

E73 - What does building a sustainable business look like long term.

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, hello and welcome back to my podcast. So happy to have you here. Today I'm going to be talking about a topic that one of my amazing DBA students asked me to record a podcast episode on, and it was all about what does building a sustainable business look like long term? What does it actually look like?

This question really made me think, and I'm just going to spill on what I feel it looks like and what it means to build a sustainable business long term. So firstly, it looks like getting very clear on your boundaries and honouring your boundaries. Really being learning the art of boundaries is something that I've really had to learn in my journey of being a business owner is really working on myself, working on how to set boundaries with clients, with students, with business partners, with myself, with my family, with my friends, everything.

And also honouring the boundaries, which is actually really important. So just learning how to maintain those boundaries, because if you don't, it's just going to lead to burnout and there's nothing sustainable about burnout.

So that's something that is really important. It also looks like setting very clear work time and rest time to replenish your energy. So when you're thinking about building a sustainable business, that doesn't mean you're going to be

working 24/7, maybe in the first one or two years of your business, or however many years you want to say, or months.

It doesn't even matter. There will be a hustle and grind season, but this is when the boundaries come in place where you're setting very clear work time and rest time to replenish your energy. Because if you don't have the rest time, you will not replenish your energy.

You will then burn out. You will get sick. This will not be sustainable. So really getting clear on this as well is important. So as I was mentioning about seasons, you want to think about seasons in building a business. There are going to be seasons where you're going to have to push. Grind, hustle, work hard, put in the hours.

These are like push seasons. That's the time where you're putting in more hours in the day. You're waking up early. You are just grinding out to get things done. And there will be those kinds of push seasons. It is required in a business to get it off the ground, you need to have push seasons. Which is all about the masculine energy and the masculine energy is always about taking action, implementing, working hard, putting in the hours.

It's very action orientated energy. And these push seasons are really good for business growth. But they are not sustainable. And even though a lot of business owners get accustomed to being in the push masculine season, we actually have to force ourselves to slow down and take our foot off the gas.

Otherwise, burnout will hit you. And a lot of business owners get burnt out because they are living in the masculine push season, and they are not replenishing their energy. And that is something that, especially as a female, I believe, I think maybe men just override this and they just push, push, push, push, push.

And eventually, it takes its toll on their bodies. But as a female business owner, my experience is that I have to honour the season of business that I'm in. And there are clear seasons in business for me. So I will have big promo launch periods where it's like an action push masculine season.

I'm putting in more hours. I'm executing much harder. I'm maybe not having as slow of a morning. I'm waking up and I'm just getting stuff done. And that is Needed to have these big bursts of business growth. And then whenever I'm

done a sort of one of those seasons, I always go into a rest, recuperation and maintenance season.

And this is like when you are just maintaining your business. You're just delivering on clients and students and running your programs, but typically you are not in an aggressive sort of sales season or pushing season, then I tend to rest and recuperate just for a month or whatever it may be just to replenish my energy.

And this is how I work. Obviously, every business owner needs to find what makes sense to them. But what I can tell you for sure is that you can't be in a masculine energy push season all the time. You have to have the more feminine rest and recuperation rejuvenation space, because that's where your creativity builds.

That's where everything just gets better. When you have rest, your business literally needs it. So for example, I just had a launch, and it was a bit of a push season for me. And now I'm going to South Africa. I'm going to be getting married in the season. And so now I'm taking a bit more of a maintenance season where I'm not going to put too much pressure on me.

I'm just going to live my life and getting married and having a wedding and not feel guilty when I'm resting. And that's the other thing, you can't be when you're in that resting maintenance season, you can't be sitting in guilt that whole season because that isn't proper rest.

It's only fully restful if you let go and you make peace with whatever is. Don't fight it. Don't get super anxious. What you can do is prepare ahead. Maybe you need to batch create content or do stuff to let yourself let go. Build out your newsletters ahead of time, whatever it is that you need to do. You can prepare yourself for those rest seasons.

If you really feel like you can't unhook otherwise, but it's important that you can unhook from your business and actually rest. That's what's building a sustainable business requires. The other thing that is connected to building a sustainable business is really loving the work that you do.

Yes, of course you will love the result of the work that you do, which is the money and impact, but you actually need to love the act of doing the work. So if you hate doing your business tasks, it's not going to be sustainable in the

long run. So if you hate posting on Instagram, then you need to outsource that eventually.

I mean, maybe in the beginning days, you can't. Obviously, you need to wear all the hats and you need to be doing the Instagram, doing the emails, doing the marketing, doing the selling, doing the launching, all of that, and you wear all the hats. But as soon as you're making money, you want to start outsourcing the work that you don't like.

So if that means someone to write your newsletter because you can't stand typing on newsletters, then that's something you should outsource. Or if you hate social media, you need to outsource social media, a social media manager. If you hate running Facebook ads, you need to outsource Facebook ads. So you really don't want to build a business constantly doing things that you hate.

A smart business owner who is in it for the long-term outsources a lot of the work to others so that they can stay in their zone of genius. So letting go of control and outsourcing is really important in growing a sustainable business that you can be in for the long-term.

That you don't get tired from and burnt out from because you are doing the work that lights your soul on fire. And other people handling the stuff that they should be handling. You don't need a big team. I have a very small team, but I make sure that people are doing the stuff that I can't stand and I'm doing the thing that I love.

That's why I still love my business. And that's why I'm still in business. Another thing is in order to build a sustainable business, what it takes is to set prices for profit. So if you want to be in business for the long-term, don't make your prices the cheapest in your industry. Don't compete on price rather compete on value and service and just do a better job.

If you aren't making profit at the end of the day. Then nothing about that is sustainable. So if you really want to be a business owner and you are currently an educator trying to make that shift into becoming a business owner who earns for themselves, then part of that journey means you need to let go of your teacher identity and you need to start stepping into your business CEO identity.

Because the business CEO identity is going to charge good prices for the work that you do. And you're going to learn the skills to sell your offers at that price point. You're not going to set prices that are within the same sort of range of what you would as a teacher because you're no longer operating from your teacher identity.

You're stepping into a business level identity where you look at your prices and you say, I need to make profit for me to stay in business. Otherwise, this is just an expensive hobby. So my job as a business owner. Is to charge prices that make sense for my business, for the health of my business.

As well as to build the skills to sell these offers at this price point, I need to develop those skills to do this, and I need to set decent prices. So that's a really big one, because I work with educators specifically and teaching business owners. Pricing is often a point where I see them charging prices that are often very low.

And it keeps them in this like burnout cycle where they just repeat the same cycle from their job in their own business. And it doesn't make business sense. So the key is to set prices that make business sense and give you profit because that's going to keep you in business and it's going to give you the freedom that you actually need and want and learn the skills to selling those prices.

So you need to develop the identity and skillset of a business owner who can sell at that price point. Those are two things that are required. And I think if you don't do those things, you're going to find yourself in a bit of an unpleasant situation where you just repeat the same cycle of burnout as you would in your teaching job that you're trying to escape.

So the other thing about building a sustainable business long-term, it means that every year or even six months, maybe every two years. You reevaluate your business and you change things to stay in alignment because as you evolve as a human being, your business needs to evolve with you. If you don't review and change things in your business, it will fall out of alignment with you and things that are misaligned.

Feels like nails to the soul. So as soon as your business becomes misaligned, it becomes deeply unpleasant and uncomfortable. And it's not why you started your business in the first place. You starting your business to grow something

that you love, that's aligned, that lights your soul on fire, that makes you happy. That brings you joy.

As soon as you outgrow your business structure and you aren't changing your business to suit who you are as a person, as you've grown. You're going to get really deeply uncomfortable, and your business is going to start to feel like you're going to start to get a lot of resentment around it.

And that is part of just being a business owner. You need to know that you're going to evolve. And as you evolve, your business needs to evolve with you in order for it to keep aligned. And that it's really important to being sustainable in the long term.

Because you need to love what you do and how you do it. And as soon as you really fall out of love with the way in which you're doing something. Then you need to change it. For example, remember I built my, in case you don't know, I built my first business in the online ESL teaching niche. That was the thing that I knew best at that time.

And it did really well. It was making six-figures by the second year. And I launched and I had this \$40,000 launch and I was like so excited. Because it was like so much money at the time, I'd never made that much money. But then I said I'm never launching that course again because it felt so misaligned, and it just felt like nails to my soul to deliver that program and to continue creating content in that niche.

It just felt so unpleasant and uncomfortable, and I hated it. And so I immediately had to change my entire business niche because I built my business in the wrong niche. It just wasn't the right thing for me. And yes, it's scary to make these big changes, but as long as you're keeping in alignment with your intuition and you're listening to your gut, you are generally on the right track.

You just need to keep evolving your business, knowing that as you evolve as a human so will your business. Building a sustainable business long term also looks like dealing with your biggest internal belief systems, challenging them and recalibrating new beliefs. So having an employee mindset is not the same as an entrepreneur mindset.

This process of building a business is deeply internal. So when you start a business, don't be surprised that as soon as you do that, all your fears and insecurities will come up to the surface. It literally brings everything up to the surface and it is a hard process, but it's a process of personal development, which is deeply fulfilling because you develop yourself.

You learn about yourself, and you heal parts of yourself that have to be healed in order for you to shine your light brighter and make more money and create the impact you want to have on the world. Building a sustainable business requires you to become the highest and most honest expression of yourself.

So the highest, most honest version of yourself. And that means often people in the outside world, maybe it's family, maybe it's friends, maybe it's just people who are seeing you on social media, they will not always like what you do and how you do it. So this opens you up to judgment.

Not being liked by others, and it can be a very isolating and it can be a lonely journey if you don't find other people on the same path. And this is why entrepreneurs and online business owners are always putting themselves or looking to be in masterminds or communities to find other people like them, who think like them, who have the same beliefs and values and want to make money and impact the world and are very ambitious and can speak the same language.

Because a lot of people won't be able to understand you and a lot of people will judge you and be triggered by you because you are being brave and courageous and doing things and saying things that might trigger them. Maybe they deeply want to be able to do it, but they just can't bring themselves to doing it for example.

Or just your values and what you want to share with the world, they just don't agree with it. And you will find that you may lose friends. I've lost friends along the journey, but I've also gained amazing friends. And you come to a point where you realize that the people that are meant for you are the ones that will support you regardless of what you do, because they want the best for you.

The best people that should stay in your life are the ones that will support you through and through no matter what you do. And the more success you have, the more they celebrate you. Those are the people you want to surround

yourself with and the rest will fall away. And even though it is a hard process when you lose friends, and you get judgment.

Part of this journey is becoming so grounded in who you are as a person and what you want to do in your life and in the world that the judgment of others doesn't stop you. That is power. That is real power. Where you accept the truth that not everyone will agree with you, support you, or even like you.

And you can create safety in that realization, you know deep in your heart that your real tribe, the real gems in your life, the people who are meant for you will support you and celebrate your growth and expansion and success in the biggest way possible. They won't judge you. They won't be jealous of you.

They won't mock you. They won't insult you. They won't make you feel guilty. They will be in pure love and support for you. And you'll have experiences where a lot of people who you thought were friends weren't actually friends and they will fall away. And that's just the way it goes.

It's just part of stepping into your power, you will outgrow people because you're changing as a person, but you will find new people. And I think that's the nature of life in general. You always outgrow people and find new people, but especially when you're building a business, sustainable business for the long-term, they are going to be lost friends in the process, but you're going to gain lots of friends.

You're going to gain people who support you, support your success and don't criticize or judge you. And ultimately, if you are building a sustainable business, long-term, you get to a place in your life where you would rather live your soul's purpose, then hold back out of fear of what people may think.

And as I said, that's the most liberating thing you can do is when you live your soul's purpose, and you live your truth. Your aligned truth. You just shine your lights exactly how you want to. You share your perspective exactly how you want to. You do what you want to do, and you just let go of what people think and you just don't let the fear of what people think, stop you and that's liberating.

So building a sustainable business is one of the most rewarding journeys you can go on. It will challenge you more than ever. It will push you and stretch you

to your outer limits, constantly. It will feel deeply uncomfortable in the beginning until you just adjust to the new normal, that's just how it is.

Especially when you're transitioning from being an educator to an online business owner, there will be a lot of discomfort in that process, especially in the beginning. But after a couple of years, at least one to two years of you doing it, you start to just become this new version of you. You just become a business owner and it becomes the normal for you.

It just becomes who you are and what you do, and it start your identity shifts, and everything gets easier from that place. And it will ask you to become the best version of yourself or at least a better version of yourself. So it's still yourself, but you're just working on yourself constantly.

So someone who you would need to work on your emotional intelligence. Someone who works on their emotional regulation. Someone who builds a growth mindset. Someone who controls their inner critic and manages their thoughts. And controls the way that they think or stops them from going down terrible, terrible rabbit holes.

Someone who has the full extent of the human experience, which in business, you will experience incredible highs and you will experience incredible lows. But that is the full human experience. That's life, is having the dark and the light and being able to be in the dark and the light and be okay with it.

So someone who can also say that in their life, they chose to go after their dream and follow their soul and listen to their heart and follow their alignment. And that by the end of the life, you can say that you didn't have any regrets because you lived fully, you were brave, you were courageous.

You built up the tolerance and the capacity that many people can or never do because it is the path less travelled. It's not the easier path, but it is the path that is so fulfilling for the right people. The people that really feel called to sharing a mission, building a business, being their own boss for those people it's so deeply fulfilling.

And it's something that most entrepreneurs who really are in it, they often say it's the hardest thing they've ever done. But they wouldn't change it for the world because it's so deeply fulfilling. And it's a little bit like being a parent, I think. Like when you have children, it's definitely going to be the hardest thing

you've probably ever done, but you wouldn't change it for the world because there's just such joy and fulfillment through that as well.

So it really is an honour to be able to build a sustainable business. And it's something that you need to actively choose daily. Otherwise it won't happen. So it's like a relationship. If you don't put energy towards it and you don't decide that you're going to build a joyful, sustainable marriage, and you're not going to work at it constantly. Then it's not necessarily going to continue being sustainable and bring you joy. Just like a relationship where both parties you need to keep putting in the work, putting in the energy, putting in the love, putting in the work essentially. It's the same with business.

You want to keep putting in the energy, keep putting in the work. Keep making that choice daily, to water your business, water your plant, let it grow. And that's a big deal. So it's not a small commitment, but it's just like having a relationship or a child.

It's your baby. It's a long-term thing. It's something that's going to liberate you. It's something that's going to bring out your unique mission and perspective into the world and impact and money. And for that, I feel it's completely worth it. So that is my take on what it means to build a sustainable business for the long term.

There's probably a lot more I could say in it, but this is what came through right now. In this moment, and I hope it was interesting for you at least. So if you enjoyed this episode, feel free to always message me and let me know if this resonated with you. If you loved it, I'd love to hear from you.

You can send me a message on Instagram, or you can email me. Otherwise, I hope you have an amazing rest of your day and I'll chat to you soon.

Bye.

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, then I have just the thing for you.

Grab my free scalable digital course roadmap, and it will walk you through the six-steps to 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 rates 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.