not very well-defined, it's not like I'm a professor. I'm a, you know, like I'm something, that's a really, I've been teacher, I'm something that's really easy to define.

It was like, I help other people to teach better. I mean, it's like, I didn't have the language of, and now I think about it and I'm like, Oh, it's really a consulting role. It's really like, I have a better way of kind of describing that now that I've felt my way, you know, through that, that part of our industry.

But yeah, I mean, it's really interesting. And, and even like, I was talking with someone the other day about how higher ed is such a weird environment. I mean, when you really think about it, there's a lot that like, when you try to describe it to people outside, They're like, that's weird, you know, like, and we don't always think about it as weird, but like for example, the tenure system kind of weird, you know, when compared to other industries, but even things like you need to keep getting degrees or you'll hit like a ceiling and you won't be able to move on.

There are other parts of, of work. The work world where you like gain experience and it allows you to keep moving up. I mean, you don't have to go get another degree. Yeah. I mean, that does exist in other places, not everywhere, but you know, I know people who like don't have an undergraduate degree and they've been able to work their way up within various, you know, industries because they've gained experience and.

You know, they're a trusted source of knowledge and all these other things. So there's just certain things that it's like, we've completely normalized that, that, Oh, of course you can't be in that job if you don't have a PhD. Right. But other people look at it in their life. That's kind of weird. And it's know that you've set up all these systems, these hurdles, right.

And all this stuff for free within higher ed. That's. The other piece of it is like so much runs on volunteer labor that I think we've all come to understand that too, as being normal. And it's like, That's actually not really normal to not be compensated for huge amounts of work that you do or what where's that compensation coming from?

I mean, like, there's just a lot of questions that I think the more, the more and the longer I'm in higher ed, I'm like, yeah, we are kind of weird. Yeah. Yeah. Although yes, higher. It is definitely weird. Uh, although I'm, I'm learning, uh, in the music world that. That expectation of doing stuff for free is not unique to higher ed.

There are other places where that expectation that you give away your art for free or that you, you work for free as it is a part of it for exposure. It's the exposure thing, right? Yeah. Internships in business is the same. Yeah. I mean, it's not definitely just higher ed, but um, I mean the idea that you write an article and then you have to pay to look at it.

Yeah. That that's all weird. I think, I think that for me was the straw that broke the camel's back for me with academia. I was like, this is BS. I'm out.

It's a lot of a logic to it. But I think that, that, you know, this is, what's so interesting. I do so much mindset work in coaching now with people who are coming to this understanding of, Oh, I have my own set of professional values. That I actually let, they thought their professional values was the value system that was given to them by higher ed.

And I think a lot of people have this. They kind of like buy into it and they're working their way up the ladder and all these things. And then they wake up one day and they're like, this feels misaligned, you know, like what's going on here. And then they're like, Oh, those weren't my values. I thought they were, I thought they were my values, but actually that's not really the thing that I care about.

And then they have this kind of mid-career awakening a little bit. And it's often post tenure. Um, where people get all the way through tenure because they had this value system that got them there. And then they kind of look around and they're like, wait a minute, wait a minute. What's going on in here?

So, you know, tenure provides that, that carrot that you're going for, right? Like that's, that's the thing. And once you achieve that, then you will be happy, right? It's that kind of. Cultural expectation that we have, I would say across Western culture where it's like, you keep working hard for the next thing.

And then the sort of bitter realization that once you get that thing, right. Life is not just completely roses and bunnies and chocolate. Like it turns out that it is actually still life, which is often still not great. Um, and so coming to that realization too, that like, Oh, well now what do I work for?

Like, I, I got the thing I thought I wanted and it turns out I didn't actually want it or it doesn't, it doesn't feel the way I thought it should. And what do I do with that? And, yeah. Oh yeah. There's a lot to unpack there for sure. So what was your. I mean, did you, when you were starting your business, was it a carrot or was it a stick that got you kind of green into that?

Yeah. And like what, what was motivating you in the early days? Um, in the early days, I think it was, it was a little bit of a combination. Um, I was not super happy and fulfilled where I was, uh, in my day job. Um, I liked the work that I was doing. I didn't like the systems. In which I was doing them doing those, those aspects of my job.

Um, So I loved my colleagues. I loved the projects that I got a chance to do. Um, but there was enough constraint in the fact that like other people were making all these decisions that didn't make sense to me. And part of that is because I wasn't in the conversations where. You know, those things happen and those things may be needed to be made.

Those decisions needed to be made that way. So like, I understand that part of it is I was not a part of that, but there's, there was a large part of me that was like, this is it's dumb. Why are we doing it this way? I want to do it my way. Um, so a little bit of the only child in there, uh, coming through, but, uh, you know, I think for me there, there was.

There were certainly elements of, of the job, um, that I was sad to step away from, but I also recognized that stepping into my own business was going to be the way to kind of. Um, move my own career forward and move my own, um, life forward in the way that I wanted to live it. So again, kind of mirroring what I had grown up with and like, I, I don't have to wear pants to work most of the time.

And I mean, not many of us do anymore, but, uh, even back then, like I, you know, working from home was always something that was comfortable for me and when something I wanted to do so, um, There were elements of that, of just kind of creating the life I wanted that were really appealing to me. And it was also a chance to kind of stretch myself.

I felt like I kind of reached the place where I wasn't going to get a whole lot more out of the job I was in at the time. And I needed to kind of push myself and, and find things that were creatively inspired, caring, and that were hard. I needed hard stuff. I have always been the person who wants. To have to figure out something new.

I mean, even still in my business, I'm still constantly like taking on new projects. I've never dried that before. Let's figure it out. You know, that's where the joy comes for me. And so, um, for me, in those early days, it was like the joy of trying to figure out how to start your own business in this, in this climate and in this world and figure out where and what I wanted to do and where I wanted to do it and how, and, and that was just a very.

Uh, scary, but also joyful kind of experience of like, Ooh, I want to do this. I want to do this. Um, so I would say mixed bag a little bit, a little bit of carrot, a little bit stick, um, for me. But what about you, Katie? W where was that kind of line for you and figuring out when to jump and how, and, um, when it made sense?

Well, it's interesting because when I think about my original kind of origin story, starting my business, and I. I always think of that as being like 2006 when I started my LLC, because I was doing speaking, but pretty sporadically before that, like I was keynoting and stuff. And so technically you could say like had a business, but I wasn't really like strategic about it.

And I didn't have my LLC until fall of 2016. Um, but I think that what I'm remembering is at that time, what I knew about academics who had. I wouldn't even call them businesses, but who had brands? I think I was more aware of people who had brands is that they were doing, speaking around a book. And in the fall of 2016, my book came out.

My second book came out and I was like, Oh, I have to. Build a brand around this book so that I can get speaking engagements because that we all know that's how you make money from books is it's not the book itself. It's the speaking. And I was like, okay, you know, like I, you know, I can kind of build out this thing that I've been doing for several years, very sporadically.

And maybe I can kind of make a go of this and see if I can build out a brand. So I feel like I wasn't even thinking about building a business. I was thinking about building a brand. And what would that mean? Two represent myself as something kind of larger in some ways than just like me as an individual who works in a university.

Like I was trying to, and I, I can articulate that now. I don't think I could have articulated that then. And I'm not even sure exactly what that means, but when I think back it's like I was trying to. Even then like build community. I mean, the first product I launched was the webinar series that I ran and I was starting to bring people together around topics that I thought were useful for higher ed folks.

So I knew, I think instinctually that speaking was not always going to be my thing. And I was trying to kind of pivot a little bit toward other things that I could do, you know, from home and, and virtually and all those kinds of things. But. Yeah. I mean, I feel like my awareness of how do you do this in higher ed is you do it through a speaking career.

And so that was where I started because I didn't really have models of people who were doing other things. And yeah, that, that's a great point. I was going to say I had the same kind of thing. It was like, you know, book and also speaking and. People being asked to come speak on some stuff. Like, is that a business?

Is that part of the business that I sh is that a thing I don't know. Right. So yeah, trying to piece that together. Well, and I think a lot of the people I talk to now who are just getting started, that's like a, that's a pretty. Common on-ramp is that you start to do some kind of invited speaking stuff.

And then I feel like once you get your feet wet in that, then you decide, Oh, do I like this? You know, like, or, or do I like this concept of being asked to do things and getting paid for them outside of my job? You know, maybe it's not the travel and the other things that you like, which eventually for me, you know, that was not what I wanted to do.

And I pivoted towards other things. But I did like this concept of having ownership over my choices of having it. So I think that one piece of it was that kind of what I was describing. The other huge piece of it, for me, that was a carrot was the creative outlet. Because at the time that I started my business, I was doing a lot of, um, production of like research and the, that was a window of time, like the past five years or so.

I've produced a lot of things, um, both in my business and in my job. And I think that I needed, like, I feel like I'm kind of jumping all over the place, but what it reminds me of is when I was writing my dissertation and I needed a journal because I was like, I I'm writing so much in this dissertation that I have to have this other outlet of like, Processing what's happening in this other writing and people were like, you are crazy.

Like, why would you want to write more? Like you're writing your dessert? And I was like, blogging. And I was like, I was just like this fountain that was like, you know, on high, you know, it was just turned all the way on. And I felt that way. I think when I started the business, as I was doing all this productive, you know, writing other research and things like that, but I needed this other thing that was going to allow me to, first of all, balance that.

So I didn't give myself an 80 hour a week job, you know, where I couldn't. Bring myself out of that, you know, work. But also I wanted to have control over that kind of creative component of, you know, if I didn't want to write an article, I could do something else. You know, like I could do something in a totally different modality, like podcasting or blogging or, you know, whatever it was that I was creating at the time.

So there was definitely a draw to that of just like, as someone who is driven by both internal accountability and external accountability. I felt like I needed to have some autonomy around how I was spending my time, what I was doing and that, I mean, being able to build in those goals and motivations and things like that worked for me in a lot of ways.

Yeah. That makes a lot of sense. And these, so this is so interesting, Katie, and there are a couple of questions that come to mind. Um, the first of which is, I'm curious for you. Uh, in terms of like mentally or psychologically, what was sort of. The primary hurdle that you had to kind of leap over in that early starting the business phase, if anything, maybe there wasn't, but, um, you know, I'm just curious, like, were there, was there anything that, you know, so people talk a lot about imposter syndrome.

People talk a lot about, like, I just don't even know where to start, you know, those kinds of fears. I'm curious. Which if any of those were especially resonant for you in that first kind of jump? I mean, looking back, I think. I feel like I can definitely identify some things that again, I would not have noticed that I was doing in the moment.

Like I spend an entire year blogging and podcasting and basically doing content marketing without having a product. This was pre-book pre second book. I should say, I'd already publish my dissertation as a book, but I wasn't really promoting it. And it was pre webinars series, pre coaching. You know, I was doing some speaking, but like not, you know, in a serious way.

And I feel like I really backed myself into having a business. I mean, it's like, I wasn't even realizing what I was doing in some ways. I, I, and again, that goes back to this concept of brand building before I was even really doing anything else. And this is why I think in some ways the philosophy that I really, um, espouse in my slow hustle program is like, you can take your time with this.

Like, this is not something that I spun up overnight. I was speaking for like five years. Then I decided to do this, this move to another job, which made me pause all of that. I started doing the content marketing stuff. Then I opened the LLC. I mean like, this is, this is a lot building up over time. And now I feel like that, that foundation and like the experience I gained through that allowed me to have the strong foundation that I have now that I'm like building on, you know, in what might to, some people feel like really rapid ways, but this is like 10 years in the making, you know, in terms of just all the other stuff I was doing.

So I feel like part of it was that I just didn't know what I was doing. Like, I, I just really, I mean, bottom line, I was just kinda like. I didn't have enough savvy. And when I was doing that, trying to think of how old I would have been early thirties, I mean, I was in my late twenties when I started speaking early thirties, when I started the business and I was just kind of young and naive and I didn't really know what was going on.

I was still shaping my career. There was still a lot of my, like more broad, professional identity that I was figuring out of. Like, who do I want to be in higher ed? I still don't feel like I figured that out by the way. But. You know, I was shaping myself as a leader. I was, you know, trying to figure out my identity as a researcher, as someone who's publishing things.

Um, so I mean, in some ways, and I feel like this is a cop out, but it's kind of true. I've like accidentally fell into the business a little bit. And after that I got super planful about it and had my revenue metrics and all these other things. But in the beginning it was like, This kind of seems like the next logical step, even though it feels like super uncomfortable to like form the LLC.

And like, this is never an identity I thought I would take on. And like, because it was not part of my past experience, it felt very foreign to me, but it also did feel like, okay, I guess this is what I'm supposed to do. I mean, just from like reading other people's blogs and stuff, it was like, Oh, okay. I guess the next step is forming an LLC, but I'm curious for you too, because I mean, I've, I feel like.

You had a clearer picture of this. I mean, like you, I feel like you had a sense, even just from your background and experience of like what this could look like. And so it must be different, you know, from someone who's like going in blind and it's just like, I don't know what any of this is. I like stumbled into it and looked around and was like, Oh, I guess, got a business now.

Oh, interesting. How did I get here? What was the map that led me here? I mean, it was all, I mean, it's, it's fair. This is why this season is so interesting to me because I do feel like it is this huge retrospective for me, where it's like, there was a lot of stuff that like, once I was there, I kind of looked around and was like, Oh, this is interesting.

Didn't plan for it. Didn't necessarily know that's where I was headed. No, I feel like I can do that more. I can have more of a plan, but in the early days it was like, I don't know what this is. I don't what I'm doing. I don't know what I'm doing. Yeah. Well, I guess I would echo that, uh, that sentiment quite a bit, actually, Katie, because as much as I kind of knew.

What life could look like in sort of a, a functional everyday kind of way. I had no idea what the work was really going to be. I mean, at that point in my career, I was doing a lot of different kinds of things. And I mean, I still do that. Hi it, me, the multipotentialite I was going to say

Exactly. Um, there is always going to be that way. Um, bless my husband for taking that on every other year. I'm like, so I want to do something different now. And he's like, so with our partners, because I feel the same way. I'm like, you know, every once in a while I look over and I'm like, You didn't know what you were getting into when you launched into this relationship?

Sorry about it. Oh, funny. Um, no, but for me, I think it was a similar sort of thing where I didn't necessarily know what I was doing. I knew I knew what I didn't want to do. Um, which in some respects is a really great guide. Right. You, you kinda know, like, this is not for me, but you know, I didn't, I didn't really want to get into a research.

Position, um, in academia. Right. I knew I wanted to kind of do my own thing and be my own boss and figure out what I wanted to do. But yeah, I had a lot of different irons in the fire and things that I thought could come to fruition or that I thought would go a certain direction. So, you know, I don't know that I would call this.

Necessarily, but I had some, you know, some instincts about like what could work and how, um, but I think, you know, as I look back on it, there were a lot of things I didn't do well in those first couple of years, that really impacted the health of the business. Um, You know, to be, to be honest, the first couple of years, I wasn't making much.

And, and thankfully, you know, I have a partner who has a steady position, so I, I was able to kind of flounder around a little bit and figure it out as I was building it, uh, and not have. You know, the pressures of, of financial ruin coming down on me. So, um, I, I want to acknowledge and recognize, um, that privilege that I, that I had.

Um, and for, for me, I think in some ways, had I been able to pivot to another academic position for a little while and still kind of continue to build the business in the background, it might've looked really different and ended up in a very different place. Um, but I can also. Say that like, I'm really happy where things landed now and where I am now.

And so I don't know that I would change it now that I look back I'm like, I don't know those first couple of years or something, but, um, but so think I learned a lot and part of the process of that early, um, pivoting to a new business. Is just learning a lot and feeling out of your depth most of the time and not sure how you got here and you look up and you're like, Oh wait, okay.

I guess I have a business now. And you know, I guess people are paying me for things and do I want to do this thing? I don't know how do I turn this thing into the next thing? And it just becomes, you know, uh, It, it can feel like a really big, scary thing because it is kind of a really big, scary thing and that's okay to feel that way.

Um, and it's okay to feel like you're not doing it very well because. You don't know what you're doing because you've never done it before. So, you know, again, there are things you've never done before that you're like doing for the first time. Exactly. I mean, even, even now I still have that sometimes where I'm like, have I ever done, I don't think I've ever done this before.

Okay. Well, I guess we're going to try this thing. Okay. Or you're learning new things. You're learning about, you know, working with clients or you're learning about the process of putting out a book or you're learning about things, the nuances of doing speaking gigs, right? Like it's a constant learning process.

So if you hate learning, I don't recommend that you start your own business, but if you. Yeah, but if you can be comfortable with being uncomfortable, then, you know, it's, it's a fun adventure. Uh, but yeah, you're not going to feel like, you know what you're doing. And for me, the, the, the block was two-fold. Um, at first it was that like, Oh, I'm doing, I guess I'll try.

Um, but the second part for me was feeling a little bit of imposter syndrome, just sort of in where. Uh, where the business content was going. Um, it didn't really feel like it was super aligned with my, uh, internal kind of what I wanted to do. It was sort of like, this is the opportunity that was presented to me.

So I took it rather than this is the thing I really, really, really want to be doing. And I'm going to drive it that way. So, and part of that was like, this is where the money's coming from. So I kind of need to fall into that because that's what people are hiring me to do, but also recognizing, and kind of going through a lot of, of, uh, reflection, process and everything to realize like that's actually not where I want to be.

And so for a long time, listeners you'll know later a year, ish ago, uh, I sort of decided I wanted to pivot away from the early childhood world, despite the fact that my. PhD is in child psychology. Um, so that was a really big pivot for me. And, you know, that would be the other thing I'd say is like, Early years in the business.

If you feel like you're not aligned with what you really want to be doing, that pivot doesn't happen overnight either. Right? It's it's a long, it can be a long process to kind of come to, um, where you, where you want to be. And it's okay for that to be a really uncovered, sorry, everybody. It's just really uncomfortable to start a business.

I feel like I'm selling it really well. Well, I would also, it's interesting though, to hear you describe it that way, Sarah, because I feel like. What you're helping me to realize is in the beginning of my business, I was, I was like, if you're like, I didn't really have a plan, you know, like quote unquote or like, but instinctually, the instinct is there.

Like there's this instinct and the instinct I had was. I would learn something and then I'd be like, well, if I had to learn this thing, other people would want to learn this thing too. Let me create a course around it. Let me create a webinar around it. Let me, and I basically took all this stuff that I had learned over time and made products out of it.

You know, whether it was a webinar or a course or an ebook or blog post or whatever. And I always just had this trust of like, well, you know, if I have these questions, other people must have these questions too. You know, like, or if I'm struggling in this area, other people must be struggling in this area too.

And I feel like the part of that, that I'd never, that I still constantly work on is the marketing part. Like I can build the thing, but then I have to tell people about it and like, you know, draw people into it and all those kinds of things. And I've also never instinctually wanted to say, you know, Hey, look, look over there.

Isn't there something wrong with you that you don't have this information? Like I've never wanted to guides. It's more like, let me just give you the resource. Let me just build the community. Let me help you feel supported. Like, and how do you, how do you do that in a way that's not negative? It's not based on.

Well, someone's lack of, you know, information or whatever, like, and, and higher ed is so focused on that. And so I think it's just, you know, we're, we're trying to navigate, you know, in terms of marketing within a realm that makes us feel comfortable. And we've talked about this in previous seasons too, but I do feel like that part of that, um, that leaning into, you know, if I, if I needed this, I think other people would too.

Is where a lot of my early stuff came from. And even now I think about like, even some of the most recent products have been packaged content. That is like something that I developed and learned over a long period of time. And then I found a way to streamline it so that I can give it to other people in a way that kind of cuts the learning curve a little bit for them.

Yeah, I think that's a great instinct and, and I've always admired and enjoyed watching you do that because that's, that's not the drive. And I have, I've always been like, Oh, I should make a thing about how to do blah, blah, blah. Like Katie's got really good instincts about that stuff. And I'm like, that's just not what I want to do.

So I'm thankful that there were people like you out there who want to do that because I, you know, I think. You're you're the growth and health of your business is a Testament to how much that is true. That there are a lot of people out there who have benefited from your knowledge and expertise in those areas.

So, yay. Well, and I feel you building steps. It's interesting. Oh, Sarah though, because I feel like we're, we're following our instincts and our passions, but in slightly different ways. Because really what I'm doing when I'm doing that is, is kind of coming to the end conclusion of something that I've been really passionate about.

And the way I close out that passion is often saying, let me now package this and teach it to you. It's like my graduation from a topic is that I do that. And I feel like when you're describing, you know, I, I aligned with things I was passionate about and that I really wanted to do. I feel like I'm doing that too, but in a different way.

And I just hop from one thing to another, a lot full poppers. I think we, we hop around a lot in our businesses, which I think is something else that if you're, I do see people who have successful businesses that are able to really kind of stay, you know, on one track. Um, but I feel like you and I have been very experimental in these past several years, which is partly why we wanted to record this season of just, there's been a lot of movement.

Um, so I'm curious, Sarah, if there's anything that business owner now, Sarah would tell business owner, then Sarah, about getting started and like, what would you, what would you tell your earlier self. Oh, so many things, Patsy younger Sarah's head. No. Um, I mean, I think there were a couple of things. The F the first is sort of, um, the emotional side of things.

And for long time listeners, you won't be surprised that I go with the fields. Cause that's, that's kinda how I, how I start. A lot of, a lot of these sorts of things is, is kind of where I feel and, and where that sort of inner passion is. Um, and so I would, I guess I would tell younger Sara, that like, you're going to figure this out and it's going to be kind of a uncomfortable process for awhile.

And, um, that's okay. And it's, you know, you're not always going to feel like, you know what you're doing and you're not always going to feel like this is exactly perfectly right. And exactly what you dreamed it would be. And that's okay. You're going to get there. Um, so there's that part of it? The other thing is sort of a more practical thing that I would have told myself, or I would tell myself is, um, don't be afraid to charge what you're worth, even though that feels weird and uncomfortable to, um, you know, I had a lot of growth in that area.

Um, and you know, I think to some degree I wouldn't. I wouldn't be where I am. Had I not gone through that, that period of like, how do I charge for my services and that kind of thing. Um, but just an encouragement to, to, don't be afraid to ask for what you think your knowledge and expertise and professionalism is worth because people will pay that if they can, I can actually afford it.

And if it's a good alignment and if it's something that they need. Um, so don't, don't undervalue your services and your, and your products and those sorts of things. So those would be kind of the two main ones. I'm curious, Katie, for you, what would be the things that you would tell your younger self? Yeah, I mean, It's interesting to think about, because I don't know that there's a lot that I would change about what I did in part, because I think building a business is like a crash course in self knowledge.

Sure. And that is huge. Like you get to know yourself very quickly about what you do well, what you don't do. Well, what you prefer, what you don't prefer. I mean, like there's just a lot what your strengths are and what you need to like. Higher out, you know, or whatever. I mean, there's just a lot that you kind of figure out.

And so part of what I want to tell my, my younger self is just like, you're doing just fine. Keep going, you know, like you, you just have to keep going and. And I, I, I guess I want to be kind of careful about how I say that because it applies to my situation where I just needed to kind of keep working through, you know, the stuff I think there are other people who will get into owning a business and they'll decide they don't want to keep going.

And that's fine. Like, I don't mean to say that everybody needs to push through, you know, if you're, if you're, that's not for you, that's not for you, but for me, um, There was just like you said, Sarah, there's a lot of times where it's like cognitive overload, like you are trying to learn so many things. I mean, think about, I think about when I first went into grad school and I was so overwhelmed and I was so concerned that I was just not going to know.

I mean, I, I remember having this conversation with my partner early days of my master's degree, where I was like, and I went into a women and gender studies program. I had minored in women in gender studies, but I really didn't know anything about it. I didn't know like what the different feminisms were.

I mean, I had like so little background and I'm like, I got there and I'm like, why did they even accept the end of this program? I mean, I just have like so little background and I remember having this conversation with him where I was like, look. I'm not gonna be able to go to the grocery store. I'm not gonna be able to contribute to our household domesticity.

I mean, it's like, I just have to like be here studying all the time. Like I was just so afraid that I was like behind already. And I was just like rushing, rushing, rushing to try to catch up to everybody. And it took me a good semester to be like, okay, I feel like I have my feet under me, but I would like literally just sit for hours, like working on these assignments because I just.

I was teaching myself and I was so dedicated to trying to understand what was I supposed to be doing here. And I didn't feel at the time. And I still don't really feel like it was a form of, um, There wasn't anything negative around it. It was just like, I need to level up and I need to do it fast. And like, how do I do that?

And I trusted myself that I could do it, but it was like, I was dedicated. Like I really wanted to make it work. And I feel like that was part of how I felt about the business early on was just like, I need to level up and I need to figure this out. Like there is a whole body of knowledge here that I know nothing about.

I have no people who have come before me that I understand what this is. So I was like reading blogs. I was listening to podcasts. I was like trying to figure out all this stuff. And again, this is why I developed so hustle, because I was like, let me package this for you. I went through this process. I was trying, I was overloaded.

I was overwhelmed by all of this. Let me package it so that you can kind of digest it in bite size pieces. So I feel like part of it is like, It's almost like a cheerleader role. Like my role now to my younger self would be like, you have got this, you know, like you can do it. I know it feels a lot. And I know you're like, am I this person who can do this thing?

You are, you are this person, you know, like you can do this, even though this feels like a totally new identity, very different than what you've done in the past. You can do this and. I just feel like I'm in such a more confident place now about this identity of being a business owner than I was, you know, when I first started, when I was just like, I feel like I am like a child wearing adults shoes, you know, like clomping around trying to figure out what I'm supposed to be doing.

Yeah, exactly. Those early days when you're like, yes, I totally own a business. I'm totally old enough to do that. I am so legit. I have a website. Whereas now I'm like, I am a business owner, pay me what I'm worth or buy. Well, now I'm like, I am a business owner. I have lots of taxes to pay. I need to charge what I'm worth.

Yeah, exactly. If you can't pay me, this is not a good fit. Yes. We're not aligned. That's how I lied. If you can not be nice. He might be okay. Sarah, is there anything else that you want to add into this episode on getting started with the business retrospective Persian? Oh, um, I don't, I don't think so. In particular, I just, I would encourage anybody who's thinking about starting a business or who's in those early days, like Katie said, hold on, just say strap in, you know, it's going to be a wild ride, but even if.

Uh, you know, even if it doesn't work out for you in the ways that you intended it to, or the ways that you think it will right now that doesn't make it a, not just doesn't make it not a valuable experience. That was a double negative. It makes it, it's still a valuable experience is what I'm trying to say.

Um, that, that you will learn a lot, even if you end up deciding that, uh, that owning a business is not for you in the longterm. Um, those skills that you pick up along the way are really valuable and really will help you in whatever you decide to do next. So hang on. Uh, learn some stuff and always stay aligned with, with who you are and what you're trying to do.

And, um, you know, you'll figure it out. Yeah. You'll end up in the right spot. And I would also encourage our listeners part of the reason Sarah and I decided to do this season this way is we were like, we probably have some listeners who are like, kind of where we are. Like, they've, they've been listening for a few years and maybe they're business owners and like they're, they're growing up a little bit.

And so I would also encourage you if you're like, uh, Mid career business owner. I don't know, you know, few years in dog years, whatever it is, do a little bit of like reflection and like, try to think back about like where you started and where you are now. And I think it's just a good opportunity to kind of think about.

What has shifted and transitioned. And I think you'll find some cool stuff. I mean, I think we have covered some things in this episode that I had certainly not thought of for a long time. And it was kind of fun to think back. Yeah. Oh yeah. This all started there. Huh? Weird. Well, it's like not conscious, you know?

So when you take it and you're like, huh, interesting. I'm not sure what that means about me, but that's what it is. Well, listen to this. Thank you for coming back for season seven, we are going to tackle a bunch of other topics this season. We're going to talk about finances. We're going to talk about time management.

We're going to talk about. Online presence and branding, marketing, all kinds of things. I hope you'll stick around. And Sarah and I will look forward to touching base with you again in our next episode, with another retrospective of where we started and where we are now. Thank you, Sarah. Bye. Thanks for listening to this episode of make your way show notes and a transcript for this episode can be found at Dr.

Katie linder.com backslash M Y w. If you found this episode helpful, please consider rating or reviewing the show in Apple podcasts. Thanks for listening.