

PEP098: Doing Less More Effectively: Mindful Productivity with Sarah Steckler

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[00:00:00] **Andrea:** Check, check, mic, check,

check, check, mic, check.

[00:00:09] **Andrea:** welcome to Podcast Envy. I'm your podcast boss, Andrea Kliner, and it is another new year, yet it's still the new year. It hasn't been that many weeks. We have survived. We are moving forward in my part of the world. It is a cold, gray, wintery season, and yet there is the pressure. Of the new year of productivity, of jumping back into work mode after a couple of slow weeks watching movies, eating, reading actual books, and thinking confession.

[00:00:40] I have a. Complicated relationship with productivity. Raise your hand if you can already relate. I have all the ideas, especially at this time of year. For some reason I wanna try experiments with my podcast clients, shows I wanna create new shows, I wanna improve workflows. I want to offer new packages, programs and services.

[00:01:00] I want to do all the things that have nothing to do with podcasting, and yet I also deeply desire rest. Reflection, I want to ease into the new year slowly rather than bursting through the door with sparkle and sass, though I do like a little bit of drama from time to time. In any case, this very episode is a prime example of this push pull that I feel at this time of year.

[00:01:29] I recorded an interview with the amazing Sarah Steckler of the Mindful Productivity Podcast toward the end of 2020. In the height of the pandemic, when things workwise, social wise, Lifewise had seemed to slow way down. And the only thing I knew to do at that moment was record a bunch of interviews, and then I suddenly got real busy and my client work increased, and I expanded my business and added team members.

[00:02:00] And as you may or may not have noticed in my episode release schedule for Podcast Envy, it started to slow to a trickle. And this interview got

lost in the recesses of Dropbox and Trello and. , what can I say? But there is this weird thing that happens to me sometimes with my podcast interviews where I'm somewhere between a podcast clairvoyant and maybe more of a cliché circus tent dwelling fortune teller when I listen back to audio files that I recorded ages ago.

[00:02:36] they are suddenly more relevant now in this future moment than they were then in that past moment. That is 100% the case. With this interview with Sarah revisiting this conversation was exactly what I needed to hear at the start of the new year, and as a busy, creative professional who podcasts, I'm guessing you do too, as I mentioned, Sarah Steckler is the producer and host of the Mindful Productivity Podcast, and she creates a suite of resources to help you stay organized and sustainably grow your.

[00:03:09] This includes an array of planners. I dare you to check them out and not buy at least one of them for this year. Also, courses to help get you organized, launch a podcast, or publish your own planner. In this conversation, we are talking about getting organized focus projects, making hard choices with your time and energy, and of course, podcasting strategies for sustainable results with your.

[00:03:33] So I want you to listen closely and see how these mindset tips and resets can apply to how you approach creating content for your podcast. Where do you need to delegate, repurpose, hire out. Or focus in. And also, I hope our conversation helps take the pressure off if you need to pivot, rethink, reformat, or even take a break and come up with a whole new strategy for your show specifically or your business more broadly.

[00:04:05] I suspect I am going to offer some more specific strategies and tips for that whole taking a break from your show thing on a future. Hey, Andrea episode of Podcast Envy. Speaking of which, if you have a burning podcast question, challenge conundrum, something you've always wanted to know, please reach out to me.

[00:04:26] and send me a message. You can record it as a voice memo on your phone or you can type it out and I'll read it for you on a future episode of Podcast Envy. Along with my thoughts and opinions. Also, I'm dying. Let me know how accurately my crystal ball predicted that you needed to hear this very conversation.

[00:04:46] Right. As a little side note, of course, I reached back out to Sarah to see if it was even okay to publish this interview from ages ago, just to make sure

that there was nothing in there that felt outdated or incorrect or she had changed her thoughts or opinions. And I will say Sarah herself is going through a.

[00:05:05] Big life transition with a move and some thoughts around her own business. And so if you enjoy and get value from this conversation, I would encourage you to check out the Mindful Productivity Podcast and see what's going on with Sarah and how she is navigating and taking care of herself as a solopreneur, as a small business owner through these transitions and changes as.

[00:05:28] Of course links to find all things Sarah Steckler the Mindful Productivity Podcast, and all of the resources mentioned in this episode are in the show notes, in your episode description and @podcastenvy.com. And now let's all take a deep breath in, together and out, and welcome the amazing Sarah St. Sarah Steckler, thank you so much for joining me on Podcast Envy.

[00:05:58] I wanted to start actually by asking you kind of an odd question. I feel like you are the type of person who has the type of brand where people constantly are asking you the same questions over and over again. And the reason I feel this way is because I always do a little research for my guests. I kind of deep dive into their podcast if there's somebody who has a podcast, and I did go back through the Mindful Productivity podcast and I was like,

[00:06:24] Oh. , there's the answer to that question. There's the answer to that question. Every question that I could come up with. You have an episode answering that question, and so I'm curious for you, what do you wish that people would ask you about that they usually

[00:06:37] **Sarah:** don't? I don't know that I've ever really thought about that.

[00:06:40] Yeah. I mean, people ask me a lot of times like how I get. Stuff done or how I get so much stuff done. I think one thing people maybe don't touch on enough is how do you define your own version of success? Or how do you define your own version of what productivity looks like for you? Mm-hmm. , because it's gonna be different for everybody.

[00:06:58] I've been on other people's podcasts before where they kind of hear what my version of productivity is, and it's not necessarily what they would think. So that's kind of an area that we don't explore that often.

[00:07:08] **Andrea:** How would you answer that question if someone Yeah, say, you know, a podcaster, were to ask you

[00:07:13] **Sarah:** that.

[00:07:14] I think for me, productivity isn't about getting. More done. And in fact, it's less about time management and it's more about my own energy management. So when I'm looking at my productivity, obviously I'm looking at the goals I wanna achieve, the things that I wanna get done, whether that's recording podcast episodes or whatever.

[00:07:33] But it's also, what do I wanna feel like at the end of the day? What do I wanna have time for? Because if I have a whole day go by, . I don't have time at the end of the day to like play animal crossing and get into my planners like I love doing. Then, like it's a wasted day for me, even if I've reached my goals, right?

[00:07:50] Not every day is perfect, but there's a lot of breaks. There's been a lot of naps. There's a lot of time going outside with my bulldog, and so the days can sometimes look scattered, but I've got focus projects around them, so when I am working, I know what

[00:08:03] **Andrea:** I'm doing. I have a tendency when I have a lot on my plate to start making checklists.

[00:08:09] For the day, and when I look at my checklist and I realize that it's three pages long and there's literally no human way possible to complete a three page checklist in one day, a, I'm setting myself up for failure. B, I'm probably not gonna feel that great at the end of the day no matter what because.

[00:08:27] It's either not gonna get checked off or I will have worked myself to death attempting to check everything off. And then also there's this feeling that if I were to go outside or if I were to take a break or if I were to take a nap that I am somehow failing or I'm not doing what I should be doing because there's that three page checklist.

[00:08:47] And so how do you balance. , all of the things that actually do need to get done versus making sure that you're designing the day in such a way that you have those things that feel fulfilling and

[00:08:58] successful

[00:08:59] **Sarah:** to you. I think this is really where. focus projects come in, but also really understanding what your main objective is.

[00:09:05] So it's kinda like anytime you move, you know, you kinda have to like restock your pantry and like you don't have sugar or flour or like weird spices. And if you just go to the store you can pick everything up, but it can feel really overwhelming and then you can kind of get home and be like, okay, what am I gonna make for dinner?

[00:09:19] Like, oh, I can't really make anything with just like rice and paprika. Right? . Like, I didn't, I didn't really like think about what I wanted to end up with. Right. . What endless to-do lists really are in a way, is they're more like brain dumps. So it's really a way of capturing all this stuff in your head.

[00:09:37] and then the next step that people miss is then taking that and figuring out what are the main things that you need to work on in a given day, in a given week if, if you do 60 day sprints, something like that. And then really taking your main objective and then pulling out those tasks. . Sometimes I'll even make like a quote unquote focus project for random stuff, like errands I need to run, or things in my business that are just like one off weird things, like you've gotta send an email to this person, blah, blah, blah.

[00:10:06] And then just kind of categorizing them and then. , when you start working and taking action on them, you're kind of in the right head space to do them. Instead of like running around like crazy, doing everything. You

[00:10:16] **Andrea:** said this phrase focus projects. I know that I have a tendency to be like, oh, I have to send this email.

[00:10:21] Oh, I have to send this invoice. Oh, I have to edit this podcast. Oh, now I'm having a podcast recording session and it's like chaos. . I know that a lot of people are big fans of batching tasks or even batching days. Is that the go-to way to do it or do you think it depends on the person?

[00:10:37] **Sarah:** Yeah, I mean, my answer is always gonna be, it depends, right?

[00:10:40] Like it depends on how your brain works and what feels good to you. But for me, I know I kind of have phases. I notice like towards the fall time of the year, I tend to be like way more productive. I can just create forever and ever. And then there's other times in the year where not so much. So it does help me to have some core things throughout my week.

[00:10:58] So I could give you a couple examples of like things I do like on Fridays, I have what I call like a weekly pulse point. Check-in in my business.

Where I do the stuff I like set like a two hour chunk of time and I do the things that, for whatever reason I don't wanna do. Once I start doing them, it's not a big deal.

[00:11:13] So I'll like, I'll make it fun, like I'll give myself a piece of chocolate and I'll put on some like, you know, dubstep and then I'll go through and like do my budgeting, right. Track my expenses and I'll make it like a party, even though it's not, and I'll trick myself. That's a fun way to get myself to do stuff that.

[00:11:28] that you need to do all the time so that you're not like super behind and feel even more stressed out. But yeah, I love batching, especially for podcasting. I think it can be a really productive way to also get in the same head space. Cuz I dunno if you feel this way, but sometimes like you're just in a better mood to record a podcast.

[00:11:45] Like you just have correct the energy. You just feel like you can show up. And then there's other days where you're like, there's no way I'm getting in front of the mic today. Yeah. So. . I definitely like to do all of those things. How I break them up and what those days look like. That can always change.

[00:11:58] It's not like, you know, for the past three years, Tuesdays have always been one specific thing, right? You're

[00:12:03] **Andrea:** one of those people that I look at your work, I look at your website, I look at your podcast, I look at your content, and I am like, Oh, I cannot stand her. How is she that organized and that productive?

[00:12:16] Like I wish, and I, I mean that in the best possible way. I don't mean I can't stand you. No, totally. I appreciate it. I'm just like, I aspire to be more organized. I aspire to be more productive. I aspire to have better systems, but it has been 42 years on this planet. And that has not occurred yet. Have you always been this way or is this something that you had to work at?

[00:12:39] Both.

[00:12:39] **Sarah:** I mean, I'm. Typical like type A person. Like I was the kind of person that in middle school, like my mom would pick me up or something and be like, do you wanna get ice cream? And I'd be like, no, I gotta get home and I have to do my homework. That was me, . I've always, you know, eaten my vegetables first, so to speak.

[00:12:54] But I think what's fascinating is that. , we have a different perception of ourselves and then there's like what people see in us. Yeah, and I always think it's fascinating that people see me as this super organized person. I mean, I appreciate it. I'm not gonna argue with it, but like , I think if people saw my every day, maybe I should do a day in the life or something, they'd actually be surprised that the amount of time that I'm actually like quote unquote organized or focused is very limited.

[00:13:18] But when I am focused, there's a lot of momentum that's built. So, when, for example, I can't remember how far into the pandemic, I decided to create a course about podcasting and basically did a presale and created all the content in like, I don't know, six days. That's all I did though. What I'll share is like very real, is that my kitchen was a mess.

[00:13:39] You know, I would shower, but I didn't do my makeup that week. You know what I mean? So like some people could argue that how productive is that, right? If you're sacrificing these other things. But I know when I'm in my creative zone, , I have to just go with it. Yeah. So , I think I just wanna share the, the reality that what gets done in my business gets done because I create focused smaller chunks of time where I'm like, in this amount of time I'm gonna do this, and then I do it like I just.

[00:14:08] minimize my distractions. So that's probably the best thing that you could do if you're struggling with organization is like pinpointing the one thing you're focusing on and then just like minimize everything else. Yeah. Don't get on Instagram , don't download freebies, don't do any of that other stuff.

[00:14:22] Do you think

[00:14:23] **Andrea:** that that's like the biggest thing that gets in the way of productivity distraction?

[00:14:27] **Sarah:** I think that can play a big part in it, and I think it can drain our energy and I think when our energy is drained, that can reduce our productivity. But I also think. . One of the biggest things that happens is when you get excited about a new idea or a new project, you feel confident and you feel excited, and then all of a sudden sometimes you'll have like self-doubt creep in, or you'll be like, who am I to do this?

[00:14:50] You know, all that kind of stuff. I mean, even years into. being a business owner, I still have those feelings as a way of keeping the endorphin rush going. You can be like, oh, I'm just gonna update my website. Or like, oh,

I'm just gonna make some extra graphics for the pack that have nothing to do with what you actually wanna accomplish, but that feels good.

[00:15:07] That feels comfortable. So a lot of times we hinder ourselves in our productivity by. not believing in ourselves enough, not trusting in our ability enough. It's funny

[00:15:16] **Andrea:** that you and I are meeting right now, so listeners, this is the first time Sarah and I are meeting . We were introduced by the fabulous Kelly Covert, who you will have heard on the show,

[00:15:25] It's very interesting to come across you right now because I'm at this point where my business is expanding and grow. , which is awesome, but it also has a tendency to feel a little overwhelming because it's like, where is the space to do the things that need to happen in order for things to actually grow?

[00:15:44] Are you still working, just you solo in your business, or do you have a team? Yeah,

[00:15:47] **Sarah:** I was just gonna get into this. Mm-hmm. , because this is typically where you feel that pressure to like hire a team. Hire a team. Yes. Right. Yeah.

[00:15:53] **Andrea:** I recently made a list, let's say, for one aspect of my business, which is podcast editing and production for clients, and I made a list of.

[00:16:02] Individual task that goes into producing one client's show and who does that task? And I was shocked at how many actual, even from like slide this file from this folder to this folder in Dropbox or send this confirmation email. I was shocked by how many line items were in that workflow that are in my head.

[00:16:28] But if someone else were to come in and try to. This, it would not make sense to them. They'd be like, I don't understand how this gets to here, to here, to here. And also I was shocked by how many of those tasks were me doing them and they were repetitive, like things that I do over and over and over again.

[00:16:44] Do you have a pro? Sorry, that was a really

[00:16:45] **Sarah:** long No, no. No way. I'm geeking out listening to this because first of all, I think a lot of times people don't write like their standard

operating procedures or their workflows until they wanna hire somebody, and that's when they realize how much work they've been doing.

[00:16:59] Even though you know all those steps, like in your brain, you're still using up mental energy every time you do them, right? So like when you write a procedure for yourself or a team member, you're taking that away from your brain. So that's one thing I started doing for the podcast for sure. So, yeah, I was just geeking out listening to your list because I realize that as I get deeper into my podcast and as things grow, it's like, okay, if at some point, right, I'm gonna need to hire a team.

[00:17:24] That's just the way it is. And that's, that's totally cool. But eventually you get to a point where you're like, oh, the only mental capacity I really have anymore is for my zone of genius. Once you've gotten to this stage in your business where you know you've got an audience, you're doing things, you're selling services or products, , you no longer have time to be the like administrative assistant anymore.

[00:17:45] Mm-hmm. . So you have to find ways to, yeah. Either automate, outsource, or delegate something. Right.

[00:17:51] **Andrea:** You know, I think it goes back to your point of looking at the things that you're doing in the day that feel like they have to get done and they feel important, but they're not actually necessarily moving you towards those bigger goals.

[00:18:03] But they're just things to tell yourself. You're doing a good job. Almost

[00:18:07] **Sarah:** Instagram's like that for me. Oh my gosh. One thing I have really noticed is like I follow other entrepreneurs and use them as like a case study. I followed people for years and I've noticed that when people really start hitting their stride, not always but.

[00:18:20] their Instagram becomes like an afterthought. Mm-hmm. . And I've always thought that was interesting because sometimes I'll see other people's, and I'm not saying that this is always the case, but sometimes I see people's Instagrams and it's, I mean, it's like a piece of art. Everything is just so beautiful and cohesive and like everything's well branded and they're always on there and.

[00:18:38] I've noticed that for me, the more I'm on Instagram, the more I'm really taking time away from like things I actually need to do in my business. So like if you're gonna miss a day of Instagram stories, is that really gonna ruin your business? No. Yeah,

[00:18:50] **Andrea:** and I like kind of what you said about being more productive does not necessarily mean doing more stuff.

[00:18:57] **Sarah:** It's doing less, more effectively.

[00:18:59] **Andrea:** Yeah, doing less, more effectively. So how can we take an inventory and see where the things are that we can do less

[00:19:09] **Sarah:** of? I think one of the best questions anyone can ask themselves is, what's something that I can just. Repurpose or repeat? Either it's something I'm repurposing in terms of content.

[00:19:20] It's something I'm repeat. I mean, a great example of this is like if I'm having a week where I'm just swamped or like I'm supporting students, blah, blah, blah, and I just have not even thought about saying hello on social media. That whole week, I will just repurpose everything. I will share reels I've created again, sometimes I'll go back and reshare stories.

[00:19:39] Here's the thing too, is that I think we're scared of repurposing stuff in our lives. We think everything has to be brand new for it to be valuable, but the chances of people seeing everything you do or hearing everything you do, you know, it's like. , even with podcasting, taking segments you've done before and or reminding people to go back to past episodes or even, one thing I'm gonna start doing with people is like doing a swap.

[00:20:03] So basically like if I was interviewed for somebody's show and they interviewed me, it's like doing the normal shows, but then also getting that audio from them and redoing it on your own podcast. So like, I'm just looking for more and more ways to. Repurpose and make things easier.

[00:20:21] **Andrea:** And now it's time for this episode's podcast.

[00:20:23] Angel Podcast. Angels are those products, programs, and services that make your podcasting life oh, so much more effective, efficient, and enjoyable. And who help support your podcast boss, the Creative Imposter Studios, and this show all at the same. Our current podcast, angel is the podcast ENV masterclass series.

[00:20:44] You wanna be the master of your own podcast, right? Then join us for these strategy sessions on the most pressing questions for purpose-driven leaders who are using podcasting to make a positive impact on their communities and disrupt the status quo. Masterclass are perfect for you when you are ready to take on a focus project of your own with your.

[00:21:05] Show coming up Oh so soon. In January of 2023, we are meaning to supercharge your skills as a podcast host. You already know that hosting a podcast is so much more than just plugin in a mic and tapping into your gift of gab. But how do you level up so that your podcast shines in a sea of similar shows?

[00:21:26] I've invited the host of Wild and Sublime Karen Yates to join me. One hour session designed to show you how to use the instrument of your voice to fortify your relationship with your listeners. How to create an interview experience that you, your guests, and your audience will love, and all of the things that you need to think about and prepare for before.

[00:21:47] And after you record, in order to ensure that your message really lands with your audience, and in February of 2023, we are revealing the secrets of how to leverage video in your social media strategy for your podcast. If I had a nickel for every time someone asked me about video and podcasting. Well, I'd have quite a few nickels.

[00:22:11] Last episode with Lauren Ramsey of Betsy Bash Social Media Agency. We announced the Creative Bash for aligning your podcast strategy with your social media strategy. This class is for you if you're frustrated by your podcast, download numbers, if you struggle to get new listeners, followers, sales, or engagement from your social media accounts.

[00:22:29] If you know you need video, but loathe the idea of recording yourself on camera. And even if you love the idea video, but feel like there just isn't enough time in the day to add it to your content creation to-do list. If this sounds like you join us February 23rd, 2023, and we'll offer you straight talk strategy and actionable advice so that you can make the best moves for your show when you book your seat, you can also add on a one-on-one session with me so that after the class you and I can meet to get into the specifics of how to apply.

[00:23:03] What we covered in the class to your specific show, and even if you're listening to this after February 23rd and you've missed the host skills class and you've missed the video and social media class, you can still go to the

creative imposter.com/masterclass and find all upcoming classes that you can register.

[00:23:25] Right now, again, that URL is the creative imposter.com/masterclass. And oh, hey, do you want a little discount for being a listener of Podcast Envy? I'm so glad you asked. When you book your class, enter the code v I. P invite and you'll receive 50% off your class. Once again, visit the creative imposter.com/masterclass linked in the show notes.

[00:23:59] Enter the promo code when you register v i p invite. Consider adding that one-on-one session with me and I'll see your face on Zoom real soon. Well, speaking of podcasting and speaking of the podcast and speaking of doing less, like I've found that I work a lot with professionals who podcast, so people who the podcast is not necessarily the business model.

[00:24:25] which I think is smart in most cases, . Yeah. Or even I'm working with organizations as well, or companies, and the podcast becomes an integral part of the business. But there's a lot of times where people have a hard time actually marrying those two. I feel like your podcast so clearly. ties into your brand, and so clearly gives me an idea of what you do.

[00:24:49] How do you see the show fitting into your business? What role does it

[00:24:53] **Sarah:** play for you? Well, I started it because I needed a creative outlet and I wasn't blogging consistently, but I can, as you can tell, I can just talk and talk and talk . So I was like, well, this is great. I'll just start a podcast. So the podcast really for.

[00:25:07] There were like a couple main reasons that I started it. It was for that, and it was also like I really wanted more of a connection and community. And there's just something about listening. There's some meme out there where it's like there's a billboard of people talking with Mikes and then someone sitting next to it,

[00:25:22] That's how I feel listening to podcast. Yes, and I totally feel that way. It's like when you listen in, you feel like you're there with whoever. So I wanted to connect with my audience that way and. Then I just found that people really enjoyed the conversational, like aspect of it. Like it really just started becoming this place where I could invite people into what I do, invite people into courses, into planners, I create all that kind of stuff, and then also use those things as pillars of content.

[00:25:51] So sometimes I have a, a podcast episode where I'm talking about something and then it guides them into like a planner I have, and then other times the planner is the, the topic of the podcast. And so, I don't have too many like rigid rules about things in my podcast. If I have an episode and I want to talk about decluttering my office and it doesn't really relate to business, I don't really care because I don't know we're humans and I mean, obviously I'm not gonna go talk about like gardening and Fiji or something that wouldn't make sense.

[00:26:19] But , I think it's important. I want my audience to know who I am and like, and vibe with me. And so that's, I guess it's kind of a, it's a way of getting to know me as a brand, as a human. , and I think that's how I view my podcast. So you've been podcasting for, it was February, 2018, so yeah. Time flies.

[00:26:37] **Andrea:** That's wild.

[00:26:38] Yeah. Is there anything that has. Changed for you about the show, about your approach to the show, about how you think about it?

[00:26:47] **Sarah:** I definitely am more direct with who I am, what I do, and how you can support me. So when I first started the show, I was like just a baby business owner, like only a, a couple years into my business and had just pivoted once again with my niche.

[00:27:02] That's a whole other story. And so, Sometimes I'll go back and like listen to a past episode and it can feel kind of cringey to me because I can feel my insecurity, I can feel my hesitancy in saying like, Hey, I have this product. You should go check it out. And now I just don't feel that way anymore. I notice that there's more confidence in my voice.

[00:27:21] I notice I speak differently. It's kind of a nice reminder that we have to just start from where we are, which is ironically the first episode of my podcast, and we just have to keep going and things will adapt and change. But that doesn't also mean that like the beginning stages of what you did weren't valuable.

[00:27:37] Right. But also, I just wanted to say this one thing cuz you reminded me of something that like. I used to have a lot of fear around, cuz I'll mention things on my podcast, right? And some things never came to existence and some things don't exist anymore. So like I'll have freebies that don't exist anymore, or I'll have entire courses that no longer exist.

[00:27:54] And so part of me was like, oh my gosh, I'm gonna have to go back and figure out what episode was what, and then delete that. And now it's just like, you know what if people go there and it doesn't exist anymore? It doesn't exist and it's okay. It's like you don't freak out if you go to Target and you're like, oh, they don't sell that thing from 1982 anymore,

[00:28:11] It just doesn't exist anymore, . So I don't know. I don't, I've like to go around the fear around that and the perfectionism around that. I wanna

[00:28:18] **Andrea:** pick on something that you said, like two things that you just said that feel related. one is, a little while ago you said something about a business pivot around the time you were starting your podcast, and you were like, that's a whole other story,

[00:28:32] **Sarah:** You're like, it's a story for now, .

[00:28:35] **Andrea:** The second thing, which may or may not be related is what you just said about that you were talking about something that never happened. Mm. And I have this all the time where I get these brilliant idea. that I get excited about and I'm like, oh, this is definitely a thing people are going to want to do.

[00:28:54] It'll be a course, a group coaching program, uh, whatever it is. And I think we're probably both in the same category of people that have no shortage of ideas, of things that we could do in our niche and with our people and yeah, whatever. And I'll promote it for like a couple months and many episodes, and.

[00:29:12] Nobody ever signs up. Yep. And it doesn't happen. And I'm like, oh

[00:29:16] **Sarah:** my gosh, can we just, yes. I'm so glad we're talking about this because I don't think people talk about this enough, . I think we just see people create things and then like sell them and then we're like, oh, that's just the only way it happens.

[00:29:27] But no, I have created so many wait lists. In my life, in my business where nobody cares, , I've pre-launched things where nobody buys, and that is also just one way to test your market. And it's okay to do that, and you're not a failure because you didn't have enough people sign up. I have ran group programs where only one person has signed up, and then I contact them and I'm like, look, you're the only person.

[00:29:55] Let's turn this into a one-on-one thing, or here's a refund, this isn't gonna happen. And one thing that really helped me with this is when there was like a time, well, when I was in college, and then other times where I'd signed up for like a course at a community college or something, and I'd be like, oh, this looks really cool.

[00:30:11] And then they'd just send out an email a couple months later like, Hey, enrollment was too low to run it. We're not gonna run it. And you'd be kind of bummed, but you'd be like, all right, here's my refund. We can do that in our business too. Like it's not, I just, we only see the wins. Yeah. And people don't have, like, I just, Ugh, I'm so glad to have this conversation with somebody else because it's like people just don't talk about it enough, or like, that's what I hear from some of my students too.

[00:30:32] It's like, well, but what if I do this thing and then. Nobody buys. I'm like, yeah, that's literally the worst case scenario. What if you'll survive? You'll figure it out. Well, in

[00:30:40] **Andrea:** that case, so you mentioned wait lists, so in that case, knowing that there's a chance that something that you create or something that you want to create isn't gonna fly and nobody's gonna be interested for whatever reason.

[00:30:51] But you know, you have several online courses. Mm-hmm. , I've heard the strategy of create the sales page for the thing, but don't create the thing until enough people buy it, which to me, sends me into a panic attack because then my worst fear is that people will buy it and I won't be able to produce it in two time.

[00:31:11] **Sarah:** Yeah, no, this is such a good point. Well, here's the thing. The integrity piece is important here, right? Because if pre-selling it that way stresses you out and then you're not able to deliver like the quality that you want that people paid for, then like that sucks, right? Then. Like you're gonna let your audience down.

[00:31:26] Nobody wants that. But then at the same point, it also doesn't make sense in my mind to like spend six months creating a course or building it out and then have no one buy that either. Correct? So sometimes a great first step can be even creating. A smaller offer and testing it out, seeing how interested people are.

[00:31:46] Or sometimes I'll do an Instagram live or I'll do a podcast episode exploring a topic and if a lot of people are like, yes, you know, then I'll move forward. Let's talk about the planner course real quick. Like how I launched it. Yeah, that's exactly what I did is I've been self-publishing planners on Amazon for a while and uh, people just would not stop asking me about how I.

[00:32:06] And to be honest, I got tired of some of the questions in my dms being like, tell me how to do this for free. And I was like, well, no, . So, so I asked everybody, I said, look like I'll do a whole course in a group program on this and it'll be like a beta round and it'll be significantly less expensive than when I run it for the real time.

[00:32:22] Yeah. And like, here's how you can sign up. So, I basically had people apply, so I just had a Google form cuz like it's one thing to submit your email and be like, I'm interested. It's another thing entirely to write a couple paragraphs about why you wanna do something and what your idea is. I don't know, like even though you're not throwing money at something, you're more committed.

[00:32:39] So I had. About 14, 15, 16 people submitted an application and I looked through them and it was also a group program, so I wanted to make sure everyone was like, you know, a decent human being and all that. Most of the people signed up and then we did the program and I basically gave myself a month to get the first module done.

[00:33:00] So I was like, . I launched it around November and I said, we're gonna start in December. And I gave myself a full month to get that first week of content done. Mm-hmm. . And then I didn't wanna like feel like every week in the program running live like I had to, like I was under this deadline. So I ended up getting the majority of the content done for the course before we actually started in that first month.

[00:33:22] And then since then, the course has evolved. So a lot of people say, Don't give students like lifetime access to your programs, charge them again and again and again and no shade. Like anyone. Anyone's business model is their business model. Yeah. But I'm a big fan of giving my students lifetime access to what I create.

[00:33:42] So when people join my course, The updates were coming. I mean, it's just eons more valuable now than it was a year and a half ago. So that's one thing that I usually promise to my students. And some courses are different,

right? And if there's live components, sometimes that's an add-on or something, but.

[00:34:00] Point is it was really validating to know that I had people applying for something and they actually wanted to pay for it. But I can also understand how that might be stress inducing for people if they're like, oh, we have 30 days to create this thing now. So it depends. Yeah. But also it can grow. So like when people are pre-selling something, it's like, what's the bare minimum?

[00:34:21] Right? Like what's the quickest way you can get them from a to. and then know that you can always improve upon it later. That totally

[00:34:27] **Andrea:** takes a lot of the pressure off because I know for some of us, myself, I'm, I'm raising my hand for this one, have this perfectionist tendency where it's like, You feel like you have to get everything exactly right, the best possible way the first time you actually launch something.

[00:34:41] Right. And most of my clients, I work one-on-one with, in terms of consulting, launching your podcast. And I know so many launch consultants that have courses and I'm like, yeah, I'd love to do a launch course. And every time I sit down to. My problem is that I'm like, but what about if they have this scenario?

[00:34:59] But what about if they need this module? But what about this very special, unique thing that only one person on the planet ever is going to need, right. For their podcast launch? And what if the technology changes, and I don't even like that microphone that I used to recommend anymore, or that software platform didn't even exist then.

[00:35:16] And so I get very in my head of. all the possibilities for that course could

[00:35:22] **Sarah:** be. Okay. I have these like dumb parallels, but it's like if you were , if you were to go on a trip and like get in the car and you'd pack up everything you need and a little picnic lunch and you'd fill up the gas tank and you get halfway across the country or whatever.

[00:35:33] You would most likely have to fill up your gas tank. You might have a flat tire. You might have all these things happen that there's really no way you could prepare or know, but you would just handle it as you go. You would fill up your tank, you would get more food, blah, blah. There's rest stops along the way.

[00:35:46] Okay, Sarah, end this analogy. point is you would figure it out and so. , even when I'm hearing you like, first of all, the consulting thing is so I need to send some people your way. Cuz there's definitely people I have that are like, I don't want DIY this. Like, I don't want someone to help, like help me seriously.

[00:35:59] Yeah. But even just like taking all of your current and past clients and looking at like them as case studies, right? Mm-hmm. . And so like one thing I do in my planner course, Is that every week when I run a live round, people have new questions. People have like the questions I would've ne I'm like, where That is such a, I don't know.

[00:36:16] I don't know the answer to that. I'm gonna have to get back to you. I don't know. So I'm a big fan of being honest with people when I don't know, I always remind my students Yeah, that like, even though I'm the. person you paid for this course. There's things I'm not gonna know and I'm a human, but I will always do my best to find the answers for you.

[00:36:33] So there's that. I always remind my students that like they should trust in themselves. If there's something I say, you're like, Hmm, I don't know, then like, trust yourself. But I think it's really important to know that you can always add stuff. So one thing I do in my course is I have what I call like an FAQ database, and anytime I get a one-off question from my students that I'm like, oh, that's great.

[00:36:54] I create a Loom video for it and I put it in there and it's this like searchable database and you can tag it and all this kind of stuff. And so, Then when people are going through the course, if they have a question, they can just type it in there. And now that the course has been running for a while, just about everything's in there.

[00:37:12] Right? Yeah. So it can always expand.

[00:37:15] **Andrea:** So we mentioned briefly some of the products that you sell, some of the courses that you have. And I once heard this other podcast producer who I admire, and she had said that when she's working on a new show concept, the concept needs to have at least five. Possible IP iterations that can come from it.

[00:37:35] And so, sure, this makes a great podcast. Could it also be a book? Could it also be a live show? Could it also be merchandise? That's genius. And I was like, oh yes. This is a big piece that a lot of people miss, and I feel like you

are creating this like stable of possible IP integrations that people can have for their brand.

[00:37:57] So if you. 25 different ideas. Well, I could write a book. Well, I could make a planner. That sounds cool. Well, I could do an online course. How do you choose what the next best thing to create is? Yeah.

[00:38:11] **Sarah:** This is such a good question. First of all, I always tell people, what are you most excited about? Mm-hmm.

[00:38:16] because, . As a creative, you've gotta have some passion behind it in order to motivate yourself, but you also wanna make sure that that flame isn't gonna burn out right away. So sometimes we have these shiny, exciting little ideas, , but then 24 hours later, like I can't tell you how many times I've been like, I'm gonna do this membership.

[00:38:34] It's gonna be this, this, and this. I tell my husband and he's like, wow, okay. And then the next day he's like, so are you gonna do? I'm like, no, I don't think that . So it's. Getting clear with like how much you wanna do it, but then also thinking about your customer journey. Like where are they, where are they starting from?

[00:38:50] Like what are, what do they want? What do they need? What are they missing? And what's the first step? It, would it be a planner? Would it be a course? Would it be a one-on-one? You know, and there's really no wrong answer here. It's how do you wanna guide them on a journey? Because for a lot of my students, their first stop is my.

[00:39:10] and then that takes them on a journey to my podcast. And then if they can't get enough of that, then hopefully they buy a course. But taking a step back and being like, in terms of my business model and how you wanna make money, right? Because there's not only the what you're selling, but it's like, are you more of a volume salesperson in your business or are you selling higher end one-on-one services?

[00:39:32] And so really identifying what you want your success to look like too. And what your marketing currently looks like. If you're just starting out and you have one follower on Instagram and nobody knows who you are, then it's probably gonna be hard to sell a \$20 planner and make a full-time income versus starting with maybe one-on-one services.

[00:39:49] Right. I mean, I, I feel like this is stuff people just say all the time, but,

[00:39:53] **Andrea:** but it makes sense. I've been in business. In, well, I've been in this business for the past five plus years and I still have a hard time choosing like, what is my project that I'm working on right now?

[00:40:04] **Sarah:** Yeah. It's tough. I hear you and,

[00:40:06] **Andrea:** and actually admitting, like you just said, that I can't do all 10 brilliant ideas that I Yeah.

[00:40:11] Have successfully at the same time. I mean,

[00:40:15] **Sarah:** I've had people tell me, cuz I've talked about creating a certain different planner for like six months. One time on the podcast I was like, I'm gonna do a dated blah, blah blah. And then at one point it just like never happened. And then I finally did it and I actually got this message from someone.

[00:40:28] She was like, I bought another planner cuz it took too long. Y'all. What? No, I, I laughed. I appreciated it, buddy. Yeah. But it's kind of like, it's really easy to talk about what we're gonna do. I have to stop doing this. I'm so guilty of this in my podcast. I'll be like, I have this idea and I'm gonna do it.

[00:40:44] Or I'll, I'll say, I'm gonna have this done by this time. Like the next time I'm on the podcast, there's gonna be this. And then it's like, no, that's not true at all. So I have to like stop saying things, preempt.

[00:40:55] **Andrea:** All right, so we're coming close to the end of our time together here, but I have a feeling this will not be our last time together.

[00:41:02] what is something that you would like to share with podcasters on Podcast Envy as they're going into the new year and we always make so many plans for the new year and. Often by March, April. Many of those plans we already can tell are not going to come to fruition for whatever reason. Internal, external.

[00:41:24] What would you say to podcasters who are in that space for thinking ahead to March, April? Everything that I planned for my show is not going away. I planned.

[00:41:32] **Sarah:** What would you say? This is a big lesson I learned, is that it's okay for your show to adapt and look different over time, and I literally mean in terms of your episode.

[00:41:42] In terms of even taking a break in terms of going from a podcast that produces shows every week or multiple times a week, to, we're now gonna do seasons because I need to manage my energy better, or I want to record themes. , we can pivot with our structure of our podcast in those terms, we can also pivot in terms of where we focus.

[00:42:04] Even with whatever your niche or podcast topic is, there's like subcategories, right? So you, you can change where your focus is and that's okay. And you can be a human on your podcast. I was a guest on somebody's podcast a long, long time ago. I can't remember which one. Don't even think it's like available anymore.

[00:42:23] And I listened back and she cut our audio. So cl like there was no, you couldn't even hear me go like you couldn't even hear me breathe. It sounded like robots having a conversation, . And I know why she did that cuz she wanted it to be like really succinct and professional. Yeah. But it's like okay to record an episode and not sound perfect.

[00:42:42] I'm not saying sacrifice your audio quality or anything. I know we're both big on that, but it's okay to be human on your podcast, I guess is a big take.

[00:42:49] **Andrea:** Is there anything else that you wanna share that's coming to mind that you didn't get a chance to say? I

[00:42:54] **Sarah:** think I just really wanna hit home that whatever you're working on right now, or whatever you're putting out into the world, don't let the fear of.

[00:43:03] Not enough people joining or enrolling to keep you from doing the thing, because most people experience that more often than not, and you'll keep doing things and eventually people will bite. So that's part of the process I think in creating, is launching out into the unknown. And the more comfortable you get with that, the more success you'll see.

[00:43:26] **Andrea:** Podcast Envy is produced by your podcast boss, Andrea Klinier. That's me. The podcast Envy theme music is by Valentine Sus Nitsky, courtesy of the Free Sound project@freesound.org. And our podcast Angel

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