**final - S7E6**

to make your way, season seven, episode six. Welcome to make your way where we explore what it means to work and create on your own terms. Along with every episode we post links to resources mentioned in the episode, along with the full transcript, you can find these materials at Dr. Katie linder.com.

Backslash M Y w. Hello, Katie, how are you? Hi, Sarah. I'm good. How are you doing? I'm doing pretty well for, for those who have been listening, uh, along the season, you'll know that we, uh, recorded a bunch of episodes back to back. Uh, we have since taken a break, so we are actually saying hello for the first time this morning.

Yes. We can't promise that will be true for the next couple of episodes, but details a while. It's been a little while since you've said hello, so hello for real. And I am excited to dive into our next topic. Yeah. Yeah. We, and, uh, for the, for those who are listening to the season, you know, that we are kind of doing a little bit of a retrospective kind of recap, uh, looking back and looking forward a little bit.

So, uh, in this episode, we wanted to talk, um, a little bit about online presence and kind of evolution of our brands over the last, um, couple of years. And, uh, Katie, I'm curious for you, you know, to what degree do you feel like your brand has evolved, especially as you present, uh, present yourself online, uh, kind of in that space and how much do you think it's kind of stayed the same.

Hmm, I think it's evolved a lot. Um, and actually I was thinking about this topic. It's so interesting because this is the question I get a lot in slow hustle from people who are just getting started with their businesses. And like this thing that paralyzes people is they're like, well, what if I put up a website and then I have to change it?

Or what if I go in one direction? And I realized that's not actually what I want to do. And I'm like, Well, first of all, I promise you that's going to happen. I mean, like it's just evolution is such an important part of business building that if you're not evolving, I would be kind of like curious about what's going on there.

You know, like that you're not going through some kind of evolution. So I've changed my website. A lot of I've changed my kind of, um, images and things that I'm posting on social media. Of course my programs have changed, which has changed how I communicate about them. But I think that one of the biggest evolution pieces is that when I started my business, I was still squarely in the realm of presenting as an expert.

And partially because as we talked about earlier in the season, I really started my business as a book author and a speaker and a keynoter. And that's all about, you know, I have expertise to share with you. And, um, as I've gotten more into the coaching realm, a lot of that has shifted. Uh, and so I feel a lot more confident about how I show up.

I feel more authentic about how I'm showing up. And that I think impacts what we're going to talk about in the next episode about marketing and sales. Um, so yeah, like I feel that there's been like a ton of evolution and it's not been that long. I mean, four years, maybe a little more is what we're talking about.

So, yeah. I'm curious about you. What do you think Sarah, about your evolution? Uh, well, first of all, I want to say that I concur with you that I think yours has evolved a lot. It's been fun to watch that evolution over the last few years. Um, there was a while there where I felt like every time we talked, you were like, okay, but I'm changing this thing, which it kind of still happens.

I mean, it's not totally out of the realm that that happens. I mean, well, and I should mention too, I did hire a branding agency. Two summers ago now I think. Um, and so that really impacted my brand around that time. It impacted a website redesign. It impacted a lot of what I was putting out on social. So, um, I've been able to stabilize.

I feel like a bit since then. Maybe for now, now, now back in six months now, he said no, for real, for real. Yeah. It's a whole thing now I think for me, uh, I, I can also identify the ways and the, and sort of the, the places where, um, my brand has evolved. I mean, part of it is tied to the huge. You know, pivot that I did in the middle of this, I was like, I started out in, you know, speaking and yeah.

And, um, being an author and in the realm of sort of early childhood development. And now I do video production and digital engagement consulting. It's like, that's a pretty big shift. Um, and so when I was first starting out, you know, my, my website was very. Like focused on me as a person too, you know, do you want to hire me to come do your, do a talk or do a presentation of some sort it for your professional development training or that sort of thing.

And now, um, after spending some time, uh, kind of thinking a little bit about, you know, not only what kind of work do I want to be doing, but also how do I want to present that work? Um, And doing some good course, uh, like listening and, and courses with, um, the wandering AME fully crew. We've talked about them previously on podcasts, uh, Jason and Carolyn's book.

Um, I, I really kind of reframed a lot of my branding to be very audience focused and that has been hugely helpful for me. Um, because then it actually sort of takes the pressure off in a weird way. So where, whereas the website at first was like, this is who I am. Hire me as a person to come and do stuff that felt kind of imposter in some ways, because it, it wasn't that I didn't feel like I could do that, but like, I'm on, I'm less comfortable putting myself out there as like, I'm the expert, right?

Like that was just never felt right. And now it's like, okay, how can I help you solve your problem is, is sort of the branding focus now. Um, But yet it's still very core to who I am and my personality. And there's a lot of me in that, in that brand, but because the focus shifted, it sort of weirdly like takes the pressure off of me in a weird way.

So, um, you know, I, that's kind of a little bit of a tangent, but basically. Like thinking about the different ways that I've kind of presented myself in online spaces and how that's shifted, um, and kind of how much more comfortable I am now. It's, it's really interesting to kind of look back and be like, huh?

I mean, I get why it happened the way it did. And also I'm like, I'm really glad I'm not there anymore. Yeah. Yeah. Well, and I, I feel like I, I can really identify that with that as well with this concept of like, When you're first starting out. And when you're doing, speaking in particular, the brand is you you're selling yourself, you're selling your expertise.

You're selling this concept that like you can come in and, you know, help them achieve the goal of their event or whatever it is that they're trying to do. And so it really is about, you know, like representing yourself or performing in a certain kind of way. But now I feel like we both have. Brands companies, you know, however you want to frame it that are bigger than ourselves.

And we're, we have a bigger mission involved. And I think about like my coach training is a good example of this. I'm not really selling myself as a coach in that coach training. Like, am I involved in that brand? Yes. I mean like, are people sometimes coming to that coach training because they trust me as a brand persona.

Yes. I mean, like that's part of it for sure. But I also feel like there are random people who are now finding that program because other people are giving word of mouth and, and they're not just being drawn in because of me they're being drawn in because of something larger that's happening through that program and what it's allowing people to be able to do in terms of growing their own coaching careers and things like that.

Yeah. And I think that the more you go along in your business and kind of solidify that larger. Purpose or mission or however you want to frame it, it starts being less about you. And it does start being more about the audience like you're describing. And, and I agree with you, it's way easier to be able to say, are you a fit for this particular thing that I offer, then do you like me?

Do you want to buy my thing? You know, like behind me, maybe it's not exactly at that simple, but I do feel like there's this sense of like, I feel like my brand has evolved to a place where it's a little more distanced from me in that, like, if somebody decides it's not for them, I don't feel like personally affected by that.

And I may have felt more that way in the beginning where it's like, if somebody doesn't pick me, it's like, what did I do wrong? How am I not fitting what you wanted? And now I'm just like really clear on who I am, what I do, what I offer to the point where I vet. A lot of our programs, like I'm, I'm like you don't come in unless it's a good fit.

Like I want to talk to you before you joined the program. And that I think is a very different way in the beginning when I was just like opening the doors and it's like, come on in. Like, I just want everybody to come on in. And now I just feel like I have a much better sense of. Who is drawn into the brand.

And especially because I build community around this brand, who's going to be an fit, you know, to kind of connect with the people who are already in that community and to be supported by that community. And it's not everybody. And that's okay. Um, I, I'm really curious Sarah about your online presence and, and we can think about this as like social media, you know, like, I mean, website, whatever, however you want to define it.

If you feel like it's grown since like the beginning of your business in terms of like followers. Cause I feel like this is a big emphasis is like grow your audience, grow your brand, grow your, your cutting online presence. So I'm curious how you feel about that. Has that happened? That's interesting. And I knew we were going to get around to social media eventually and I would have to come clean and say that I.

I have basically completely stepped off of social media. Um, yeah. Which is a weird thing for me to say, as somebody who consults with people about how to use social media, uh, not entirely, but that is a, you know, a part of the portfolio that I offer. Um, you know, I think for me, because most of my PR my online presence was on Twitter.

You know, several things have happened 20, 20 being one of them. Uh, but you know, I think for me that the emphasis shifted a little bit and because Twitter is so conversational, um, and, and feels like less of a kind of professional promotional space. Um, I felt like I needed to step back for a lot of reasons.

Um, you know, just sort of, not feeling like I could engage authentically in that space. Especially as my business focus shifted. And frankly, the people that I was following on Twitter and who were following me on Twitter, a lot of them were from sort of that previous iteration of my career. And so it didn't like, it didn't feel like I was talking to the right people even.

Right. So it was like, okay, I'm going to have to either go and sort of re curate a new audience and kind of basically redo all the work. I just did for the last several years. Um, and then, you know, with all this stuff that happened in 2020, um, both with the pandemic and, and with the, um, racial injustice things that were happening and with all the election stuff, it just, it was not a space I felt comfortable being in.

And so I was like, you know, this, my gut is telling me just step back from this. And like, you know, I don't, I just don't need to kind of. Insert myself into a space that I don't feel, um, is, is really beneficial for me or anybody else for me to be like, you know, talking at this point. So, um, yeah, so I've really stepped back from social media, which has, has been an interesting, uh, thing.

I. You know, I've thought a little bit about like, which space would I want to reenter. Uh, now that things have changed so much. Um, and, and since the pandemic hit and my business really shifted, uh, again, you know, kind of in the direction of video production and, and working with coral and arts organizations, you know, I'm thinking about where are those people online and where would I need to kind of.

Go. Um, if I, if I wanted to kind of curate that audience and, and kind of reach those, those potential, you know, clients, for example, but I haven't really had the energy, frankly, to engage with that more than just on a, on a very surface level, like what, which platforms would be the best to go to. Um, the other thing that I think happened for me is that because most of my business was happening, word of mouth, and most of my business was coming from.

Conference presentations or other kinds of things like that, that I was doing both before, when I was in early childhood. But also since I've made this, this pivot, um, you know, doing online presentations and, and making myself available to organizations who, um, you know, who work in the choral music space that has gotten me a lot more business than.

Any amount of social media stuff ever would. And so I'm like, I need to put my emphasis and my energy where, you know, where the tap is flowing. Let's focus on that. Now that said, when I did kind of do this pivot around the beginning of the pandemic, um, to be working on virtual ensembles and virtual choirs and things, I did some work on my website, SEO, and that was huge.

I wrote a couple of posts about how to do virtual acquires. I wrote. Um, you know, a couple articles about like different events and those sorts of things. And that, uh, those, those posts and my, um, my page, uh, on, on creating virtual ensembles and how to do that, providing some materials for people on how to do that, that has been a huge driver.

Uh, I haven't seen the like spike in my traffic because of that. And the search terms people are using and all of that. So, um, you know, so I know that, that there has been some, yeah. Benefit to have been having been strategic about that kind of online presence, but that's not social media. And so it's really interesting to me to be.

Like the person who started off as like social media is the way to get people to connect with you. And now I'm kind of going through this phase where I'm like, you know, it's just not for me right now. And that doesn't mean it won't be for me forever. Um, but it, it just means that like right now that's not the space that I need to be in.

So that was a long-winded kind of answer to your question.

So it's been a journey. Um, but Katie, I know you've, you've kind of stuck with it a little bit more than I have in, in some ways, uh, in social media. So can you talk a little bit about like, what that's been like, especially with all the landscape shifts that have happened in the last, you know, 12 to 16 months?

Yeah. I mean, I would say like, yes and no, I've stuck with it. I withdrew from Twitter. Other than kind of scheduled posts that were aligned with launches and things like that. Um, I withdrew maybe a year ago. I mean, just around the time that things started to get pretty intense politically, not that they haven't been for the last, you know, four and a half years or whatever, but, um, academic Twitter just got bitter, uh, and it had been kind of bitter before, but some of the circles that I'm connected to around.

Alternative academic careers. And, um, especially tech, you know, during this period of the pandemic, there are a lot of people who are just really upset about how they've been treated during this time. Um, and, and I want to clarify that as justified, like, I am not saying in any way that I don't agree, you know, with some of the reasons why people are upset and particularly in like the online teaching and learning community.

Just, you know, what, what has been expected of this community during this period, and also the lack of recognition that they're getting during this period. It's tough. Like, I I'm, I'm going to say that. Um, but it was also during the pandemic, not the space where I needed to be. Uh, and it was just not helpful to me in terms of my own attitude and the kinds of leadership I needed to bring within my own organization.

And for people who are. Kind of unclear what I'm talking about. Like, I work in an online teaching and learning organization at a university. And so, um, I just found that that was not a space where. I needed to, to be fulfilled. Like it was, it was not feeding me. It was draining me to be in that space. So, um, I just kind of wandered over to Instagram and started posting my to-do list every day.

And that's kind of what I do. Um, I stopped posting in the grid if Instagram I did for a while. Um, probably. Early 2020, I think I, and then the pandemic hit and I kind of pulled back, you know, in a lot of ways. So, um, I, I do schedule posts and Twitter. I do engage there, you know, when people are tagging me and stuff like that, I do have notifications on my phone and I like pop over there and talk with people.

But the kind of curious thing that I've realized, and this is going to be like shockingly, uh, common sense to people who are listening is eventually you do get that word of mouth traction. And you're so busy in your business that you don't need to be posting on social. Yeah. Like it's like, there's kind of this like graph that like the lines cross on the graph and then you're like, Oh, like I don't, I don't necessarily need to be doing that as much anymore.

Whereas in the beginning, It really felt like a awareness building kind of situation. And as my things like my newsletter have grown, I haven't really felt like I needed social to reach the people who care about what I'm offering. Now. I also think though, that that is very tied to both of us have really had more of an organic growth model in our businesses.

We have not been trying to scale. We I'm assuming this, I see you're nodding, like what we, we've not been, you know, trying to like hire massive amounts of people and grow really quickly. And so when I look at like the growth of my newsletter over the past four years, those numbers are in the hundreds, not the thousands, you know?

And, and I'm okay with that. When I look at my social media, same, you know, it's in the hundreds, not the thousands, but I feel like the people who are finding that are. I don't want to say like the right people, I'm using air quotes. Uh, but like they're the people who are more likely to connect and use my services and, and they care.

Like not everybody wants to go through a coach training, so they're not all going to be interested in that product. Not everybody wants coaching. Not everybody wants coaching around radical self-trust. I mean, like I've niched into areas that when people find that. They tend to stick around. And I have a lot of repeat customers.

I have a lot of people who, after they work with me and they joined the prolific community, they come back for other programs that I run. And so it's creating a kind of sustainability within my business because I have that audience and, and people have talked about this as like having a thousand true fans.

Like what does it mean to have a relatively small number of people? I think Seth Goden has talked about this as your tribe, you know, like you find your people and then they're part of what sustains. Your business and your growth. And I talked a little bit on a previous episode, this idea of when you continue to provide value, people continue to give you revenue.

And so part of it is like thinking about a very different model of who I'm engaging with on social and through all my, um, my online presence. And just this morning, every once in a while I go through and I call my social media. So just this morning, I just dropped like 50 people that I was following on Instagram.

And I don't follow a lot of people on my social media platforms. I follow maybe between 200 and 300 people. So I'm not someone who's going out and like, you know, following people. So they'll follow me back. Like I don't really use that strategy, but when I started looking through my list on. Instagram this morning when I was doing that, I realized I would say 70% of the people I'm following on that platform are people that I know.

Like I've, I've interacted with them. I may not know them, like from a in-person meeting, but I've, I've had a conversation with them at least, or they've been in one of my programs or I know their work and I've like followed their work in academia or something like that. And then there's probably 30% that are like brands that I'm kind of interested in following or bigger personas that I don't have like a personal connection with.

And that was interesting to kind of realize that, you know, usually when I go through that culling, I'm like, It's pretty easy for me to find, you know, people that I am like, Oh yeah, I'm not really interested in what they're doing anymore or whatever. And it was just really, it kind of curious thing when I looked this morning and I was like, wow, I really do know a lot of these people.

And that to me is speaking to. The building of a community, the nurturing of relationships that are more real in that space and that are kind of mutually beneficial in that space. So all that to say, I mean, I feel like the social media has always been a tool. What I'm using that tool for has shifted over time.

That's a great way to put it because yeah, I. I can still see uses for social media going forward. I think there will be uses for it again, uh, in my business. I just haven't been clear on what those are. Um, and so for me, I've set the tool down to extend the analogy. Um, I, you know, I've kind of, I've set the tool to the side for now because it's not serving me.

It's not actually serving my business growth. Um, and, and my business, you know, dissemination or whatever. However you wanna frame that. Uh, in the ways that I needed to. And so, like, why would I keep trying to, you know, Hit the hammer with a blunt at now hit the nail with a blunt ax. I don't know. I'm now I'm just like taking this metaphor way too far, but the point being sometimes you have to put the tool down and that is okay.

Yeah. Or I think you, you also come to a place where you, you find different tools. I mean, if we're really going to extend this metaphor, you know, both of us have found this tool of word of mouth and it takes time to have that tool be functioning for you because you have to produce a good product. You have to have people come through that product or service, and then you have to give them time, which could be six months a year or two years.

You know, who knows I've run programs that are year long. So maybe two years from now that person's going to tell someone, Oh yeah, I went through this program a couple of years ago and it was really good, you know, like, I, I don't know, I don't have control over that, but I do think that there's this, um, like I just talked with someone this morning who for the past several months has been saving up to come to my coach training program.

Time, like she's been budgeting for it and putting aside money and is excited to do it. And she was just asking me some questions this morning about timing. And I was like, I don't know, who's out there doing that. I don't know who is like thinking well, and I think about how many times I look at a program and I'm like, yeah, the timing's not right right now.

But I think I want to do that in the future. You know, like it, we all have those, you know, moments and, and, um, whether it's budgetary or time-wise or whatever. So I just feel like there's this. Like you get to a place where you just trust a little bit more, that there are people in the waiting in the wings, you know, your products and services are good that they're providing value to people.

And that if you keep kind of putting in the work of doing those programs, facilitating them or working with clients, you will have fruition from that. Like th th things will come to fruition. And so I don't, it's, it's like going all the way back to like the Bhagavad Gita. Like you can, you can. Look at the fruits of you, don't look at the fruits of your labor, look at like the process, you know, that you're going through to get there.

And, and I feel like when we do social media, sometimes there's this sense of like instant gratification or like I'm going to tweet and someone's going to buy this thing. And, and I'm sure that works for people. I'm, you know, I'm not saying this is not a tool that people should be using. Um, but I'm way more interested in like, Engaging with tools that I like.

And I feel like right now there are elements of social media that I enjoy. But I would say ratio wise, when I'm engaging on social, it's probably like 70 or 80% personal, 20 to 30% business. Like, I, I really am not thinking about it as a business strategy as concretely as I once did partially. Cause I don't have time and partially because.

I don't know that I always see the return. I see the return from building relationships. I don't see the return from like individual tweets. So I'm way more interested of the build the bit, the relationship building side as a business builder than something else. Yeah. Well, and I think the other, the other thing that, you know, that front, the advantage of a couple of years of, of having done this work is that you and I both have.

Free stuff on our sites and on our various platforms, you know, that people can see and, and actually, you know, hear us talk about things or, you know, for, in my case watch videos that I've actually produced before. And, you know, I have curated playlist of like previous work I've done for clients. And so like, it's a lot easier for people to, uh, to see that value.

And so if, if they kind of come to you through social media, that's great. But like, The tweet is not what makes the sale, right? Like it's the, all of the other work that we put in. And so for me, if the social media is not the right funnel for my audience, that I'm, that I want to work with, like then that then I don't need to use that funnel anymore.

And, and for me, because so much of my work is actually focused on helping artists think about using digital space. That sort of inherent thing is there that a lot of artists aren't using the digital space and so like, why would I spend a ton of time trying to go to the digital space to get an audience that isn't in that space?

So like you, you have to meet your audience where they are, and yeah, but I think another big piece of this too, is when we think about social media, there's this sense of like, Everybody needs to be there, you know, and maybe this is kind of an older idea. I feel like there's a lot of people now who look at social and they're like, I don't know that I want to do this at all.

You know, like they're, they're kind of entering into this space and, and I get it from the sense of like, social is not something we can control. Like Twitter could go down tomorrow. Facebook could go down tomorrow. Like these are not platforms that, you know, if you invest a ton of your strategy in them, We don't have control over the future of that.

So I'm way more interested in building on things like my website, like the podcast that is my intellectual property. I have control over the aesthetics of it. It's a 24 hour marketing tool for my business. So it's not to say again, I'm not, I'm not saying social media, isn't an important tool, but I think sometimes we put way more investment into that because there's just so much out there about like, Uh, how to, how to like effectively use these tools because none of us ever feel like we're doing them.

As good as we could. Right. Or utilizing them to the best of, I mean like, think about all the courses out there on Facebook ads and like nobody knows what they're doing and they're constantly changing the algorithm. I mean, if there's a whole industry built around consulting for Facebook ads, And yet it's like just build a really decent website and have strong SEO, and you're going to get quite a good attraction from that.

So like you were saying with this new element of your business. So I feel like there's something to be said for that too, of just like investing in your website. Even if you go in different directions and change the font and theme and all of these different kinds of things. That's a pretty important thing to do.

yeah, I would, I would say for those of you who are thinking about like, which, which part of my online presence should I be working on right now that I think we've talked about this before Katie, but like your website is kind of the most important thing that you have on the internet, because you have control over that.

Like, you can change your brand at any time. You can change your fonts and colors and whatever. Like you, you have control over that and it's. It's also your home on the internet. And so how do you want people who are coming into your home to feel about you and about the services you offer? Um, you know, do you want it to be something from 1994 or do you want it to feel like, you know, kind of a welcoming space that, um, where they can, they can find what they need and, and, uh, you know, are looking for stuff that you have to offer.

And I think some of the things about SEO, you know, SEO is a term that freaks people out. A lot of the time search engine optimization, I think is actually what it stands for. Is that right? Yeah, that's correct. Okay. I think that's right. Um, but really it's thinking about what is your audience going to type into that Google search bar?

Right. So if they're going to type in. How do I make a virtual choir, then put that as a tag of your, you know, your webpage and the, you know, the more people kind of click on that. And the more it kind of serves that Google serves that up for people, the better off you are. So, you know, it's thinking critically about what is it that my audience, the audience that I want, the people that I want to interact with my business, what are they looking for?

Um, they're not probably going to type in. Sara Langworthy PhD. Right? Like they don't necessarily know that I'm the person to solve the problem. So what is the problem that they have that they're going to go to Google to look for? Um, yeah. Anyway, there's just a little bit of website one-on-one I guess I do think that there's, again, you're shifting from this concept of like focusing on the services that you're providing to the audience that is needing those services.

So even that framing of what is the problem that people are trying to solve. I think this is an area that. It's really challenging, you know, for some people to really think through, there's definitely parts of my business where I don't feel like I fully understand, you know, how I'm working with people in that way.

And in part, and this is, we'll talk about this. I'm sure in the sales and marketing episode is both of us have never really wanted to have like a deficit kind of marketing model where it's like, what's wrong with you? Don't can't I fix you. Can't buy my thing. I'll I'll fix your problem. So it is about kind of this, um, there's a really loud helicopter going over right now.

Cause it was so lovely here. Yeah. I feel like something's happened. So I don't know. We, I live on a military base, so I'm assuming it has something to do with that, but yeah, they were probably running exercises or whatever. I'm going to leave this end just so people can have a little bit deeper. Reality.

Yeah. Sometimes it's like that anyway. It's it's circling or doing something. I don't know. Um, yeah, we also hear like random explosions coming from the military base as well. In addition to tornado sirens that go off once a month to test. So it's Kansas living is, uh, exciting. It's a whole new adventure, it's all new adventure.

Um, but I think that this concept of, you know, Trying to look at a problem. Like when you come into my website at the top, it says, do you need more ease in your work in life? You know, like I'm, I'm talking directly to the audience and saying, you know what, what's bringing you in here. Um, But the other piece, I really think, I can't believe I haven't talked about it yet.

Regarding online presence is podcasting. All right. You've done a little bit of just dabbled just to dabble the smartest move I ever made in my business was starting a podcast in 2016. Uh, and again, like the, the numbers for that have grown in the hundreds more than the thousands. It's not like I have, you know, 10,000 downloads a month or something, but.

I've got a decent amount of people, you know, who are listening to that, who are emailing me about topics, who are, um, you know, touching base with me about, I just released. And even with my blog, I released a blog about books, I'm reading, and somebody responded about what they'd read and, you know, but I think that there's, um, the thing that's kind of, that I wasn't expecting, and maybe this gets into our biggest fears episode that we're going to talk about later is.

My current clients will come into sessions and be like, so I was listening to your episode from last week and it was, and I'm like, you're listening to my podcast. Like, don't you get enough of me as your coach? Like, why are you also engaging with my content? Like, it surprises me. I'm like, well, I guess if I hired someone, I would be listening to them too.

And I would be, you know, paying attention, whatever, but. Like it's happened frequently that this comes up and it just kind of makes me like, Oh yeah. Like, so now when I record these episodes, I record them like, like I'm talking to my clients and I'm, I'm like talking to a specific audience of who I think will be helped by that information.

And some of the episode topics come from my client interactions and stuff like that too. So it's just kind of recycling it back into the community. But anyway, I just, I find it so interesting. And I do think that I have a, I have a kind of entry, you know, people start to work with me, I have them fill out a form and I will say, how'd you hear about this?

And a lot of people will say I heard about it through podcasts. So I think that that's just kind of this interesting. Um, there's a reach there that I don't think I fully understood in the beginning. I happened to just completely fall in love with podcasting as a medium. Obviously I have multiple shows like this is something that I've really enjoyed for a long time, but the kind of side benefit of what it has offered to my business in terms of reach and growth.

Um, clearly that's there. I mean, I don't know the exact metrics, but I know enough anecdotally from talking with people that, um, That's a massive part of my online presence. And I just don't think about it very much. I've been doing it weekly for so long that like, it doesn't even, yeah, it's just part of the foundation of my business.

So that's kind of an interesting component to think about. Do you have elements like that, Sarah, that feel kind of foundational regarding your online presence that you don't even like, think about to some degree. I'm trying to think. I mean, I th I think in some ways I'm not making videos as frequently, um, as I once was for my own channel because I'm spending so, so much of my creative energy doing videos for my clients.

Um, but I do think that, you know, when, when people are looking at, do I want to hire Sarah for this thing? I, I do think they're looking at what have you done previously? And so having that breadth of work over the last. How many years does it have been? I don't even know, five, six years of making a variety of different kinds of videos, uh, on my YouTube channel.

I think that speaks to not only sort of my, my creativity and my approach to things, but also, um, You know, demonstrates in a way that me telling you that I make videos, can't them, you know, that that's not going to demonstrate the same way as somebody seeing what it is that I do and how I've helped clients before, but also how I've been a creator myself.

And so I would say that that is foundational, even though I'm not spending a lot of time kind of continuing that currently. Um, I think that's another tool, right. That I, that I use. And then I will probably come back to at some point, um, In a more intentional way, but, you know, I don't, I don't have anything that I've started at the very beginning that I kind of continued through, uh, in the same way, mostly because as, as long time listeners will know, I like to dabble.

I'm a dabbler. So, um, I don't know that I have anything like specifically foundational, but I think that I am building on the foundation of the work that I've done previously in, in ways that are very valuable for the business. Yeah, that's actually, that's a really good point. And I was thinking about that.

Cause I I've been thinking about, are there areas as, as certain parts of my business continue to grow, I needed to start thinking kind of strategically about areas where it might pull back. And so I made a list the other day of just like, where can I pull back? Where do I really want to keep going? You know, in terms of, of what I'm spending time on and like, The you've got this podcast, which is my primary podcast.

Like I still want to keep going with that. I'd really like to keep logging. It keeps my writing muscles warm, you know, like there's, there's a certain things that I feel really good about, but I was thinking about, um, my other podcasts coach to coach, which was really created as a kind of. Content marketing piece for the coach training program and actually ended up being an educational piece for the coach training program and I've embedded it into the curriculum and we listened to episodes and talk about them.

And, and for people who haven't listened to the show, this is basically me coaching other people and them coaching me back. So I bring on guest coaches each season and we talk. But we've gotten to a place with that show where I have enough content there to kind of fulfill the curricular needs that I need.

We've gone through, I think six seasons. I've just released the six season as we record this, it's releasing right now. And I looked at that and I thought, well, that's a pretty strong foundation for people to listen to both within the program and outside of the program. I'm not sure I need to continue that forever.

You know, like that may be something that I eventually, and I don't know yet, like I'm thinking about it. So, um, is that something that I would retire is that, cause it's kind of tough sometimes to find the guest coach, it's asking someone to commit quite a bit of time, at least eight hours of their time.

Um, which right now is just volunteer. They're just coming on the show and kind of volunteering to coach with me. Um, and the people who've come on have just been really phenomenal, but I don't know that that's something I can continue. Both just time wise to do. And so I do feel like there's this important piece of when you're creating pieces of your online presence, like you're describing with your videos, to what degree is that evergreen, to what degree is that going to be useful in the future?

Um, and even thinking about articles that you create for your blog, you know, like, or thinking really specifically about SEO or what's driving people to the site. What's the level of evergreen, that, that is that you can just kind of let it sit there and it's going to do the work for you. So that's interesting.

When you talked about your videos as being foundational, I was like, yeah, there's a couple things I can think about that feel that way to me too, that I'm not sure. And that's something that I think is actually really important to think about with online presence. It's just because you launch something.

Doesn't mean, it needs to be part of your business forever. And there is this sunsetting thing that you and I both talked about where we've taken products that, you know, I think about the first online course I created about promoting books for academics. I mean, you could email me and I'll, I'll let you buy it, but it's not really prominently on my website.

It's, it's, you'd have to go back and find a link somewhere and, you know, try to find it. I it's, it's something that I'm not really pushing anymore, but it gave me. Really important things. And I learned a lot from it in the very early days. So that's the other piece too, is sometimes we have a component of our online presence.

Webinars series I launched in the beginning is another good example of that, that I eventually sent, said it and was like, now I feel super competent and knowledgeable about how to run webinars. I got what I needed from that. I hope my audience got what they needed from that. But I don't necessarily feel like I need to do that outside of what I do with the prolific community.

So yeah. I mean, that's just really interesting to think about like, what are these foundational components and what is the purpose that they serve. Right. Right. Well, and even are there ways that you can kind of re curate that content in a way that. W, you know, might speak to either a slightly different audience or is easier for your kind of initial audience who's stumbling upon you for the first time to interact with, like, if you have a couple of those things that are like, here are my core tenants of coaching or whatever, like how do you present that stuff?

Um, you know, I've thought about that with, with respect to some of my client work too. Like, which of these. Pieces of work that I've done for, for other people should, should have a showcase, you know, position on my website and which can just kind of exist in the general portfolio of things. So, um, yeah, it's, it's definitely a constant, uh, kind of reiteration, I guess I'm like thinking about, what's going to be useful to you going forward.

One of the things that I'm struggling with right now with respect to online presence is. Finding the time to like, think about it and actually make it happen on my website. Like I have a laundry list as we're talking, that's like going on in my head of the things that I need to change and tweak and adjust.

Um, You know, in order to kind of continue the business growth the way I've seen it been the way that it's been growing. Um, and so, you know, I'll remind you, I remind folks out there that like your website should be a living thing. You should update it frequently. Um, I'm currently in the bad about that camp, but, uh, you know, for others out there who are, who are struggling to find that time, like it's a thing that's real.

And also it's really important to continue to refresh that presence and make sure it is, is still serving you the way that it, that you need it to for the type of work that you want to be focused on. Yeah, this is something that I went in and did like a light refresh over the winter break. Cause I needed to add in some coaching packages that had changed.

I needed to update my, my fees and some things like that on the website. And I actually put in a recurring task for myself every month to just go in and like check and make sure because I have stuff on like the front page. That's like upcoming events that I need to be like cycling in and out, depending on, you know, when people are sending up for things.

But I feel like my homepage is like, well overdue for a kind of overhaul and I don't know what I want to do there yet. And so that's really, what's been hanging me up is that I just don't have a vision yet of what I want to put there. And it's fine. I mean, it, for what it is, it's, it's not hurting anything necessarily, but I just feel like it's time.

So I eventually, I think I'm going to do something there, but it was nice to kind of go through the website and kind of touch everything and. Refresh a little bit like the styling that I was using on the site. And, um, and it took, I don't know. I remember we were watching miracle on 34th street while I was doing it.

Cause it was like in the background, you know, it was just one of those things where you're just kind of tweaking things. Um, but I would say I probably spent a good four hours, you know, just kind of going through stuff. So it, I, I don't know. It's one of those things where it's like, it can take a lot of time, but it doesn't have to, like you, you can just kind of be fiddling with it.

And, and I would say I go in there maybe an hour or two every month and just kind of like change some things around and update stuff. And of course I'm, I'm posting to the show notes of the podcast and my blog every week. So like that's putting me in there, but that kind of holistic view of like looking at all the pages together and like, how is everything.

Coming together that matters. Um, yeah, yeah, yeah. I hear you. It's hard. And I, I like to wait until I see someone else's thing that I'm like really inspired by, and then I'm like, Oh yeah, that's, that's kind of what I'm going for. Yeah. Yeah. Or like, Oh, I need to try that on my site. Cause that seems to work really well.

Or like I'm really drawn to that. And like what would that look like for my site? Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah. It's a constant struggle. Do you want to talk about Sarah related to branding and online presence? And I think there's like the basics of, of branding, which, you know, branding is such a achy word for so many of us.

It's like, Oh, I don't know. Uh, what does that mean? Uh, and it, it both means more than colors and fonts and styles, and it also is really important to have consistency in your colors and fonts and styles. And so, um, for, for people who are a little newer to this. You know, settle into something you like, but also know that that can change and that's okay.

But when it changes, make sure that it changes consistently and kind of threw out, um, you know, it's a, of course, uh, okay. For your style to change and not go back. And Katie I'm sure for you, like going back and changing all of the graphics for all of the podcasts episodes that you've ever made is like, Maybe not a priority.

It be exactly. Yeah. That was not on my list of things. Right. But making sure that anything that you create going forward is, is in that brand and in that kind of consistent feel. It's weird. Cause like I don't, I'm not, uh, I don't really understand fonts. I'll be honest. It's like, I, I understand they're important.

And I also have no like, no idea about font theory. Um, I know there's a whole like field out there that, that studies that sort of thing. But for me, when I'm looking at somebody's website, It's sort of this, like, do I feel settled or do I feel unsettled? Right. And so anything that you can do to kind of make your audience feel comfortable in your presence and feel that there's consistency and coherence between your different online channels, whatever that is.

And that happens a lot, sort of. Subtly through fonts and brands and colors or fonts and colors and, and style, but it also happens in your voice and how you kind of present the personality of your business. Um, and so those are kind of, if you're getting, just kind of getting started in this sort of branding world and they're like, ah, branding, what does that mean?

Um, I like to kind of focus people on that idea of personality. What is the personality that you want to convey? Um, and whether that's as an individual or as an organization, um, w w what do you want to be known for? How do you want your people to feel when they, when they stumble upon your work? So, um, I don't know.

Those are just like some tips that I'm kind of mulling, um, as I'm working with some clients on that, on that issue of like, what does branding help? What do I do? So, yeah. Yeah. The other thing that you were kind of making me think about was. Getting help with some of this stuff. So like I mentioned, I hired someone to do a rebrand for me, and it's stuck for a couple of years.

I mean, sometimes I look at it and I'm like, wow, these colors seem kind of bright and colorful. I don't know how I feel about that. You know, like at the time it was like kind of where I was, and, and now I'm like a little more muted, I think. But the other thing, when it comes to online presence is, you know, we both use certain tools and, you know, Canva we've mentioned before I have a scheduling tool, things like that.

But the other thing that I don't think, I, I probably talk about enough just in terms of the actual, um, role that he plays is my partner, my business partner, my life partner. He does basically all the backend. On our websites. And we have multiple between the course websites that I run, you know, the, um, the main website where things are branching off of, I have book websites.

I have other kinds of things that we're doing. He's the one who handles all the domain name registrations. He does all the security backups. He does, you know, a lot of the caching. Like he, he figures out all the tools and stuff to make it go quicker. I'm not doing any of that. And so I think that that's the other piece and I totally understand why some people go with like a Squarespace or I think you use Wix, Sarah or Squarespace.

Now I, you were using Wix before. Yeah. Okay. So going with something like that, because it's a little bit more, um, Hands-off I think with some of these other pieces, but I'm fortunate that I have this expertise, um, in my home so that I can be really leveraging that. So that's the other piece is like, if you feel like you don't fully understand some of this stuff, None of us do.

I mean, like, there's just no possible way, unless you're like a web designer or whatever, and I've designed my own sites, but I feel like I am still, there's a very large force of information that I don't know how to do that. So I mean, you do, you do what you can. And I think that that's the other piece with online presence is like over time you get better at it and you learn as you go and you look at the metrics and you see what's working and you see what's not working and you make decisions about that.

So, I think both of us have evolved pretty heavily in our own knowledge of these tools and techniques. And even how we talk about them now. It feels very casual where you're like, I don't know, I'm not using social media anymore. And in the beginning it's like, we're going to live or die by our social media posts.

Like our businesses will go under if we're not posting on Twitter three times a day at the optimal times. And how do we know what the optimal times are? I mean, like it, you just get so kind of frantic about it and now we're like, yeah, whatever, it's a tool, you know, like there's other tools. So I do feel like there's kind of a.

A maturity that happens with some of this stuff too, you know, as you're growing your business and this being a retrospective. I just want to mention that because I do think if you heard us talk about this at the beginning, it would, we'd be taking it way more seriously. Yes. Agreed. Okay. Yeah. Our younger selves, it's really funny to go back and listen.

It is, it is. And to kind of preview an upcoming episode. Uh, we, we are doing a listen back to, um, one of our, one of our previous episodes, all about our biggest fears and Katie, I don't know about you, but listening back to that was both like, Oh, we're so cute. And also like, yeah, that's still relevant. Uh, no, I definitely, I don't want to give too much away, but there was one in particular where I was like, Oh, this actually gives me a lot of insight into something I'm feeling right now, because that is one of my fears.

And I was like, Oh, like some of it, I feel like I've set aside, but other stuff was super relevant. So yeah, we will talk about that in a couple of episodes. Um, but listeners, I want to thank you for coming back and listening to this episode of our retrospective. We have a couple left in the season and Sarah as always so fun to check in with you.

Same to you and a chat again soon.

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