

E10 - 5 lifechanging lessons I learned in 2022

Welcome to the Empowered Edupreneur Podcast. My name is Michelle Smit and I am an ex-teacher turned online business coach for Edupreneurs the owner of Digiteach and a six-figure entrepreneur. I am in love with empowering educators just like you to create freedom filled online businesses and lives they love. If you are looking to up-level your skills, your finances, your mindset, and change the trajectory of your life as an educator and business, then you are in the right place.

Think of this podcast as your weekly dose of business and mindset development to help unlock the infinite potential within you. To play bigger with your life and go after your dreams. We are going to have so much fun together. So thank you so much for pushing play today. Now let's dive in.

Hello, hello, hello. Fabulous human. I am so stoked to talk to you today. As always, I am currently sitting in Cape Town with a view of the mountain. And I'm the most excited. We have moved here for six weeks and oh my gosh, I am in my element. You know when you just go to a place and you feel like such energetic alignment, like the place was just meant for you, and you're just like so much happier and at peace there.

That is Cape Town for me. And I'm staying in Hout Bay, which is just one of the most magical little places in Cape Town as well. I've really travelled all over the world. Been to like 50 continents, but Cape Town is still probably number one city in the world for me. So yeah, the food, the nature, the weather, the mountains, the wine farms, the beaches, the people.

If you haven't been, put it on your bucket list because you'll just love it. Anyways, I hope you're doing so well today. Can you believe that we are in December already, of 2022? Like how did that actually happen? What a total mindfuck. Excuse the French. I don't even know if I can swear on a podcast, but there it is.

Time has warped for me a lot this year. I don't know how it was for you, but I went through slow motion. And what felt like the slowest moments of my life. And then I also experienced the year flashing past me in a moment. And this all felt like simultaneous, super weird. Time is one of the strangest things

because our experience of time distorts and this year distorted big time for me.

and you know, we've hit December of 2022 and I always get into reflection mode around this time. I look at my year. I then plan a bit about my next year and look at what my intentions are for next year and stuff, especially in the business and stuff like that and in life. But yeah, I just have been doing quite a bit of reflection on this year for.

And I thought, what better way to start this last month of this year with a podcast on some of the lessons I learned this year? Because I can safely say this has been one of the biggest, most challenging years of my entire life. And it's one of those years I will look back on in time and I will remember it forever.

It is a year that will be marked in my history as like a turning point year. It was a year where in the blink of an eye I became a different person in the blink of an eye, almost like a second, where my entire world turned upside down inside out, on its head. Everything that I thought I knew just got obliterated.

So you can imagine that and how challenging that is. So I'm just going to give a little pre-warning that this podcast almost like a trigger warning that I will be talking about death and experiencing a profound death in my life. If that is something that you're not ready for, then maybe this isn't the podcast for you today.

It's not going to be a lot on that. But I'm going to be talking about it. So I just wanted to let you know I'm actually going to be jamming on all the lessons I've learned. In this year that have been really transformational, that have made me a better person, that have made me incredibly strong, a lot wiser, and also just going to be a better businessperson as a result of it.

Like all of these lessons are going to, they're really powerful, and they will better your life and your business. All right, 2022. I don't know how your year was, but my year was wild. Started off the year with my biggest launch ever had like a \$60,000 launch. Magical. Literally thought the world was my oyster.

I've never been more like, oh my gosh, this is going to be the best year of my life. And then about like two, three weeks after that or something. My dad

died suddenly. Out of the blue. So it wasn't really like something we were preparing for at all. Although he wasn't, well, it wasn't like, it wasn't something I was like, yeah, this is going to happen.

You know, it was like a complete shock. And I have never ever experienced that level of pain before in my life. And to be absolutely honest with you. This is obviously a very vulnerable podcast, but this was the first year or time ever where I had continuous thoughts of just giving up running Digiteach.

And having thoughts of like, I'm literally, I can't do this anymore. I'm just going to quit and I'm just going to get a nine to five job, and I just want someone to tell me what to do because I'm so tired and I'm just so broken. And thinking about that now is crazy. But there were months of this year where I lost, meaning I lost purpose and I had to dig deep.

And I mean real deep. I went through the trenches, I went through the darkness. A part of me died. And when my dad died, I felt like there was a part of me in my life that had died and. I had to sort of experience that grief and that darkness and all of that. And in it, you are just so lost in it.

It's like you try have wisdom and be like, this will get better, but in it, you just, you can't, you, there's no, there's nothing you can do in that space. And I must tell you, running a business in the midst of grief, it will challenge you more than you thought was possible. It will challenge you to your core.

It will be one of the hardest things that you have to do. Obviously, grief in itself is one of the toughest things any human being has to go through. Grief and loss. But when you have your own business on top of it, when you are the reason for that business making money, when you're the person who is the generator of income, you're not just being paid by a job that will challenge you because wow, you are going to, you're going to struggle.

You're going to struggle with motivation and ambition and all of that stuff's just going to be gone out the window. Yeah, this was my year. This was the reality of 2022 for me. This was a year that will be historically one of the most challenging, probably one of the most challenging years of my life. I think I'll have lots, many more, but you know, this is what was given to me completely unexpected and just shows you how life is just completely unexpected, right?

You can plan as much as you want. Things are going to happen. So yeah, I am through the darkest of my time for now. Hence me being able to even speak about it on these podcasts. I mean, I wouldn't be able to speak about it if I was actually still in the trenches. But I am still, obviously there is still a lot of grief, there's still a lot of heaviness.

It's not something that goes away. But I have re-found my meaning and my purpose again. I am feeling lighter. I am feeling like I can breathe again on most days. Obviously it comes in waves. But yeah, today's podcast will be more vulnerable and more meaningful obviously. Based on what I've just discussed with you.

And I will be chatting to you about five life-changing lessons that I learned in 2022. And I really think despite most of these lessons being learned in the most challenging, brutal way, that I have learned powerful things to integrate into my life and my business, and I, I am definitely stronger and wiser for it.

I don't think that you need to have a transformation in the face of grief. I don't think that's necessary. But I do feel like just by the nature of going through such a life-changing event. There will be some serious transformation and it's not going to be easy. A lot of it is dark. And yeah, this is what I'm going to be sharing with you today.

I think, I hope this helps some of you or that you resonate with some of it and that you can take away a few bits into 2023.

So lesson number one. Life and business has cycles and seasons. honour the season you're in. I cannot stress how much peace that is brought into your life when you simply honour the season of business and life that you are in.

There will be seasons where you are productive, where you're creating, where you're in your element, where you're in flow, where you're making magic, getting shit done, making money. Things are going to just be happening. There's going to be a lot of forward movement and momentum. And then there will be seasons where you are going to go inward.

You are going to rest, you are going to replenish, you are going to refill your cup, you are going to stabilize, you are going to integrate ground and just not do all of the stuff. The problem here is that we think we must always be on. We must always be producing and creating and productive, especially as business owners.

And then when we go into our slow season where we're called to pull back and rest. We give ourselves so much crap and all this guilt comes with just, it's just guilt, right? It's just like when you're chilling and relaxing and you're not doing something productive, you're just feeling this guilt, right?

Especially if you run a business. Now, this is. Literally the most natural cycle there can be. And in terms of seasons, right? The action season and the rest season. And the most empowering thing you can do is to go with those natural cycles, those ebbs and flows between them and maximize on them, both of them, because the resting season is just as important as the creation action season.

They are literally yin and yang. You need to rest in order to refill for the creation, for the action. The one cannot exist without the other. They support each other. They, especially in your business. For example, I started this year with one of the biggest launches we've had, and we were on track to hitting the revenue goal.

But then life happened, right? My dad dies, my world falls apart. Everything is obliterated in a second. And what ended up happening is my plan for 2022 literally dissolved. Into nothingness and I ended up taking five months off work this year, five months, two and a half months, immediately after my dad passing.

And then another, like two and a half months later. I took that rest to heal, to process my grief, to find my feet, to learn to live again, to just figure out what the hell had just happened. And to be honest, it wasn't like much of a choice. I, I literally couldn't. I had, when I tell you I had zero creativity, I felt dead inside.

Like I had nothing. I had nothing to give. And instead of what previous Michelle would've done is not listen to my body, not listen to my heart, and just grind out and just work through it. I did the opposite because I was, that it was that imperative, like I could not overlook what. What I was experiencing and I rested and I gave myself the time I needed.

I listened to my body and I honoured the season of life that I was in. I literally forced myself to do nothing work-wise for months. And despite that feeling hard for me, it was the greatest gift I could give myself because it allowed me

the space to heal. To just figure out some stuff and to allow that creativity to grow in me.

And that is actually how this podcast was born. I literally birthed this podcast in the toughest period of my life towards the tail end of the real dark trenches because I wasn't able to do anything in the trenches. But when I gave myself space to heal and things I bought this podcast was born and lots of energy, new energy came.

Now I really just want to remind you that you are a human being. You will have cycles and seasons in your life and in your business. These are inevitable. It is so important to be in touch with yourself, to see where you're at and flow with those seasons. I actually work my business runs on seasons, so I have launching season and I have resting season.

I launch and then I rest, I launch and then I rest. I am not someone who sells all the time. I don't jam with that. I don't have the energy for it, but I love having launch seasons where I'm actively launching. And then I love having like slow relaxing seasons where just for like two, three months I'm just doing the normal stuff.

I'm not like actively aggressively selling. Obviously I can make money in that time and I can light sell, but nothing too intense and that is really important for me. I'm honouring the way that I work. I honour the season I'm in when I'm launching. I'm launching and I'm on and I'm doing the thing.

And then after that I'm resting because I'm refilling my cup because I'm an introvert and I need to, so I really want you to hold onto this lesson for 2023. It is the most freeing and supporting thing you can do for yourself. honour the season of life and business you are in. honour it. Give it what it needs.

Allow yourself to ebb and flow between the two. Work at those two to your advantage. Right. Okay. Lesson number two is meaning in your work is everything. Meaning in life, right? I realize now why so many people are miserable in their work and why I was so miserable in my work as an online teacher.

It is because I lacked meaning in the work that I was doing. There wasn't like a deep fulfillment in what I was doing, and guys, there is nothing like a death of someone. Important to you in your life to really shake up what is important

to you, to really put into perspective how fragile we are and how we are all on this planet to live, but so many people don't live.

They just survive. They just settle. They just continue because it's easy. It's, it's the easy option and, and they're just not happy. They're just like sort of this discontent like vibe. I cannot stress how important it is to find work that is meaningful to you. That brings you a sense of purpose. My business, although I lost meaning and purpose because I, this year I was completely angry with the world.

I was angry that bad things happened to good people. And I thought, you know, what is the point of all this suffering and this bullshit that we have to endure on earth? And although I felt like quitting for months, I didn't. And there were moments where my business actually got me through those days. I remember so many days where I was just, Empty, like nothing.

I had nothing to give, but I had to show up for my group coaching calls that obviously I had had to fulfil on what I was delivering to my students. And I would get on these calls and they would just completely shift how I was feeling like I would get on these calls and that by the end of that call I would feel alive again.

Like I was still in the darkness, but there was this glimmer of hope that there was something that was keeping me going. And those calls, those coaching calls, the people that I connected with this year on those calls, I will remember them forever because they were actually very healing for me because I was getting out of my own misery and I was helping someone else.

And that gave me meaning, and that gave me purpose. So helping others help myself and that was really important and really, really important. So if you're struggling, you know, in life and in business and you're just like not feeling that, that spark of meaning, just look. Look at what you're doing. Look at where you're getting your meaning and your, your sense of purpose from what, what are you doing in your work that's fulfilling that really deep part of you that just wants to fulfil that?

Right? And you can look at that. If there, maybe you see something that you maybe need to look into for 2023. Because we really do need meaning in our work. I really believe that as humans, I think depression and all this stuff comes from when there's lack of meaning. Otherwise, you know, what is the actual point of life?

Money is nice, but meaning is the soul food that brings you real joy and satisfaction. It's strange, like the money is of course amazing because it reduces the stress and stuff. It allows you to live and do things that are nice. But the impact and the meaning and the purpose is where the magic's at. So don't build a business empty of meaning.

It's going to be impossible to forge ahead with it, especially when shit hits the fan in life. And let's be honest, we all know that shit's going to hit the fan in life. Everything that doesn't matter or has no meaning to you will fall away when shit hits the fan because life gets put into perspective when big events happen and you really get clarity on, look, this is just, this doesn't matter to me, and it will fall away.

And this is what happens when you just have these big life-changing experiences that put things into perspective. So really look at where you're getting your meaning in your work, what you can look at into improving, you know, you know, digging deeper into that, like doing the thing that you really want to be doing that really matters to you on like a soul level is really important.

Okay, lesson number three is there is often a breakdown before a breakthrough. So I have started to see a pattern in my business now where whenever I'm going through some heavy, heavy, heavy shit, When I am in the trenches of struggle, at some point at the end of that, I will have some sort of breakthrough, which will let me get, like go to the next level, to the next iteration of my life or the version of me that needs to be born in order to continue, right?

So now when I am in the trenches, when I'm in the weeds, when I'm in that season of some sort of death, I know that I'm in it, it's like a wisdom. It's like, I know it's happening. Obviously I can't say that this is exactly with grief and things like that because I don't believe like there's, I don't want to like gaslight it and be like, there's some transformation at the end of it.

Like I don't always believe that. But in general, if you're going through the trenches in your business often something is dying. In order to make space for something that needs to emerge, something new, something better, that's the right thing for you. In order to reinvent ourselves, in order to like keep growing our business or take things to the next level, we have to actually let things die often ourselves and in our business.

And we have to make space energetically for the rebirth of something. And most of the time we aren't aware of this death and rebirth process, and that makes it even harder because you get so caught up in it. But if we can have the awareness that we are experiencing a shedding of skin or in the process of something dying off, then we can trust the process more.

We can know that this too shall. We can trust that this is part of the cycle. And although the death and the shedding is hard, and I don't mean like real life death, I mean something in you has to die off a part of you, a belief system, a way of being something like that or the way you are working, something like that has to die and it's hard and it's tough.

But it's necessary. It's necessary part of life to allow that space for that new thing to emerge, that birth of whatever it is to come to come into your world. So there is so often a breakdown before a breakthrough. Just trust the journey you are in and when you're in the shit, be kind to yourself. Just be kind to yourself, okay?

And know that something is happening. There is something happening that needs to happen, and although it's deeply uncomfortable, this too shall pass. Right? And you will be amazed at the moments of clarity and the, the, the things that emerge at the end of these kinds of experiences.

Okay, lesson four is, resting should be made a priority in your life and business. Like it must be as important as working, resting should be equal to working and making money. Taking five months off this year was by far the best thing I could have done for myself, and although I didn't hit my revenue goal because I actually cancelled the launch, I know that I'm going to bring in such power for 2023 because I gave myself.

Exactly what I needed at that time in my life. If you ignore your body and your heart signals for rest, for downtime, for play, for fun, for relaxation, and you just keep grafting and burning the candle on both ends, then you are going to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs and you are the goose. You are the goose that lays the golden eggs.

You are your greatest asset. You work to bring in money. Whether you're in a job or whether you run a business, you are still your greatest asset. If you get sick, if you get ill, you are unable to generate anything for you. You can't make any money. You are your greatest asset. And if you ignore your rest

season, if you don't give yourself that season where you can replenish, where you can look after yourself, where you can just ground into yourself, where you can just integrate whatever it is you need to do in that resting season, whether it's healing or just having fun.

If you don't give yourself that, eventually your body is going to become unwell. and honestly, you cannot show up as the best version of yourself in that, in that way. How can you show up as the best mother or the best employee or the best business owner if you are literally depleted? If you have nothing to give.

If you're burnt out and running on fumes, that is not the best version of you, and that is not serving anything around you and anyone around you. You're actually just damaging yourself in the process. And you may think you're helping people by selflessly giving of yourself to everyone all the time, but you're not helping everyone by doing that, and you're certainly not helping yourself.

If you're struggling with creativity, rest, if you're struggling with ambition and motivation. I honestly can sometimes just say, maybe rest is what you need. Maybe a good solid week of social media or maybe a month of social media is what you need. Maybe some time in nature and just playing is what you need.

Maybe creating some art is what you need. Dancing, like just nurturing yourself, just chilling. Even just taking a nap, like all of that. Just having a massage. Just give yourself the downtime. Make it a priority. It is as important as working that feminine energy. Remember the masculine as you're doing in your action energy.

The feminine is your resting and replenishing and magnetic energy. That feminine energy is so powerful. It's almost even more powerful than the masculine. I wouldn't say that, but it's, if not more powerful. And magic happens in the moments of rest and play and just exploration and joy and recharging your batteries.

And once you recharge them, you can come back into the world with potent energy, you can show up. Much more potently in your launches. When you're selling, when you're on social media, when you're doing content, you're there. Your energy is there. If you are depleted, it's going to come through in everything you do.

I launched this year in the worst time of my life. I launched two launches in the darkest times of my life. And they were nothing compared to my first launch. Nothing. They were basically half the result, and that's because I was not there.

My energy, I was done and I know that my energy's going to be full because I've rested. The next time I launched, the next time I, I run something is going to be magically powerful. I know that because I am there, I'm a hundred percent there. So treat rest. As a priority, like it's not an afterthought. It needs to be like, this is part of my, this is like on my to-do list is to rest and then tick it off.

The last lesson. That I learned, which was quite interesting for me, was toxic positivity as a thing, and here's what you should do instead. So the whole idea of just thinking positive and then everything's going to work out is just, it's just not. It's just bullshit, okay. I used to believe in that.

I genuinely used to believe in that. I was a very positive person, and I wouldn't say I'm not anymore, but since losing my father, none of that rings true for me anymore. It just seems like we're totally gaslighting ourselves and blatantly ignoring our feelings. So if you feel like shit, you can't think positively out of it.

You can't be like, cool, I'm in the darkest moment of my life. Let me just think of like, oh, I am happy, or good things happen. That is blatantly gaslighting your feelings, you're completely ignoring where you're at. And realistically, we're living life and bad things do happen in life, and we are human beings who have a whole spectrum of emotions.

So what actually happens when we repress our emotions, we cause more resistance. We expend more energy. And guess what? Those emotions persist because what you resist persists. What you resist persists. You can never positively think your way outside of shitty things happening. That's like if you go through a trauma and you just try positively think your way out of it, that's literally just going to increase your suffering.

That is like gaslighting you 101. So if you're going through some tough times, acknowledge it. Don't let that toxic positivity feed into your life. Let those unpleasant, those dark emotions, that's let that come out. Sit in the

discomfort of being in that space. Just be in that space. Let those feelings be, just let them be.

Don't judge yourself for them. Don't make yourself guilty for them. Just remind yourself that you are a human being and it is completely normal to feel depressed, to feel anxious, to feel like there's nothing, you know, like all those dark feelings. It's normal. It's, that's the human experience. And what you will find is because you give that part of you space, those emotions don't fight.

They, they don't keep pushing and bubbling over. They literally just slowly fade away. And they will pass. So remember to honour the season of life and business you're in, and don't make yourself wrong for whatever's happening in your life and in your business. You know, if shit is hitting the fan, just know that that is part of this journey of being a human being and of being a business owner, and just trust that it'll pass and let be in the crap of it. Like, let's, let's normalize that. Let's not have this toxic positivity thing. Oh, everything is fine all the time. I'm like, you know, I've just gone through the worst thing that happened in my life, but I'm just going to think I'm happy and that's going to make me happy.

That doesn't work, and it's actually, it's not very kind to ourselves, and we just make our lives a lot worse when we do that. You just increase suffering. So like, if you're in the crap of it, in the trenches of life, just let yourself be in the trenches of life and be like, this is, this is okay.

This is the human experience. It's absolute crap. I can't wait to get out of it, but I'm going to be here because that's where I'm at. Alrighty, these are really life changing lessons that I learned this year that I think have, have made me wiser, stronger. In, like just in life and also in business. And I can safely say that I've just become more compassionate and kind to myself and much more understanding of my humanity and much more accepting of the darkness that exists in myself and the world.

And you know, I think this has made me. Not really a better person, but definitely wiser, definitely stronger. I'm much more empathetic. I am, I believe I'm a better coach. I believe I'm a better business owner. I believe I'm much kinder to myself as I grow my business, and that I'm not going to just grind myself down to the ground in pursuit of making money that actually is in the, in the, in the perspective of life that is not worth it for me.

My values and all of that stuff has had to be rearranged this year, and there has been so much that I've had to let go of and figure out and rebuild. And yeah, I guess it'll be a year in the history of my life where just so much stuff happened. And although I don't want to say, you know, there was like transformation at the end of it, but you know there was and, I guess that doesn't mean that that'll always happen when someone passes that you'll have that, and that's not the goal of it. Like, oh, I'm going to get stronger because of it. It just, you just learn so much about what's important to you and you just get rid of all the crap that isn't, and you just start really becoming.

Like life just gets put into perspective, right? Life is short, guys, it is shorter than we think and it is more fragile than we think. And we should be on this planet doing things that light ourselves up. We should not settle for things that are. Not good for us, whether that's a job, a relationship, friends, all of it.

We get to decide how we live our life and there will be lots of challenging things where we have to like get rid of the old, to make space of the, for the new and stay aligned and things like that. So, yeah, this was a deep one, guys. But I hope that some of this resonated with you, you know, that it helped you in some way.

And if we can just be a bit more compassionate to ourselves, a bit more understanding of our humanness, especially in business like we are not robots that just post on social media every day. We are literally human beings that are going through profound things, big life events. Raising kids, literally, having all these things happen to us.

We can't just be robots. We aren't robots. We're human beings. And if we need to take a month of social media to look after ourselves, that is what needs to happen, and that is the best thing you can do for yourself. Screw the rest of it, screw the shoulds and all of that. Just listen to where you're at and honour the season of life that you're in and don't make yourself wrong for it please.

If you can take that with you into 2023, you're going to. It's just going to be a lot lighter for you. A lot lighter, giving yourself space to just be who you are. And be okay with the ups and downs of life and business. I hope you enjoyed this. It's definitely a vulnerable one. Probably my most vulnerable podcast I've ever made.

But I love this. One of the reasons I actually started this podcast was to connect in a deeper way with the people who I connect with online, like my audience, and my tribe. All of the humans that I get to, you know, connect with online, I wanted to do it in a deeper way. Instagram is pretty surface level stuff for me, like short reels and stuff.

Like I do it, but I can't get deep and I am a deep person. And for me, speaking from my heart in this podcast, medium is the way for me to connect and deeply connect with people. So that is what I wanted to sort of do in this episode. Obviously, it's so scary to do vulnerable things and uncomfortable, but I really hope it was received well and you enjoyed it and it was meaningful to you in some way.

If so, please send me a message on Instagram. And let me know because I would really appreciate that. Just saying, you know, something resonated or you enjoyed it, I would really appreciate that. And, if you enjoyed it, I will keep creating more vulnerable content that really speaks to more the deeper things of, of business and stuff.

Not just the hard, like the strategy and the how to, because that really is important I think. All right, so let's integrate these awesome lessons. Let's take them with us into 2023, and let's have a fricking amazing next year and go with the flow of life, right? Lots of love, and I will chat to you next time.

Thank you so much for tuning into today's episode. If you love what you heard today. Then be sure to share it with me by leaving a five-star review so I can continue delivering these goodies. If you aren't already following me on social media, then come tune in to some daily inspiration on Instagram by following @_digiteach_ or visiting my website at digiteach.biz.

I appreciate you so much, and I can't wait to connect with you in the next episode. In the meantime, go create a business and life you love.