

E38 – How courses exponentially increased my hourly teaching rate.

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 uplevel your skills, your finances, your mindset, and change the trajectory of your life as an educator in 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 and welcome back to my podcast. As always, I'm so happy to be talking to you today, but I will be honest today, I had quite a bit of resistance to podcasting. So that is a bit of a weird experience for me. I don't often have that because I've loved podcasting so much. And today I woke up and I knew I had to do my podcast, and I just felt this heaviness, which I don't often feel.

And I kind of was like putting it off. I didn't really want to go do it. And I realized it was because I wasn't interested in the topic, the episode topic. I've been doing a lot of teaching in my episodes as of late and I've been doing a lot of business strategy which is great and amazing, and I love that as well.

And this was going to be another strategy episode. But I was just not feeling it. It just wasn't energizing me. I didn't feel like talking about it for half an hour. And so, I changed my top my topic and as soon as I changed my topic and I was like, what do I feel called to speak about today?

What's on my mind? Then I felt this shift instantly and I must say. It became so much easier for me to just get down and doing my podcast because I actually want to talk about the thing that I was going to be talking about. So that was an interesting insight, and I must say it is important to listen to your audience

and give them what they want and create content that is really helpful and valuable for them.

But it's also important for you to enjoy your work and actually enjoy your content creation and enjoy the things that you're talking about. So there really is a fine balance. You have to keep your audience happy and your listeners or the people who are on your Instagram or whatever it may be.

But you also have to keep energized in whatever you're doing in your business, because if you don't have the energy behind it. It feels really painful. And if you're not talking about anything that people find interesting or valuable in your audience, then no one's going to listen or no one's going to pay attention.

So, you really do need to find the balance. And it's the same with Instagram, often when I'm creating content for my audience. Specifically for my audience a lot of the time, it's not really stuff that I really feel like speaking about, but I know it's stuff that they want to learn about and that they need to learn about and that they're interested in and stuff.

It's a lot of beginner stuff, stuff that I've done for years and years that seem quite obvious to me. But it's not obvious because most people are new to course creation and launching and stuff like that, so it's not obvious, obviously. So, I do sometimes find resistance because there's always this balance of creating content for what your audience wants versus what you want.

And I know, all the Instagram gurus are forever going to tell you to just create content for what your ideal student avatar wants. But if you're feeling heaviness with content creation, resistance with content creation, and you're just struggling with it then I just feel like sometimes you got to just break the rule and just share what's on your mind and heart and just channel whatever message that needs to come through that feels good to you.

In your content and stuff. Sometimes it just needs to be like that. And for me, I feel like every time I do that, I end up writing such a potent great post because the energy is behind it, and it feels so much easier.

When I'm enjoying the act of what I create and the content that I create. And I enjoy channelling whatever message that comes through. So that was my first lesson for today's potty. Yes, I did just call it a potty. I love that word. So, the lesson is just to lean into the content that also excites you.

So, lean into the topics that excites you. Talk about things that matter to you whilst always tying it to your ideal students and finding a way that it can help your ideal students, of course. That's why you have a business. And sometimes you just got to keep it as simple as that. It doesn't have to be more complicated.

Sometimes you just need to let your energy guide you if you're feeling really off about something, find out, maybe you're putting too many boxes on you and it needs to look like this and you need to have this thing and you need to have these brand colours and you need to, oh, there's so many rules, especially with Instagram.

And that really dampens creativity and dampens flow, and then you end up swimming upstream and it's difficult. So, for me, this podcast is a form of creative expression, and so is my Instagram. But this podcast really is, I mean, this is my favourite form of creative expression in my business. And the content that you create, whatever that may be, whether it's a YouTube channel, a podcast, maybe your blog blogging, maybe you've got the Instagram, the TikTok, whatever it looks like.

That's your creative form of expression. And it's sacred. it's like your creativity. And so, you really want to honour that. And you want to try, stay in a place of joy with it because, in an online business, you need to create, you need to create content, and you need to create offers, and you need to be creative.

Literally, you have to be creative. And if you're putting all your content in a million boxes and saying, this is all that you can speak about. This is what it must look like, and this is what your audience wants. And so don't speak about anything else and be super niche specific and there's like a gazillion rules.

It really can dampen the creative nature of the work and then it comes out. It just either feels really difficult to create and painful and resistance, like all of it. And the content often just isn't that potent because it's created from a different energy. Okay, so that's what I wanted to share today.

I changed the episode. Long story short, and I feel much more energized to talk to you today about the actual episode. Which this is a topic that's been on my mind for the last week. It's really just about how selling digital courses and

group programs has exponentially increased my hourly rate. Now, I think that is a really cool episode.

I realized this week, again, I knew this. But it like hit home again. That I've 20X'd my hourly rate, which is really, really amazing. And I did it in two years or so, two, three years. And I thought this is such an amazing thing to share about and talk about, and I believe it deserves an episode in itself because.

This is really why I'm passionate about helping teachers and teaching business owners sell scalable courses and products because I want them to hack the system and I want them to stop trading their time for money, and I want them to exponentially scale their hourly rate so that they can live lives that they adore.

And so that they can build the freedom that they want and the flexibility and have the impact and all of it, right? So that is really my mission. And so that's what this episode's about. And if you don't know my story yet, maybe you are new, and this is the first time you are listening to me. I used to be an online ESL teacher, so that's an online English as a second language teacher.

I taught Chinese kids for like four or five years online and I hit my income ceiling in the company that I was working for Now. I think I started teaching online at 24 or 25, I can't be sure, but around 27 years old, actually I'd say 25. I started teaching online, or 26.

But anyways, at 27 years old, I hit my income ceiling, okay. 27 only, which is kind of bleak. But. The bleakest part was that that was \$20 an hour. So, what that meant is that I could only ever make \$20 an hour as an ESL teacher in the industry. Now, I don't know what the industry is like now.

Maybe some of you listening are online teachers. Probably are. I haven't been in the game for four years, so I'm quite detached at this moment. But back in the day when you worked for an online ESL company in China, \$20 was like the highest rate you could get. It was the holy grail of hourly rates, and everyone was gunning for \$20 an hour and there was so many companies paying \$5 an hour, \$3 an hour.

I can't remember the word but abusing their teachers by paying them really low rates. And so, \$20 an hour at the time was amazing. I was really grateful for that. Don't get me wrong. No shame if you're earning less. I mean, I was

very happy, for a long time. And I was living in Vietnam. And Vietnam is a super cheap country to live in, and I was living my best life.

And then I only needed to earn \$20 an hour to live well there, so it was fine. But then I happened to fall in love with a Dutch man, and then I happened to move to this random place in the Netherlands that I didn't even know existed. And the Netherlands was like five times the cost of living than Vietnam.

So, I really went from the cheapest to a pretty expensive place to live. And so, then I had to teach hours and hours and hours. I had to double my hours basically. And I was making, at best, I was making \$2,000 a month, and then at worst it was about a thousand dollars a month.

Now minimum wage in the Netherlands was like a 1500 euros. So, I was basically making minimum wage and I think honestly, some people working at McDonald's earn more than that and that's amazing. it's not such a bad option if you think of it like that. But at 27, I think it was about 27, it was 2018, right?

I was like, okay, I had just moved to the Netherlands, and I was living off. My partner, he was helping me, Mike. He was helping me live and I couldn't travel, and I couldn't fly home to South Africa to see my family. It was very tough. Very dark night of the soul kind of experience. Just having immigrated to this country left my whole family.

And yeah, not having the finances was rough. And so, I just reached a point in my life where I was like, oh my gosh, I have to get my act together. I actually can't do this for the rest of my life. I'm only 27 years old, like I can't reach my full potential. Now I can't hit my income ceiling.

Now I've got my whole rest of my life to live. And I've got to live. I've got to travel, I really wanted to live a good life. It's what I've always wanted. And so, I also just felt like I had so much potential. I didn't know what I wanted to do, but I felt I had potential to do something more than what I was currently doing.

And so, I was getting pretty miserable in my teaching job and I, I just felt I was on this endless teaching treadmill, and this is why I talk about the teaching treadmill all the time because I was on that treadmill, y'all. I remember it was like robot. I wasn't even present when I was teaching anymore.

I was like a robot. I just crawled out of bed. Got in front of the camera, smiling. The fakest smile I could possibly make, because at the time I was just teaching the same class. I was even repeating myself over and over again. And yeah, that was not a good time.

It was fun for a really long time, and I really enjoyed teaching the kids. They made me so happy for a long period of time. Don't get me wrong. Loved it, loved it. But, four years in of teaching the same a, b, c lesson. And yeah, it was not giving me the challenge I needed, and I was making 20 bucks an hour for a long time.

And so there comes a point where one needs to make life changes one needs to get their shit together. I needed to, and I was living my best life in the sense that I wasn't really career driven. I had travelled the world for my whole of my twenties. I was just living a fun life, but I was like, I need to get my shit in order so I can actually finance the life that I want.

And then that's when I found out about online courses and course creation and online business. It was like found my first mentor, 2018 and it was a revelation for me, and I decided, you know what? This is probably the thing that I should try doing because there's not much else.

I don't want to go to a classroom job, that's not a vibe. I don't want to teach online anymore. The other option that I was really considering was starting my own freelance teaching business, so just teaching my own students online and charging my own rates, which I think is awesome.

It's like a tutoring business. Great for people who are energized by that. I was not energized by that, like the thought of that. I literally felt my body recoil. I could feel it was a no. So, I just didn't want to do it, but then I found the course creation route and the online business route.

And even though I had no idea about it, I just felt like an expansion in my body, and it was a very exciting, nervous spark inside my gut that was like, this is something you should pay attention to. So, I went down the rabbit hole and I got my mentor invested with him and he helped me. Launch my first course.

That's how Digiteach was essentially born, started in 2018 and I launched my first course. I do have a whole other podcast episode. I think my first podcast

episode is all about the story. So, if you want to go listen to episode number one, I go into more details of the origin story.

But essentially it took me one and a half to two years to really start making good money, and then what happened was pretty incredible in my online business after launching just one course. So, I created one product, one course, it was \$379, and just from selling that one course, I was able to increase my hourly rate from \$20 per hour to \$400.

I was able to generate \$400 an hour basically. And that was like, whoa, that's 20 times more per hour. It was amazing. I remember having this penny drop moment back then, and then I had it again this week. I was like, oh my gosh. That is so cool. What an awesome story.

And so, I remember I hosted a live workshop a couple of years ago. And the ticket for this workshop was \$37. I had 11 people buy the ticket, and the workshop was about an hour long and 11 times 37 is \$407. And so, I made \$407 from that workshop. And if you run workshops where the ticket is \$20 or whatever, and you get more people in, those workshops can be quite profitable.

And 20 times more than my hourly rate basically. So, it was just such a crazy thing to be able to do that yourself. So, you did that, you built the skill and the knowledge and the grew the balls to do that yourself and make your own money. Very, very cool. I think the moral of this episode and the story is just through the act of taking.

Just taking your knowledge, the skill that you have, your lived experience the results that you've created in your life and turning it into an offer to sell a line. It can really, really dramatically increase your hourly rate. I mean it 20X'd my hourly rate, and I believe that it will probably continue.

I don't believe that I've hit my income ceiling. I honestly don't even believe in income ceilings anymore. I don't even believe in hourly rates. I don't charge hourly rates, I don't think an hourly rates, that's a very employee paradigm, teacher paradigm thing. I don't do that anymore.

I've been in my business too long. I don't think like that. But I had a moment where I was like, wow. In these things that I do that's what the hourly rate is.

That's amazing. And so, I sold one course for a year as I mentioned, \$379 for that course. And then we made a hundred thousand dollars from it.

And then I was like, cool. Let's look at what that hourly rate is. And it was way, way more way, way more. Okay. And so, I feel this is the answer, this is the answer to making more money without working more hours. This is why I'm forever telling people, gosh, courses and group programs, digital courses, digital curriculum, group programs.

Create a signature program, create a signature offer, and just sell it. Just create one offer and just sell that one offer and you'll 20X your hourly rate. It really was that simple. Obviously, there was a lot of skill and learning curve, and I launched a lot of times and it's not easy.

It's not easy to do it. I'm not going to sugar coat and be like, hey, this is super easy. You should just do it. It's not easy. You have to face a lot of internal struggle and resistance. It's very scary. It's very vulnerable. There's a lot of discomfort that comes with it. Also, you need to learn skills, that's hard.

But it's kind of simple. Take your knowledge, your experience your results, package it into a program and offer, make it a hot, hot, hot offer that people want to buy. And just learn to sell that offer and just sell it repeatedly. Sell that one program over and over again and just let that compound and compound and compound.

And then suddenly you're making like \$400 an hour or like a thousand dollars an hour, whatever it may be. And I just realized as a teacher, back in the day we really do have so many gifts. As teachers, we have so many gifts that we can share online, and I see teachers and educators like they are, they come to this earth to serve and to help and to impact, that's the soul kind of calling, is to impact people.

That's what educators love about their work, right? And so, the incredible thing about digital courses and group programs is that it's the most amazing way to monetize your gifts. So, make some cash money and make more money than you thought was possible for yourself. Like really scale up that hourly rate and impact hundreds, if not thousands of people around the world.

Not only has my hourly rate exponentially increased and my working hours have dropped, like I've got so much more flexibility. Tomorrow I'm going to

Antwerp, it's a Thursday. I just take days off when I want. I just do whatever I want. That's really incredible, to be able to do that.

But not only that, I've also impacted thousands of people all over the world. Through my courses in group programs. I mean hundreds upon hundreds upon hundreds upon hundreds upon hundreds of people have bought my products online. Just in the Educators Income Booster Bootcamp, I think we've had like a thousand people.

And yeah, for me that's insane. And then my previous course was like 700 people and DBA over 200 people. And not only that, just the people who are learning from my podcast. Like right now, this is like thousands of people. I would say it's pretty cool because it's about 500 downloads a week, which I think is amazing.

And so, I just don't think it gets better than that to be honest. I feel like I hit the jackpot in life. And I really believe that this is such a beautiful way for people, anyone really. But educators and teaching business owners, for them to earn more, to impact more. And to live the lives that they desire to live. That they really truly, in their heart of heart, actually want to live.

It's very unconventional. It's very different to what's the norm. It's maybe frowned upon to want to make lots of money and be wealthy, but I don't think so. I think that it is amazing. I think it's amazing that you want to be ambitious, and you want to make more money. I think it's such a beautiful thing and I think, I think money is a byproduct of the impact that you have in the world, and money is a byproduct of the value that you share with the world.

And if you can give value to people and serve and teach and change lives, money will be a byproduct of that. It just is. Money, it's like an exchange. You give value, you get money. And the more value you give to this world, the more money you make. And yeah, so many educators just want to help people.

What greater way to help someone in through this business model of digital courses and group programs instead of the one-on-one model, which is like more the tutoring model or the one-on-one coaching model. I do one-on-one coaching. I love one-on-one coaching actually, but I don't fill my entire calendar with a million one-on-one coaching calls, that literally sounds terrible to me.

I have a couple of coaching calls a week, and the rest, I just create my podcast, I create my email newsletter, I create content on Instagram. I'm creating new offers, it's awesome. Very, very grateful to be in this position.

And I just remember so clearly the feeling of how I felt when I wasn't making, when I was, when I hit my income ceiling, \$20 an hour and just, oh, I just felt so limited and so restricted and so uninspired. And so, if this episode resonates with you, if you are feeling limited in any way or yeah, that you want to increase your, your income and you don't know how.

If you want to create more for yourself and you want to build a business and stuff, then courses and group programs is the business model, okay. I'm a huge advocate. Yeah, it really changed my life and it's, it's amazing. It's changed my students' lives as well. I actually am definitely going to record a podcast episode on some of the students that I've worked with and my clients and the things that they've done has been so amazing.

But yeah, I just felt called to share that message and just hopefully it was inspiring to you that you can literally 20X your hourly rate, it's available to you. It's possible for you if I can do it, so can you. And on the topic of creating a course or group program. I'm very excited to tell you this, but the live version of my Educators Income Booster Bootcamp is opening again.

So, it's going to be opening on the 6th of July 2023. Now, people are able to buy the prerecorded version of this all year round, but the live version of this event is on steroids, okay? So, you're going to have so much energy, so much momentum. I'm going to help you map out a program like an offer, a hot offer.

Some type of digital course or group program, whatever it looks like. But it's going to be something that's scalable, that is also desirable, that is positioned in a way that it can sell. Because not all courses will sell, not all products will sell because the offer isn't strong, it's not desirable, it's hasn't got the key ingredients.

So, I'm going to walk you through day by day the key ingredients to creating an offer. So, by the end of the bootcamp, each one of you will have your own offer from start to finish mapped out on paper. From the pricing, from your niche, from who is your ideal student avatar, what are you going to be teaching, what's the program promise, what are the modules, what is the order of the modules?

What are the bonuses, the whole thing. We are going to flesh it out together. This is one of my favourite live events to host. It's a very big one, energetically for me to facilitate this event. And so, I don't do them often. Not sure if I'll do it another one this year as well. I'm kind of leaving it up to how I feel.

So, a ticket is 37 Euros. It's total a 10-day event in total completely live. If you can't join live, you'll get access to six-month replays in your ticket. So, it's fine. It really is the most abundant price to work with me. There's nothing more abundant than 10-day live event for 37 euros. Where I'll be coaching you to create your own program.

And I have a wait list, so you'll see a link underneath the episode in the show notes to the wait list. If you are on the wait list, we are going to open the doors earlier, two days earlier for those on the wait list, and you're going to get an early bird bonus when the doors open.

So, I've got something that I sell for 17 Euros. It's this awesome course tech success guide. It helps you with all the tech of creating a course. And normally it sells for 17 Euros. But you will get it for free. So, if you're on the wait list. Doors will open two days earlier for you and you will get the Course Tech Success Guide with all the tech that you need to create and sell your course for free. Which is amazing.

Now you can get on the wait list by hitting the link in the show notes. And if you did purchase the prerecorded version of my bootcamp. Or you are a past Bootcamper, an alumni student. Then you're actually going to be invited with a 50% off ticket price to the live version.

So, keep your eyes peeled for that email. We are inviting all alumni and the people who bought the prerecorded version to join at 50% off the ticket price. Because the live version is amazing. You are going to have so much momentum and clarity and it's just going to be fabulous.

So, very excited for that. Otherwise, I hope you loved this episode. And if you did remember, share it with me via email or Instagram. I love hearing from you. I love connecting with you, and I hope you have an amazing rest of your day.

Thanks so much for listening to today's episode. If you are a teaching business owner, freelance teacher, or online teacher, and you are interested in creating a digital course or group program to scale your income and impact without teaching more hours, than I have just the thing for you.

Grab my Free Scalable Digital Course Roadmap and it will walk you through the six steps of turning your one-on-one classes into a scalable offer that frees you from the teacher burnout trap. Creating scalable courses and programs have allowed me to 10X my hourly rate, hit six figures in my business, and impact hundreds and hundreds of people around the world without having to be actively teaching all day. If this is what you desire. Grab my guide in the show notes and let me help you.

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.